Zig Zag Education

Religious Studies A Level | Edexcel | 9RS0

Anthology Study Guide

Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

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Contents

Teacher's Introduction

This anthology guide is a tool designed to help you deliver the A Level Edexcel Ethics specification, helping students not only understand the core ideas within each of the extracts, but also develop a broader understanding of their context and meaning within wider philosophical discussion. Each section covers one extract comprehensively, examining first a summary of its major concepts and arguments, before moving onto a critical analysis of its strengths and weaknesses.

Remember!
Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

Throughout there are also 'Discussion Points' boxes designed to invite students into deeper critical analysis as well as an extension section looking at the 'wider issues generated by the extract's ideas on religion, human experience and morality. The resource therefore can be adapted to focus purely on students' core understanding of the extracts or expanded to include wider philosophical knowledge that may be useful in an exam situation.

While this resource is primarily oriented around preparing students for Section B of their A-Level exam, the information contained within this anthology is also relevant to Section A and Section C, and in each section's introduction, the relevant areas of the specification are noted to help students draw on their previous studies and knowledge.

Contents:

Notes for Using this Resource

- Quotes given are taken from the Edexcel Anthology, unless otherwise specified.
- This resource is both tailored to students who have and have not covered the full A level course for Ethics. Where students have studied the relevant topic to the extract, they may be familiar with some of the content.
- Throughout the guides students are encouraged to extend their knowledge beyond the course where appropriate. Any such information is marked as a 'Discussion Point' or has a note to indicate it is not essential knowledge within the syllabus.

June 2017

Update v1.1 27 September 2018
We've made it clear that the 'Taking it further' sections are extension material, and that students are not required to consider the 'implications for understanding religion and the human experience' for their exams. However, these sections are useful for showing the subtleties in the anthology texts and may help students in developing top mark responses to exam questions.
Updates on pages, 1–2, 16-17, 27, 40-42, 52, 64-66, 75, 86-87

'Situation Ethics' – William Barclay

What you need to know before starting…

1. The core concepts behind situation ethics and criticisms of it from both Chri
2. The different ways one might interpret and apply [illegible]ve in ethical dilemm
   people accurate moral guidance.
3. Some of the weaknesses behind [illegible]-based approach to ethics and ho
   utilitarian or rule-based [illegible] theories.
4. The ways in which situation ethics has influenced modern Christian thought a
   partic[illegible] applied ethics.

1. Introduction

This extract draws on Section 2.2: Situation Ethics on the syllabus and you are adv
of the anthology alongside this topic. Additionally for owners of the ZigZag Cours
Ethics Year 1, the section on Situation Ethics can be found on pages 36–44.

William Barclay's essay is primarily a critical examination of situation ethics, drawi
Joseph Fletcher's books *Situation Ethics* and *Moral Responsibility*, before analysin
of the major weaknesses within this ethical theory. This guide will begin by detail
criticisms of situation ethics before examining their possible wider issues generate
everyday experience.

2. Summary of Ideas

Barclay begins the essay by outlinin[illegible] important elements of Fletcher's p
The basic idea he notes initi[illegible]t good and bad aren't universal rules, qualiti
what is morally [illegible]ally wrong is judged from the context or situation in
The person [illegible]re applying situation ethics is not bound by any pre-existing m
evaluating a[illegible]ourse of action, Barclay argues Fletcher:

> *… refuses to say that any principle is absolutely binding and always valid; righ*

However, an important nuance to note is that this doesn't necessarily stop the 'sit
principles developed beforehand by experience. Rather, it simply means that at a
considerations they have made are liable to be altered by difficult moral circumst

Agape Love

So how does the situationist determine the correct moral decision in these circum
there is only one thing that is intrinsically good: agape or as Barclay defines *'uncon*
important as it defines two important points about situation ethics. The first is th
It is an intrinsic, not an instrumental good which means t[illegible] is not used in the p
concept. It simply is the sole guiding purpose behind [illegible]ctions a person makes.

The second point is that identifying this form of love as an end in itself allows the
people that stand again[illegible]r own ethical principles or sensibilities. Therefore w
dislike and [illegible]e [illegible] another person, they can still reserve agape love for the
choices in a[illegible]cally difficult situation.

To demonstrate this principle, Fletcher has developed many examples of ethically traditional forms of Christian ethics do not necessarily demonstrate the most lovi in particular early on in the essay about families in the trail caverns losing their liv correct to sacrifice a baby's life for the welfare of the entire group. In particular h

> *Which action was love? The action of the mother who kept her baby and brough to all, or the action of the mother who killed the baby and s ped the lives of the decision with which the situationist confronts w m action was love?*

One important thing to note is th e mples given for situation ethics to contemplate inevitably c e relativity depending on the context. While the sit ni or the most loving action, what exactly is the most loving actio en loving itself, is not always transparent. Fletcher argues for 'four wo g principles' to govern moral actions, which will be examined later, but this has often been argued to be an issue with the approach of situation ethics, especially when compared to more traditional Christian concepts of right and wrong.

Discussion Point 1

Devise your own ethical dilemma and consider whether an agape-based and a rule-based approach to morality could provide an agreeable solution. Does either have any particular benefits, and how might their conclusions differ?

Justice as Love Distributed

The second of Fletcher's basic principles that Barc de fies is the idea that love and justice are funda lly e same thing, with justice simply being lo ted. For some philosophers the two co e sometimes been seen as counterparts ex justice might encompass forms of retribution ling on what is seen as fair punishment yet many would t regard such actions as loving. For Fletcher however, the one intrinsic good, if applied situationally, has to be worked out case-to-case so that the greatest amount of love, or just the most loving action can be pursued. This then forms the basis for justice, as Barclay notes:

> *Justice, it's said, consists of giving each man his due; but the one thing that is d love and justice are the same.*

Fletcher's concept of justice not only grants him the means to apply the intrinsic g but arguably prevents it from becoming a generalised, vague feeling, unable to w Barclay notes this later:

> *This means love has always got to be thinking; od h always got to be calcula*

Discussion Point 2

Does Flet dea of justice misrepresent the concept within Christian thoug Testament the idea of a just God is kept separate from the idea of a loving God and righteousness were two separate attributes of God himself.

Discuss some examples where a person or situation could be just but not lovin demand retribution?

Barclay's Criticisms

After examining the basic principles of Fletcher's ethical theory, Barclay moves on to a number of criticisms which he believes present serious problems for theories of situation ethics. One important thing to note is that there are two aspects to his analysis. The first covers the internal problems with situation ethics which would suggest intuitively it is at odds with our ordinary moral thinking, or that it cannot be applied effectively enough to guide people's moral decisions. The second is that as a Christian theory of ethics as a whole it strays too far from the system of morality as set out within the Bible and the Church. This to some interpretation of systems of authority and to what extent exegesis of the Bible can criticism are presented by Barclay and it is important to note that the success or failure area does not necessarily affect the other.

Key Ter
Exegesis
Bible or a
explanati
is general
within Chri
support, a
easily be

Overall Barclay presents five areas of criticism. Numbers one, two and five, cover the internal inconsistencies of situation ethics that Barclay identifies, whereas nu focused on its difficulties as a specifically Christian ethical theory.

1. Fletcher's examples are too focused on extraordinary moral deliberati

This criticism has long been noted about Fletcher's presentation of situation ethic that nuanced moral decisions might be needed in extraordinary scenarios, moralit ordinary situations, where there is less emphasis on careful deliberation of moral particular have focused on the overuse of these scenarios as an indication that sit everyday system of moral decisions and while Barclay doesn't press this criticism does note:

> *It is much easier to agree that extraordinary situations need extraordinary meas no laws for ordinary everyday life.*

There are a number of nuances to dig out of this criticism and it is debatable whether Barclay can put himself in an objective enough position to define 'ordinary life', but there is a trend among Fletcher's examples to not demonstrate moral decision making processes at times of peace. For example, one of his most famous examples is of Mrs Bergmeier, the German prisoner who asked a Volga German camp guard to make her pregnant so she could be reunited with her family. Undoubtedly while this is a difficult moral situation worthy of discussion, it is hard to imagine people in the modern world undergoing similar struggles when they are not present within an ongoing war.

Disc
Do moral situa
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Think of two p
dilemmas peop
law-based or s
help provide th

2. Situation ethics gives human beings an overwhelming amount of mora

One of the virtues of situation ethics is its ability to act in light of difficult moral courses of action that may be arbitrarily restricted by rule- or other consequence-flexibility also has the possibly counter-productive result of granting humans such that they either become overwhelmed by it or are given licence to always act from the if their perception of it is skewed or distorted. This issue arguably pervades all hu even if there is time or experience to help dictate a course of action. Barclay notes i

> *There is no such thing as a readymade decision. Of course, we know the things and teaches, but we are left alone in complete freedom to apply them.*

There are two parts to this. One is possibly a psychological view, namely that hu
act in life without the supervision of some authority, whether that be the law, re
Situation ethics therefore places a great mental demand on human beings in tak
of authority and asking that an understanding of love and how to distribute it tak
possibly prescriptive view, that morality simply works better when we do apply la
identifying what is love. In this view understanding, compromise and cooperatio
is a mutual understanding of a modifiable ethical system in place. Barclay does n
between these two positions, but it is worth noting how this way this criticism appl
explored whether Barclay's arguments against criticism and more just dissatisfact

*The situationists have a blind faith in the idea of law, but the lesson of experience is tha
law, being the kind of people we are.*

While this may be pertinent, it can equally be replied that Barclay may have a phob
a decision is terrifying or difficult doesn't mean it shouldn't be made. John A T Ro
makes the case for situation ethics as 'the only ethic for the man come of age'. Wh
such a state is a point of contention between those who support situation ethics ve

Discussion Point 4

Existentialism shares some similarities with Fletcher's idea of ethical autonomy
their freedom at the centre of their existence and choices. With this in mind, re
authenticity and inauthenticity: do they present a way to understand Fletcher's i
moral agent?

3. There are things in the world which are intrinsically good and bad

This criticism takes aim at the situation ethics treatment of right and wrong being wholly relative and contextual. Traditionally, Christianity has been held to regard certain things as intrinsically bad, and elements of the Bible such as the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount or even the Golden Rule have been used to justify such as position on the basis that breaking the biblical laws is equivalent to breaking God's word. More importantly, as Barclay notes, this traditional Christian interpretation of morality places a specific property of good and bad on our actions and arguably a significant amount of our language is built around this duality. When we see someone mugging another person in the street we might instinctively call that action bad without necessarily stopping to think about the wider circumstances in which it occurs. Yet at the same time, if we discovered that the victim had in fact previously swindled the mugger's relatives and not been caught, one might be more sympathetic.

The question of what good and bad actually signify or mean is a difficult one to co
Barclay reserves his comments to simply describing situations where he identifies
acts being good:

*I think that there are things which can in no circumstances be right, to take but
person in the name of experience or the experiments which can lead to drug ad
break up a family relationship in the name of so-called love can never be right.*

To clarify, in the case of Fletcher's example of Mrs Bergmeier, one might argue that a
and that she should have refrained from trying to get pregnant with the Volga Ge
the act of adultery has the property of badness. Irrespective of the situation, that
adultery is committed.

On the other hand, to describe good and bad as predicates is to say that they are complete an idea about the subject. In the sentence X (is red), (is red) is the predi assesses Fletcher correctly, good and bad are attached to specific subjects or acts them. Mrs Bergmeier's adultery is good expresses some idea about her acts and sentence is determined by whether it was the most loving act.

One important thing to note is that properties are also pr tes. What differs between the two is that properties can also be sai b exemplifiables', that is are an example of the property in questi we to say apples (are red) wher (are red) is a property of the app in turn be able to point towards any a as an example of a red similar way, if I were to say adultery has the property of m ad, in any situation I could point to an adulterous act a being an ex f a bad act.

Therefore, when Barclay makes this distinction, he is arguing there are some acts have this property of being morally 'bad', such that if we ever needed to provide example of 'badness' we could point to certain acts, in his case breaking up a fami pushing a young person towards drug addiction.

Discussion Point 5

The examples Barclay gives to support objectively bad acts arguably are quite sp ethic. One can imagine a situation where to help children stuck between fighting break up a family, an act that some might class as good.

Are there any moral acts therefore, which irrespective of religious belief, could Does Barclay need to provide a concrete, universal exam of such an act to s

4. Situation ethics fails to account for the possibility of sublimation

Sublimation in psychology is a defence mechanism where unacceptable or bad im transformed, often u ously into ones that are socially acceptable or benefic discusses it er defines it in a broader sense, encompassing the idea into a n situation eth ignoring the possibility of ethical transformation against simply predilections with loving acts.

The specific example he notes of Fletcher's is that of the Rainmaker deliberately s farmer to save her from the life of a spinster. While this act may be loving in the the possibility of the woman having a fulfilling life engaging in other pursuits. Sim fulfilling lives without the prospect of sex and instead have used their energy tow Barclay criticises Fletcher here, he is pointing out that a loving act may not neces situation if it involves indulging someone in their desires when there may be an al that is better fitting with moral law.

One particularly important catalyst of sublimation Barclay identifies is the grace of argues, is to be a moral force, then it has to contain the p lity of creating ethic end, simply permitting acts that contradict conve tional morality simply because t loving goes against the idea of the good i g the person to God and preventi

Overall there are two a t this criticism. The first is that situation ethics in p necessarily y reasonable solutions to ethical dilemmas. In the case of the fa solution ma dissolve both parties' obsession with the idea of marriage rath can be classified as a loving act in itself however is a more difficult to affirm.

The second aspect is that there are many cases when permitting the breaking of r endorsing the most loving action in a situation goes against the idea of Christianit from lives of sin. It limits God's influence and grace to a mere afterthought and pl secular idea of love as the primary source of moral authority. For many Christians points of contention with situation ethics, as despite Fletcher's exhortations that l of all moral actions, there is great scepticism about whether it can be a reliable an is so open to human misinterpretation.

Discussion Point 6

Sublimation as a co[illegible] ways has to be directed towards a norm of human b correct s[illegible] d c[illegible]eing and acting that everyone can agree on. For Barclay thi ethic as a [illegible] but can this accurately be the standard against which human be

In the modern world many attitudes have changed and arguably the norm has ch an act that might have been sought to be sublimated fifty years ago but is accept an issue for Barclay's criticism?

5. Situation ethics creates tensions between private morality and law

Barclay's final words reject standard criticism in favour of highlighting some difficu the emphasis on individualism that situation ethics favours. In particular he raises interacts with private and public morality. He notes initially that:

> *… these are many things which are immoral, but which are not illegal. Or, to pu wide difference between sin, with which the law is not concerned, and crime, with concerned.*

He cites in particular the Wolfenden Report, a 1957 British publication recommen homosexuality at a time when it was [illegible]. Part of this report states that the concerned with private imm[illegible]ity those acts which contravene public order argues what go[illegible] on [illegible] person's home, so long as it does not harm others, s

Yet Barclay i[illegible]es a number of issues with such a position, especially when co tendency towards individualism as he perceives it.

Discussion Point 7

Research the history of the Wolfenden Report; do you believe the law should h prevailing morality of a country? If so, does this stand in opposition to the centr and how might it also present issues for Barclay's criticism?

i) Issues between law and freedom

Notably Barclay takes Fletcher to account for his heavy em[illegible]sis on the importan morality. Fletcher argues:

> *We must be free to decide what to [illegible] before any of our actions even begin to be discipline has any moral [illegible]ce.*

Here, while [illegible] agrees with the sentiment, he also points out that hereditary person's free[illegible]. Someone born into poverty and hardship will have their auton richer person might not and vice versa. Barclay even states:

> *Most of us have made ourselves such that we are not free. The whole trouble ab us it is an illusion.*

What does this mean for situation ethics? If humans generally are not free in a significant way when making choices, this would indicate that most human actions do not possess real moral significance, especially if people without realising are acting from preconceived laws built up by society or in their own minds. For example, if I refused to steal for fear of going to prison, is my action a coercion by the state or a significant moral choice? Many would regard the two as synonymous and [illegible]ere Barclay questions whether situation ethics, in emphasisin[illegible] human freedom in morality, can co-exist with legislation [illegible] designed to take the agency out of human actions.

ii) Issues b[illegible]en [illegible]orality and illegality

One of Barc[illegible]ain contentions is the complete distinction between public and teaching is supposed to be the best prescription for life in any society then law sh in turn means suppressing vices whether or not such an act is the most loving thin

> *The trouble is that once a thing is not forbidden, it may be felt not only to be pe could be argued that what the law permits, it approves…*

As a side effect, therefore, promoting situation ethics and a degree of permissibil make society more immoral, which stands in opposition to traditional Christian te something the situation ethicist accepts is debatable, but it raises the question of interact with a legal system effectively.

iii) Issues between the individual and the community

Barclay argues that when too much self-expression is emphasised in society and i results in the weakening of community and law as peo[illegible]se to develop them This is perhaps the most contentious of Barclay's [illegible]as rather than being a ph upon an interpretation of the effects of [illegible]alism, which might be argued to b and perception than a genuine [illegible]. Many liberal thinkers have often contend humankind is greater w[illegible]e are free to pursue their own choices and desir could be m[illegible]t [illegible]mmunity develops though like-minded individuals expressi feel most co[illegible]ble.

Nevertheless, an interesting issue is raised here, in the sense that within situation grant the most loving act as being towards themselves rather than others? If we t choosing to skateboard as an act of love to themselves rather than to the neighbo makes, would this result in a breakdown of community? The question remains in prioritises the freedom of others over the possible weakening of general order, co

3. Philosophical Context

While many philosophers had previously stressed the importance of context and situation within ethical theories, Christian forms of situation ethics came into particular prominence in the 1950s and 1960s with Joseph Fletcher's 1966 publication *Situation Ethics: The New Morality*. Upon its release, his book was highly controversial, as Fletcher suggested, contrary to traditional Christian ethics, that acts of adultery, premarital sex and even murder could be morally right in certain situations. Many have traced the rise of situation ethics in the 1960s to the increasingly liberal values of the 1960s. Civil, sexual and cultural rights began to become increasingly debated and many people's moral views underwent radical change.

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In recent decades, however, situation ethics has fallen out of favour with most the failing to provide a solid scriptural basis for its claims, but also for failing to create Christianity as a whole.

Joseph Fletcher (1905–1991)

Fletcher was an American professor, who in addition to developing situation ethic approaches to bioethics, in many cases advocating the possible benefits or abortio time were contentious subjects.

In situation ethics, however, Fletcher was specifically trying to find a middle groun which focused too much on rigid laws, and antinomianism or inspirational ethics. Hence situation ethics developed as a middle way and to provide context on guida love. He provided four presuppositions and six principles to guide moral discourse

Four Presuppositions (Working Principles):

1. Pragmatism – Moral actions should be practical towards their intended loving
2. Relativism – Rules should never be followed absolutely and each situation sh loving action that can be produced.
3. Positivism – Moral agents have to decide from faith in God, that love is the ul
4. Personalism – The notion that people have to come first before commitment

Six Fundamental Principles:

1. Only love is intrinsically good, nothing else.
2. In Christian decision making, love is the ruling norm.
3. Justice is love distributed.
4. Love should be shown, regardless of relationship or personal hostility.
5. Only the loving outcome matters (the end justifies the means).
6. Decisions based on love should be made situationally, not prescriptively. This pre-existing rules governing one's ethical decisions.

The four presuppositions were designed by Fletcher to guide initial discussion into fundamental principles governing how a person should decide upon how to deter Whether these provide a logically accurate guidance to create a viable ethical syster section and Fletcher has criticised his attempt to lay a consequentialist framework of as an indefensible concept.

J A T Robinson (1919–1983)

John Robinson was a Cambridge theologian who developed theories on situation ethics at a similar time to Fletcher. His 1963 book *Honest to God* in particular outlined an ethical system for what he termed 'man come of age', that is a person mature enough to begin making reasonable moral judgements that they in turn take responsibility for. Similar to Fletcher, he argued the right approach to any moral situation is to choose the approach that will best demonstrate agape love. Of particular interest is how he interpreted the Bible to support a depiction of Jesus as rejecting the legalistic approach towards morality endorsed by figures such as the High Priest, the Jews in John's Gospel and the Pharisees. Notably he draws out:

Mark 2:27 – 'The sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the sabbath' (NRSV) as an opposition to the strict rules of the Sabbath.

John 8:7 – 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone' a situationist approach to ethics, for although the woman sinned under law, it was unloving action.

Such examples place Robinson's ideas in opposition to the traditional divine command church, which equates an action's moral worth based on whether it is equivalent to

William Barclay (1907–1978)

Barclay was a Scottish theologian who wrote numerous books on biblical study and *Permissive Society*, first published in 1971, is a collection of Baird lectures first presented revised and expanded for print. In it, Barclay addresses many modern ethical theories of the traditional 'Christian ethic', discussing the best ways traditional theology can and values of modern society.

His discussion on situation ethics therefore takes place from a more conservative and permissive viewpoint. Practices such as abortion and euthanasia by Fletcher are Barclay largely attempts to show how permissiveness within a society exemplified contribute to overall moral decline, especially from a Christian perspective.

4. Detailed Analysis

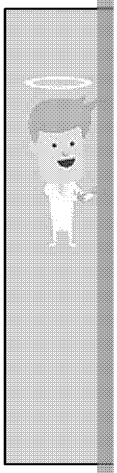
It was noted in section two that there are two ways of criticising situation ethics: that presents moral outcomes or inconsistencies that make it difficult to advocate as a the second that it doesn't accurately comply with the teachings of Christianity from This section will focus on both, going through all of Barclay's criticisms before detailing nuances to consider when discussing situation ethics as a whole.

1. Fletcher's examples are too focused on extraordinary moral deliberation

This criticism of Barclay's focuses on the methodological approach of Fletcher in discussing circumstances to demonstrate the virtues of situation ethics versus more legalistic emerges from this is that Fletcher is possibly guilty of setting up a straw-man; defining based theories of ethics fail by nature of an ethical problem, rather than setting up a fair approaches can be judged by their respective merits. As Barclay points out:

[It] is a criticism as much of situation ethics as it is of Fletcher's presentation

Yet whether Fletcher is unfair in his framing of moral issues is up for debate. One can make the argument that the most important tests of one's moral character are times where there is an abnormal or extraordinary ethical decision to be made. When someone is forced between choosing to take a life or sparing it for the sake of another's, that is the time when they likely would prefer the clearest moral guidance. On an ordinary day, many people's moral char[illegible]s aren't radically tested, but a good proportion of people [illegible] us about the day theirs will be.



Leading on from this, ma[illegible] ethical dilemmas surrounding euthanasia [illegible] death penalty, do revolve around more extreme cir[illegible]nces and looking at Fletcher's work within bioethics, a strong case can be made that the examples he presents are reflective complex and flexible ethical system within Christianity than divine command theo

Yet it would be wrong to necessarily suggest that more complex ethical situations One more modern Christian ethical theory that has been developed to deal with c absolutism. This theory places absolute laws into hierarchies such that depending law can override another, either as a third alternative, greater good or lesser evil In Fletcher's complex situation of Mrs Bergmeier, therefore, one might argue that love one's family takes priority over the moral law against adultery. So it is impor rejects Barclay's criticism here, it isn't necessarily an argument in favour of Fletch

Discussion Point 8

Can graded absolutism be supported by scripture [illegible] Christian tradition? If m commands then arguably to reject them [illegible] of human interpretation is i of God, unless one takes Fletcher's [illegible] that love is an intrinsically important

For example if I have t[illegible] between lying and causing unnecessary distress, them? Gra[illegible] so[illegible] assumes there is a hierarchy, but how do we judge this principle o[illegible]ption similar to Fletchers behind it?

Does graded absolutism therefore collapse into a form of situation ethics?

2. Situation ethics gives human beings an overwhelming amount of mora

As noted in section two, Barclay's criticism can be seen to suggest two possible iss first that human beings do not want to or cannot handle the psychological or mor significant moral freedom, and the second that love is simply not capable of being that free human beings can understand.

The first criticism can arguably be seen as dubious. Simply because men do not w responsibility that comes with freedom does not mean that it is not correct that t the first place. Even if there are laws to guide one's actic[illegible]eople still face a ter whether to follow them or not in unusual moral c[illegible]s[illegible]ces. One also has to n argues people cannot rely on their past [illegible]nces to develop guidelines and law cannot regard these as absolute [illegible]oving course of action is available. The their experience in ordi[illegible]tions, only reverting to wider ethical considerati situations. [illegible]'s second form of criticism is perhaps more pertinent and insig

> *The right[illegible] of freedom in our relationships with others depends on love. If lo good thing. But if there is no love, or if there is not enough love, then freedom become selfishness and even cruelty.*

There are a number of points contained here. The main one is that love cannot b
human beings such that when they come to apply situation ethics to a difficult mo
a sufficient understanding of love in the first place to even begin deliberating a co
may even mistake what they believe love to be and perform actions that are whol
many cases in history where misplaced ideas of love have caused human beings to

While we can note Robinson's idea here, that situation ethics is for the 'man com
questions about how one can judge the maturity of a person and whether or not a
be truly morally responsible for their actions. Where there are laws, however, the
be aware of moral guidelines outside their own sphere of understanding.

Charlotte and Peter Vardy also argue this criticism of situation ethics, noting that i
to contain but as such it is hard to believe that adopting a widespread situati
eventually lead to forms of abuse in the name of morality. For example a family e
out of a belief it is more loving could be one example of denying a person agency
general love.

Discussion Point 9

Could situation ethics be compared to a form of rule-consequentialism rather th
even somewhere in between? If this is the case, does Barclay's criticism miss the

The Situationist's Response

One important thing to note is that many consequentialist theories face similar crit
some might argue, in utilitarian theories is no more fully comprehensible than max
general human understanding about the kinds of actions that are more likely to cre
as a whole. The fear of prescribing the wrong action in a situation is inevitably par
same thing could apply in interpreting laws incorrectly in a complex moral d
the critic can point out there are difficulties in interpretation or possibly undesirab
argued that this exists also in theories of normative ethics (the study of how one

What the critic of situation ethics has to demonstrate fully is that love is a particul
ultimate intrinsic good by which to judge actions. Charlotte and Peter Vardy make
particular ignores Jesus' commands to love God, and places love as the ultimate in
secular audiences. Proponents of traditional Christian ethics may argue further th
being loving within a legalistic system of ethics, or that an important part of being
regardless of whether one feels love in a particular situation.

Nevertheless, when critically engaging with Fletcher's cases, it is still apparent tha
doesn't truly engage with the core issue with legalistic ethics: their lack of flexibili
arguably push the Christian ethic away from its traditional moral core, inevitably r
admit that scripture is lacking insight on many modern ethical issues, such as abor
which partially have their roots in present day technological developments. Unles
quantified method to establishing moral rules about an incredibly broad possible
always have to rely on more abstract Biblical interpretation, or another basis for e
conscience.

Can love be quantified and measured?

However, the argument still don't take into account one major problem partiall
situation ethics is a consequentialist theory, it should only be concerned with maxi
situation. But how can this work in practice? In the case of utilitarianism, Jeremy B
calculus to attempt to determine how much pleasure was produced by any particu
still an incredibly inaccurate and unwieldy way to try and determine how to maxim
situation ethics, love is even more of a generalised feeling and to demonstrate its r

We can take the example of a soldier on the battlefield disarming a foe and threat
one can imagine the soldier faces a decision, mercifully killing his foe or letting hi
return to his town and be shunned for being weak or a coward for the rest of his l
loving? The soldier has no ability to change the entire culture of his foe's society
condemn him to a poor quality of life, filled with regret and loneliness. One can e
that the soldier would have killed him in that moment. It becomes a decision bet
right to life versus respecting their desire for a higher quality of life. Which decis

Discussion Point 10

Is an understanding of how within Christianity necessary to fully understand Fle
theologia[illegible]e that agape is borne out of a relationship with God; the questi
atheist co[illegible]y understand and apply situation ethics. Is this a problem for Fle

The main issue with Fletcher's examples is that they show why Christian moral law
absolute in some circumstances, but they do not show why love should be the ult
situations, especially when it cannot be quantified in such a way as to produce a c
situationist might respond that some moral dilemmas can never have a completel
graded absolutism may almost certainly be a better response if it provides guidan
naturally argue that God's guidance is even more important at these points, and r
blurry concept of agape love, one should look towards the grace of God for answe

In the case of the soldier, how does maximising love provide a solution to the ethical dilemma he faces? One final issue that can be observed is that if, say, the soldier killed his foe and later walked through his foe's hometown where people were mourning his death, would that change the original loving intention of the act? In the case of utilitarianism, one could posit that in fact killing the foe did not produce the most happiness and despite the soldier's good intentions, the act was wrong. However, it is much harder to look back at actions and decide if they demonstrated the most love. An act could feasibly prove beyond belief yet cause great misery. In the soldier's case, therefore, one could argue both actions could be seen as equally loving, even if one was plainly worse in many other ways.

Therefore, Barclay's criticism that love cannot be accurately prescriptive as a moral theory arguably poses great difficulties to situation ethics. While he does not present it in as great a detail as featured, how situation ethics 'actually' works is a hurdle that it arguably never quite overcomes.

3. There are things in the world which are intrinsically good and bad

It was explored in section two, the difference between 'predicates' and 'properties' further, one could say Barclay is arguing for a form of moral absolutism, that certain or wrong and that no amount of context or situation can change this. On the other argue for a form of moral universalism, that things are objectively morally good or but not independent of context or consequences.

Barclay doesn't provide a wholesale defence of why moral absolutism has to be re acts have the property of badness other than stipulating some circumstances he badness, such as pushing a young person into drug addiction. Yet it is debatable w examples, where possibly more extreme acts could be given. Would genocide in a

One important thing to consider is that from a Christian perspective, it is not alwa what specific teachings about good or bad acts are given explicitly. In Matthew 19 of the Ten Commandments, which can easily be recognised as rules for moral con Mount in Matthew 5, he declares how the Commandments have been interpreted

Accepting the commandment 'You shall not murder', is to recognise for Barclay th
badness. Justification therefore does not come from assigning values to actions, r
indicating that within certain actions there is some deeper badness to them. Yet
this definitive badness altogether simply from scriptural interpretation is very diff
show that simply following the Commandments could lead to undesirable conseq
all moral acts have a greater purpose than their effects here on earth and judgem
outcomes than one's purity of intention. While scripture is a good source of ethic
say conscience is also, and it might be a stretch to always place one over the othe
be good or bad.

Discussion Point 11

Does the Bible support Barclay's idea that there are some objectively good and
might Fletcher point towards to justify his position?

Discuss whether Barclay or Fletcher require more than scriptural justification fo
Christian ethic can be wholly based off Biblical interpretation.

4. Situation ethics fails to account for the possibility of sublimation

Barclay explores in some depth Fletcher's example of the Rainmaker, pointing out
farmer's daughter, despite seeming loving, relied upon a possibly misguided idea
meaningful in life. He raises the idea that sublimation, the changing of abnormal
wholesome and beneficial ones, is an important consideration, especially if one w
Church's responsibility is turning sinners into good men.

Yet a lot still hinges on how one interprets the most loving action in the example
could argue his actions are loving to a degree, another might argue it would be lo
spinsterhood within the wider community especially when in the play, domestic
farm during a drought are arguably a more pressing issue.

This does expose, however, a flaw in situation ethics, that it at once concerns its
at the same time acknowledging that this intrinsic good is wrapped up in our subj
noted before love is difficult to quantify and maximise as a good, but if the is
further, it could be that what love is, is so culturally dependent, that it holds little
good passed down through Christ. What begins as an attempt to maximise love s
maximise the things we hold important at a particular point in time.

5. Tensions between law and situation ethics

In section two, the various tensions between situation ethics and establishing a sc
explored. Here a more general set of criticisms will be examined.

One of the major contentions Barclay has is with the idea that law should not concern itself with the private morality of its citizens. Certainly under situation ethics, it can be argued that focusing on loving acts, it would be far more unloving to punish someone simply because of the thing they do in their spare time, and so this is an area that Barclay is fair to raise. What is more difficult to establish however is Barclay's argument to legalise something is to in essence permit it, which in turn encourages it. Such a distinction is the difference between legalising something and decriminalising it, the latter favouring an approach of not aggressively punishing people based upon the mistakes they have made in their lives.

Key Bo
The bas
thought
therefo
contenti
howeve
whether
faults in
actual f
Simply
work pr
mean it

It is wrong to simply suggest that the law isn't concerned with morality. Laws in a designed to protect people wherever possible and ideally enforce a common goo can live together safely and happily.

While this is an ideal often not met, especially in authoritarian or corrupt countrie law reflected 'loving' morality, these aims would not be far out of the question. D therefore, it seems enforcing law based upon Christian m[illegible]y only is to possibly authoritarianism. Following a system based on th[illegible]d divine command theory of eth of legal laws, both public and private, bu[illegible] does not necessarily equal what the be that such a society, although [illegible] the eyes of Barclay, may not be peaceful

While there [illegible]rg[illegible] moral difficulties with that approach, equally there ca establishing [illegible]nforcing law if situation ethics is taken to be correct in its ethica Laws by and large are commands. While there may be exempting circumstances f sentencing depending on how far a person transgresses them, it would be unwie rules for every possible situation.

However, if one accepts this is the case, then there is accurately a tension betwee For if one subscribes to acting well within a situation then they may often find the The law, for example, might legislate against euthanasia to stop people taking advantage of others, but many people might find themselves in a situation where the most loving thing to do would be to help a relative die. In a more extreme example, they might believe the most loving thing to do would be to assassinate a high-ranking parliamentary member to ensure better welfare for the citizens of a country.

While Barclay might be wrong in suggesting legality e[illegible]pproval, there is the strong possibility that situation ethics st[illegible]ly l[illegible]s towards civil disobedience over following the law. Many might argue here that if the law reflected situation ethics [illegible] would not be an issue, but Barclay sagely notes this issue i[illegible]s final parts of his essay:

> *Too muc[illegible]means the obliteration of the individual; too much individualism[illegible] We may well come to the conclusion that one of the great problems of the presen[illegible] delicate balance between freedom and law, and between the individual and socie[illegible]*

Therefore, while situation ethics might play an important role in illuminating diffic once more turns to how it is possible to apply it in real world society as a system o situationist does so, it becomes difficult to see in the eyes of many critics, how it c Christian morals as a whole, but provides an ethical groundwork for those who ha

5. Wider Issues for Religious Belief

Situation ethics, when it first started becoming more prominent with Christian ph
widely perceived to be controversial, often not because of its focus on the import
the ethical principles that seemed to entail from Fletch[illegible]diction of it. For ma
changing times and moral practices of the 1950s and 60s, where new technolog
such as the sexual revolution posed a [illegible] new and pressing moral issues.
too liberal and many critics argued that the church and religion should be seen as
changing to fit the secular minds of society.

Discussion Point 12

Discuss how much situation ethics can be viewed as a reaction to the changing
Should Christianity seek to adapt or learn from different secular attitudes or sh

Thus if Fletcher's ideas are adopted, there are widespread consequences for religi
focused on Jesus' rejection of legalism in the Gospels. For example in Matthew 6:
who pray only as it is seen as a part of religion and don't focus on its true purpose
Fletcher's ideas around agape love guiding moral conduct, can be seen to be an in
practices of organised religion. Therefore, orthodox laws built around the Church
abortion and other scientific practices from a belief in the sanctity of life may well
broader, arguably more loving focus on the quality of life. Barclay may even be se
critique of Fletcher for promoting too much individualism in ethics. Many would a
personal choice is open to error and that Church organisation is necessary as an e
people. Yet it is important to note overall that Fletcher's critique of legalistic mo
undermining the Church's authority on moral matters and giving a greater respon
the message of Christ for the [illegible].

On the other [illegible] it is important to note the implications of Barclay's critiques.
perceived to be more liberally minded regarding Christian ethics, Barclay is broadl
Throughout *Ethics in a Permissive Society*, he argues for the importance of the Old
and it can be posited that this is an aspect overlooked by Fletcher, who largely foc
figure of Jesus. Charlotte and Peter Vardy note similarly the issue that Fletcher gi
too much importance, playing down the equal stressing by Jesus of loving God. W
light of this, the importance of legalistic morality is more easily retained, for Jesus
God's judgement and one's relationship with him.

In fact, it is even possible to say that Fletcher's interpretation of Jesus' rejection of legalism is misguided. Viewed another way, many argue that instead it was a rejection of the hierarchy and practices of the Jewish authorities at the time and the loss of the sanctity from prayer and rituals altogether. Simply because one set of legalistic practices [illegible]er rejected doesn't mean the idea needs to be rejected as a whole and Jesus' calls for religious growth in the Great Commission as well as his setting out of various moral laws indicates that a partially legal ethical structure, supported by a Church [illegible] envisioned.

An important [illegible]ice is that legalistic approaches don't necessarily reject ethical a
situations, even if they appear more inflexible. A person still has to interpret wha
new ethical dilemmas and many still seek guidance from the Church in difficult sit
possible to say that despite the conclusions drawn by Fletcher's theory, there doe
widespread impact on religion as a whole, depending on how much importance o
agape love and personal moral responsibility.

6. Wider Issues for Ethics

Throughout this guide, it has been noted a number of times that in Fletcher's eyes, sit
move towards more liberal ethics about euthanasia, abortion and other modern ethic
could impact more orthodox Church morality has been discussed in the previous secti

Where it is interesting, however, to examine how Fletcher's ethics might have greater
comparison to other secular theories of ethics, particularly co quentialism and virtu
first, it can be noted that situation ethics emphasises f m cconsequence-based for
maximising happiness or some similar end such a pleasure or welfare, one is seeking
demonstration of love. In this way it could be distinguished as Christian, but equally ma
for being largely secular in outlook. The question therefore remains, could it legitima
morality?

One of the is at can be perceived to be raised by this comparison is whether the
what is loving and what creates the most happiness. In many moral scenarios, these c
a similar outcome and Barclay's criticism from sublimation seems to affect both equal
for example, it is easy to imagine both moral theories arriving at the same conclusion.
one could choose to maximise love over happiness? Certainly in fringe cases such as th
provide organs to save three there might be differences, but when pushed it is arguabl
This combined with the fact that love is a much more difficult concept to quantify, mea
parameters, many people may favour other forms of consequentialism, even if these o
by simply choosing between objective happiness and unhappiness.

Key Idea

Love can be seen as a 'thick' ethical concept in that there is an evaluative component attached to a descriptive element. For example one might look at a parent hugging a child and then express approval by saying the parent is loving.

Another similarity that can be
virtue ethics. Both advocate g
significant attention. In the ca
whereas in virtue ethics a wid
attention, from courage to be
to argue that a wider range of
beyond love. In the case of pr
ni ay be a moral concept v
at the same time it is difficult
humble person is necessarily l

Hence while situation ethics may be a more radical step within Christian ethics, it ma
within more r thought, especially when other forms of consequentialism or virt
scope outsid lical influence. However, it is still important to note that the simp
common recognition of love as a guiding moral force mean that many people may ide
more instinctive sense than other more complex moral theories.

7. Wider Issues for Perception and Experience

The impact on ordinary experience of the world from Fletcher's ideas can be argued to
Christianity especially, moral thinking has been dominated by the idea of God's law be
people have seen and judged the world through this lens. Difficult situations have alw
response and this has coloured people's perceptions and actions of various ideas and c

Yet if situation ethics is adopted, then a person is naturally encouraged to use their id
actions, and the objective perception that reinforces legalistic moral thinking is remov
approach, one which perhaps even encompasses each person's autonomy. Such idea
understated in their effects upon everyday experience. Whether it's from the natural
comes with making decisions, or the maturity emphasised by Robinson in being able t
situations, Fletcher's ideas advocate not only a new way of moral thinking, but a more
and perception.

Leaving aside whether Fletcher's assessment of human beings' radical moral freedom is correct or
sizeable shift fr human beings analyse their moral behaviour in their ever
possible, the to view Barclay as arguing against the promotion of radical moral f
level of open runs counter to effective and comfortable engagement with the outs
concepts such as justice being love distributed are applied to one's life, it is arguable th
change as one looks upon ethical dilemmas looking to maximise love. In essence Fletch
ethic of love, is arguably looking equally for a radical change in moral perception, simil
as he is looking for changes in moral outcome.

Throughout this section both Fletcher's original arguments for situation ethics an analysed and it is now up to you to decide whether you believe either side to be p particular consider:

- Do Fletcher's examples reliably present a phil[illegible] case for ethics bei
- Can only agape love be the prim[illegible] of all moral decisions?
- Does situation ethic[illegible] effective structure for ordinary life, or is i extraordina[illegible] stances?
- Doe[illegible]ion ethics present human beings with an overwhelming amou
- What difficulties might Fletcher face with the idea of quantifying and max
- Is it possible to fully abandon the idea of absolutely good and bad actions
- Does the idea of sublimation present difficulties for advocating agape lov
- Is the possible necessity of law within society a problem for widespread a moral theory?
- Does situation ethics provide effective moral guidance or it is not accurate ordinary people?
- Is situation ethics too secular as a theory and does it ignore other importa
- Does situation ethics prove more attractive to non-religious people, than

Activities

Activity 1

Below is a table summarising Barclay's arguments within 'Situation Ethics'. Read thr
using your own interpretation of the anthology, the extract and any other ideas you
the table.

'Situation eth… – William Barclay	
Barclay argues:	**Argume**
Fletcher's …e …uations focus too much on extreme circumstanc… present an imbalanced picture of ordinary moral decision making.	
Situation ethics presents an overwhelming amount of freedom for human beings. Laws are necessary in some way for morality to be practical.	
There are some things in the world that are intrinsicall… good and bad. Not everything is reducible to its context in situation.	
Fletcher fails to account for the possibility of sublimation. If Christianity is supposed to make morally bad men good then it must not simply seek to indulge people with love.	
Situation ethics has difficulties when applied to law and society. It could place too much emphasis on the individual and freedom and not enough on community and values.	
Conclusion: Situation ethics doe… …sent the Christian ethic effectivel… …grully. In reducing moral acts d… to … …text and situation, it fails to give prac… …pplicable moral guidance for people.	

Activity 2

Working in pairs, choose one person to act as Fletcher and one person to act as Ba
the situation below, given as an example in *Situation Ethics: The New Morality*.

*I dropped in on a patient at the hospital who explained that he only had a set time
give him some pills (that would cost $40 every three days) that would keep him al
but if he didn't take the pills, he'd be dead within six months. Now he was insure
indemnity and that was all the insurance he had. But if he took the pills and lived
insurance was up for renewal, they were bound to refuse the renewal, and his insu
he told me that he was thinking that if he didn't take the pills, then his family wou
and asked me for advice on the situation.*

The person acting as Fletcher should draw up an argument to suggest which action
justifying his action where possible. The person acting as Barclay should then provi
laws might govern the patient's decision and suggest a course of action.

Then both should present their case to each other and see whether the two outcome
approach might have failed. If yes, note any inconsistencies or interesting parts of
determine how it could be possible to arrive at an alternative conclusion.

After the discussion, consider who had the stronger moral case and decide whether
or divine command ethics was more appropriate.

Practice Exam Questions

Answer the following questions giving reference to the passage below:

Second – and this is a much more serious matter – situ[illegible] ethics presents us [illegible] freedom. There we are in front of our situation [illegible] no prefabricated judg[illegible] make the right decision. Brunner has [illegible] at there is nowhere you can go – n[illegible] Mount and say; 'Now I kn[illegible] oha[illegible] to'. There is no such thing as a readym[illegible] the things that ex[illegible] has discovered and teaches, but we are left alone in co[illegible]

The righ[illegible] of freedom in our relationships with others depends on love. If lo[illegible] good thing. But if there is no love, or if there is not enough love, then freedom [illegible] become selfishness and even cruelty. If you leave a man without love to do as h[illegible] can do is incalculable. It may well be that neither I nor any other person is at t[illegible] freedom from which the situationist offers us. The situationists have a kind of p[illegible] experience is that we need a certain amount of law, being the kind of people we [illegible]

a) Outline and clarify the different ideas presented in this passage about [illegible]

b) Analyse the different implications for Christian ethics in this passage.

Level	Descriptor
Level 1	There is limited knowledge, terminology and technical languag inaccurately or inappropriately. Only surface level knowledg beliefs and concepts is displayed and religious ideas and beliefs limited variety and not always correct, or sufficiently connected
Level	There is adequate amount of knowledge, terminology and tec p[illegible] although with a few mistakes. A thorough knowled of important religious beliefs is displayed but with room for fur Religious ideas and beliefs addressed are of a limited variety, bu and sufficiently connected to the extract.
Level 3	There is a broad amount of knowledge, terminology and techni accurately and rigorously presented throughout an appropriate to the question. A thorough and fully developed knowledge an important religious beliefs and concepts is displayed. Religious addressed are of a wide variety, correct and pertinently connect

Question No.	Indicative Content (10 marks AO
a)	**AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge an specialist language and terminology, when responding to the** **Candidates may refer to the following:** • Situation ethics as outlined by Fletcher, argues that there is actions and rather what is moral depends on the context of • What is good, for Fletcher, is what demonstrates the most lo is the only intrinsic good that should be pursued and shoul • Barclay's criticism centres on the possible issue that situatio freedom for the ordinary individual. It has been described for the 'man come of age' but Barclay suggests that human reach the position where they can handle the freedom given • Barclay's example is that while some people understand lov mistaken or even use love to their advantage. The freedom gives license for people to exploit it as misunderstandings a • Moreover it may even be that human beings require laws. human beings needing such vast freedom, situation ethicist but human psychology is such that laws may well be neces

Level	Descriptor	Mark
Level 1	There is a very limited knowledge, terminology and technical language, often u inaccurately or inappropriately. Some topics and details are chosen with rudin made between a small variety of aspects of the question. Any criticisms or judg only substantiated by general or non-specific evidence.	
Level 2	There is a limited amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language, s well presented, although with some mistakes. Relevant topics and details are c and links are made between a small variety of aspects of the question. Criticisr judgements of a few aspects are made but with little substantiation by a reason evaluation of supporting evidence.	
Level 3	There is a moderate amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language well presented, although with some mistakes. Relevant topics and details are c with a basic progression of reasoned arguments throughout the answer. Links between a lot of aspects of the question. Criticisms and judgements of a few made with an attempt at substantiation by a reasoned evaluation of supporting	
Level 4	A broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language is well pre few mistakes. Relevant topics and details are deconstructed with rational and l progressions of reasoned arguments developed throughout the answer. Links between a broad variety of the aspects of the question. Criticisms and judgemc of almost all of the aspects of the question and are substantiated by a reasoned some supporting evidence.	
Level 5	A broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language is well pre correctly and rigorously, throughout a justified response. Relevant topics and critically deconstructed with rational and logical progressions of reasoned argu strongly developed. Criticisms, judgements and links are made of/between all aspects of the question and completely substantiated by a thorough and reason evaluation of supporting evidence.	

Question No.	Indicative Content (5 marks AO1, 15 marks AO2)
b)	**AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluat be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using speci terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting the AO described below.** **Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1.** • Situation ethics is a form of Christian ethics as it specifically advocat demonstration of agape love in any given situation or ethical dilemm • However, this also goes against a lot of traditional Christian divine c which puts forward that there are objectively good and bad acts as d word of God. An act such as killing, despite situation ethicists argu never be good regardless of the outcome. • Barclay argues that there are various weaknesses of situation ethics, on its own terms, as well as within the wider context of Christian **Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2.** • Whether situation ethics is too focused on extreme ethical deliberatic that the traditional Christian ethic is better in ordinary situations tha • Fletcher's arguments may grant humans an overwhelming amount c incompatible with traditional Christian morality. Humans arguably follow or not God's word in different ethical situations, not interpret for themselves. • Difficulties within quantifying love in situation ethics. In contrast w could be seen as the faculty by which we develop a relationship and loving may be what is commanded by God, not what we interpret as • There may be simply things that are objectively good and bad, regar these can be identified independent of God's word, it may well be th does not interpret morality accurately. • Fletcher's account may well not take into account the possibility of st identifies. Christianity, if a religious authority, should arguably make h them interpret what love means for themselves. • The difficulties situation ethics might have if applied to law and soci respect are likely than the licentiousness of situation ethics as a whole Christian ethic. • Situation ethics rejects legalism, but there are cases in the Bible when to be endorsed by Jesus and others. This may present an issue for Fl supporters if they cannot interpret the Bible effectively to support sit truly Christian. • Consequentialist ethics may well be naturally opposed to Christianit source of good somewhere other than God. While it can be argued a God's love as a whole, situation ethicists might be forced to accept hu ultimate arbiters of morality, not God, if pushed far enough by critic

Situation Ethics	The moral theory that argues that what is good and b situation and its context.
Divine Command Ethics	The moral theory that argues that what is good and b commanded by God.
Agape Love	All-encompassing and general love for humankind, he personal beliefs or dislikes.
Justice	For Fletcher, justice is love distributed. Where love is is therefore justice.
Predicate	The part of a sent nc th tates something about th example t k ng t statement x (is red), (is red) is the
Property	p rty is a characteristic of an object, generally b and exemplifiable.
Exemplifiable	Where a property can be assigned to an object as bei of it. For example, an apple could be exemplifiable of long as all apples possessed the property of being gre
Sublimation	The process by which undesirable or unacceptable be psychologically (and often unconsciously) into better impulses.
Act-based Consequentialism	Where what is good is judged by the consequences of undertakes.
Rule-based Consequentialism	Where what is good is judged by the following of vari consequence maximising rules.

Answers to Discussion Points

1. **Rule/Act Based Consequentialism** – Students might point out that Fletcher seems to consequentialism on occasion, allowing that we can follow our ordinary moral instinc specific acts in extreme moral dilemmas. This has the advantage of putting less pres evaluate the right moral acts. However, it also means that in general, one might con agape through moral shortcuts and thereby in the eyes of Fletcher failing Jesus' com

2. **Justice and Love –** It is possible to point out that for some people justice can involve imprisoning of a murderer rather than the rehabilitation, which many would argue being loving. However, one can apply this towards simpler examples. Imagine a pri and received equal rations. The priest was full halfway through but the other two we Many would say it would be loving for the priest to give away his food, but it is justic Students could discuss whether such examples fit in with Fletcher's concepts of love

3. **Activity** – Students can imagine smaller moral examples, such as if a student falls as for a test. Does he cheat knowing it will lead to his parents and teachers being happi despite possibly being perfectly able to have done well if he had managed to study p

4. **Extended Reading, Existentialism –** While they are different in many ways, existentia terrifying freedom humans face and their differing reactions to it. Students might loo inauthenticity, judging whether Barclay's criticism is an inauthentic reaction to freed instead enforcing arbitrary rules to make it easier to handle.

5. **Intrinsically Bad Acts –** Students might point towards extreme examples such as gen equally might posit situations that could justify these. It is possible Barclay can simpl inability to determine succinctly what is right and wrong means that trust in a benev what is right and wrong might be essential within a Christian ethic.

6. **Sublimation –** It is alluded to in the text, but homosexuality is a good example of an to be a mental illness (and still is in some parts of the world). While acceptable now been sublimated in various ways, suggesting maybe that Christianity cannot necessar govern this practice.

7. **Wolfenden Report** – Students may look at John Stuart Mill as reference here. Many of applied morality, but cannot be the sole determiner of ethical interpretation. Students protection for whistle-blowers are examples of this and cases of civil disobedience th bring about greater moral

8. **Graded Absolutism** – One of the key criticisms of this theory has been its arbitrary pr exampl was presented with the choice of robbing a bank or committing adult Arguably Scripture does not provide much support, so it seems a third-party law has them. For situationists this just happens to be love.

9. **Rule/Act and Barclay –** Certainly at times Barclay seems to be guilty of overstressing ethics. Fletcher states often one can revert to common sense morality in ordinary sit case that can be made that approaching difficult ethical circumstances without any ha terrifying prospect of human freedom.

10. **Agape Love –** The idea of a general love for humanity is often espoused but other eth in agent-relative reasons for moral action. While general or agape love, therefore, mi experience, it may be difficult to comprehend this concept within secular ethical theo motivations as more important. In this sense, it may be hard for an atheist to underst the same way that Christians do as an all-encompassing love for humanity.

11. **Biblical Justification –** Students can note that one's approach to the Bible of either e interpretation) or eisegesis (reading into from one's own experiences/beliefs/presup Arguably in the Gospels especially there are both times when Jesus favours law-like c others when teachings come in parables, or unexpected context-based acts of loving exegesis, one might look for specific rules to direct ethical decision making while if one love to be already important, and then examples of how love is put into practice b

12. **Adaptation of Christianity** – Many people would argue that Christianity has changed questio wh it should continue to. Some might argue with greater scie unders comes change in religion, but others might argue that such adaptatio question the heart of existence and as such take focus away from the significance

What you need to know before starting…

1. The core ideas behind deontological ethics and a number of different forms ph throughout history.
2. The different ways one might arrive at an understanding of moral rules and wh derive morality from reason alone.
3. Some of the weaknesses and deontological ethics and the first formulatio as proposed by K
4. The wa hich Kantian ethics has influenced present day philosophical tho fields o pplied ethics which make use of the categorical imperative in one wa

1. Introduction

This extract draws on Section 5.1: Deontology on the syllabus and you are advised the anthology alongside this topic. Additionally for owners of the ZigZag Course C Ethics Year 2, the section on Deontology can be found on pp. 12–27, 34–35.

The essay is a series of extracts from the second section of the *Groundwork for th* designed to illuminate part of the philosophical process behind Kant's ethical theo formulations of the categorical imperative. This guide will begin by outlining and the categorical imperative before analysing its various weaknesses and noting the religious belief, ethics and everyday experience.

2. Summary of Ideas

Kantian ethics is commonly understood as a deontological ethical theory, which clas action is acc g t mmitment to a rule or set of rules. Essentially, therefo even when ts in negative consequences so long as it follows an objective m makes ethics a field separate to what is agreeable. While the results of a particula something that is desired, that is not what makes it moral at heart. Kant identifies or something that commands beyond what individuals might find agreeable and a responsibility to act through duty. One's duty, therefore, can be characterised by 'ought' for Kant can be discovered through reason.

The journey towards illuminating moral law through reason alone motivates Kant' extract in particular provides an outline of how from Kant's original definitions of one can arrive at a categorical imperative: a rule that is separate from all continge circumstances and can guide human ethical action irrespective of context.

Groundwork to the Categorical Imperative

So how does Kant begin this task? At the beginnin of this extract he makes a num that illuminate his reasoning towards the ca or imperative:

> *Every thing in nature works in accordance with laws. Only a rational being ha with the representation of laws […] Since for the derivation of actions from law nothing is required but practical reason.*

While this may initially seem as if he is making a number of assumptions, Kant's e number of his insights into metaphysics as a whole. One major distinction he mad the world we know through experience, and the **noumena**, or the world-in-itself w not develop any knowledge of through experience. Within the phenomena, causa

We regularly observe causes and their effects and it is apparent that the world as a whole is contained within an order governed by certain laws. However, Kant speculates that the source of real free will that could give human moral actions significance, is possibly contained within the noumena. These concepts are not essential to know in detail, but they provide an important framework for understanding Kant's rea

Key Idea

Kant's ethical pr
epistemological
human beings co
his project of transcendent
used to describe his work
th rld appears to hum
rk in particular as a bri
beliefs in realism (reality i
and idealism (reality is me

So if nature works in acc with laws as Kant argues, ther be pable of rational thought (humans) have the ability to with this un ding in mind. For example, playing billiards, I purposefully hit the belief they will move certain ways from my understanding of collisions and th ultimately behind this understanding is reason, and so for Kant, my will is simply the world. However, he goes further:

> *If reason determines the will without exception, then the actions of such a being objectively necessary, are also subjectively necessary, i.e. the will is a faculty of independently of inclination, recognises as practically necessary, i.e. as good.*

This means that if reason is the mechanism which controls our actions, then what what our reason regards as necessary. However, Kant does not argue that reason Further on he notes that human beings are constantly under pressure from subje influences from the world based upon our current state of affairs. One might rea make an object fly through the air one has to propel it, but if I am trapped in a he football, any reasonable attempt to make the football fly rough the air is restrai circumstances.

What he then draws out is that these objective principles that guide our actions, called commands and t e formula of an imperative. An imperative in t statements e.g. the sentence 'One ought not to litter' is an objective actions whi e recognise as true by reason, we would follow in ideal circums subjectively be no litter in the world). Kant notes this in particular:

> *They say that it would be good to do or refrain from something, but they say it something just because it is represented to it as good to do.*

What this leads Kant to argue, is that whatever practical goods we do in the worl oughts and because these are governed by reason, they have to come from objec rational being, not from our subjective circumstances. There is an important diffe principles which are 'agreeable', which find favour simply via our natural desires, everyone by being derived from reason. What Kant does effectively is tie the idea if anyone is a rational being, they can understand the valid reasoning behind any moral imperative.

Discussion Point 13

Can all moral statem ed into 'ought' statements that universally appl ethical be d se whether turning them into such a form loses any part

Good and Imperfect Wills

One important final point Kant makes is defining a 'good will'. He states:

> *A perfectly good will would thus stand just as much under objective laws, but i*
> *represent it as necessitated by them to lawful actions, because of itself, in accord*
> *constitution, it can be determined only through the representation of the good.*

A good will therefore is unqualifiedly good; it cannot be guided by objective laws a anything it does is automatically good by its very constitution. Since it can never c immoral end, imperatives cannot [illegible] ought for a good will, rather its very b 'divine will', is '*necessarily in harmony with the law*'. Equally it should therefore b only apply [illegible] of objective laws to imperfect wills. In other words, an ou beings with [illegible] that will not automatically perform the command by their very c

The Categorical Imperative

Kant divides between two forms of imperative: the hypothetical and the categorical. Hypothetical imperatives express a command for an action that is rooted in achieving or attaining a particular goal in the contingent world (the things that could be true or false depending on other circumstances). One example would be:

> *If one wants to make wine, one ought to grow grapes*

While we might regard this as an important principle, it only applies when a certain set of hypothetical requirements are met, in this case, the receiver desiring to make wine. If the receiver has no interest in making wine, then the hypothetical command carries no weight; it ceases to be an ought.

On the other hand, there are categorical imperatives, which apply without referer It is 'objectively necessary for itself', as it commands people irrespective of wha It is possible to broadly differentiate hypothetical and categorical imperatives as f

Hypothetical → If, then ought

Categorical → Ought

Categorical imperatives for Kant form the basis of morality; ought statements tha mitigation by any goals or contingent objects one might regard as important. The realistically possible for all human beings. This means they cannot be impossible c circumstances, unlike hypothetical imperatives. From this thought he states:

> *It has to do not with the matter of the action and what is to result from it, but wit*
> *which it results; and what is essentially good about it consists in the disposition,*

Investigating the Categorical Imperative

Since the categorical imperative is not linked to aims or things people might regar grounded in experience of the world. Therefore, the categorical imperative by na entirely a priori.

It is from the [illegible] the differences between hypothetical and categorical imperative Whereas with the hypothetical imperative, it cannot be known what the statemen or 'if' is known, the categorical imperative is completely known from the start in be

But if I think of a categorical imperative, then I know directly what it contains. imperative contains only the necessity of the maxim, that it accord with this la condition to which it is limited, there remains nothing left over with which the accord and this accordance alone is what the imperative really represents neces

This appears convoluted, but in short Kant argues that if the distinctive element o that it applies universally, then its universalisation of any statement is what it rep in accordance or agreement with any condition, but at the same time this accorda categorical imperative is formed of.

To describe another way, the primary feature of a categorical imperative is that universe, irrespective of that thing's features or state of being, then what the imp anything a person does ought to equally be able to be willed across the entire uni time, must be able to be performed by every person without contradiction or at l

Therefore, he comes to the conclusion that there is only a single categorical impe

Act only in accordance with that maxim which you can at the same time will th

This is one of the central pillars of Kant's deontological ethics and forms the basis be formed. Kant was often critical for using examples as simple measures of a pri take as an example, as he does later in the *Groundwork*, of a person seeking to bo without paying it back, universalising this principle would provide a contradiction would ever lend money anymore knowing it would never be paid back.

Discussion Point 14

There is another form of Kant's first formulation given in the *Groundwork*:

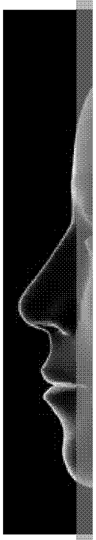
So act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a unive

Why does he make this addition? Are there are particular benefits to stating i

The Second Formulation of the Categorical Imperative

In the final section of the extract, Kant explores a second formulation of the categori around human beings in particular. This is sometimes called the Formula of Humani

Act so that you use humanity, as much in your own person as in the person of every other, always at the same time as end and never merely as means.



A great deal of the attractiveness of Kant's moral theory lies in this principle, for it establishes the importance of respect between people and forms the basis of equality as an essential moral practice.

But how does Kant reach this formulation? The first part revolves around Kant's distinction between rational beings and ordinary objects of inclination. The latter only have a 'conditional worth' in Kant's view. If there was no need for them in pursuing different ends then they would have no value. An example of this would be burning coal to generate electricity. If it ever came to the day when electricity was not needed, then coal would have no value in and of itself. It only contains worth while it is instrumental towards other needs or ends. Kant states:

Thus the worth of all objects to be acquired through our action is always conditi existence rests not on our will but on nature nevertheless have, if they are bein worth as means, and are called things…

On the other hand, as hinted in the last part of the sentence, things are set oppos possession of reason as part of their nature makes them *'ends in themselves'*, not any other goal. Thus our 'humanity', 'personhood' and 'rational existence' have a conditional upon any other object or purpose. This idea extends to all human bei argument further as an objective principle:

> *… every other rational being also represents his existence in his way as conseq as is valid for; thus it is at the same time an objective principle, from which, as laws of the will must be able to be derived*

Simply put, because we e[illegible]se our own rational existence as an end in its everyone el[illegible]so [illegible]nd. Some critics have noted initially that this formulat intuitive un[illegible]ding than having a purely a priori basis. There is not necessaril to state why [illegible]ason is important, or why because one person holding their ration necessarily view everyone else's the same. One could suppose for example that e simulation of rationality compared to oneself. At the same time, however, such c intuitive jump than simply recognising everyone else, similar to in rational existen and treatment as an end in themselves.

Discussion Point 15

Is it necessarily true that acknowledging my own rational nature as an end mean equally as ends? For example one might regard their love of music as an end in i people's love of music as an end. Is Kant's argument anything more than an agre moral intuition?

The Nuances of Means and Ends

It is, however, important to note before [illegible] number of subtleties within important is that the formula do[illegible]out using people to a certain degree a a person could suppose [illegible] driver to take them home is using someone them with [illegible]. What the humanity formula rules against is simply trea to an end. [illegible]gests instead a strongly moral component to treating people a we can suppose each person is morally equally respected through payment and th a functional one. However, if the person puts a gun to the taxi driver's head and f home free of charge, they are treating the driver merely as a tool and so using the mere means. Where this distinction begins and ends is still a matter of debate. F clothing from a department store in the knowledge that the store employs under garments, is the person guilty of treating people as a mere means? Or is it just th

The other thing to note is that beyond simply treating people as ends, it is specific 'rationality' that we are focusing on. One criticism of Kant that will be explored la provide no safeguards for the mentally ill or incapacitated. If a person seemingly they no longer have any absolute worth and so seemingly can be treated as mean might find agreeable.

The Third Form and the Kingdom of E[illegible] T[illegible]ng it Further (Additional t

From the first two forms of the ca[illegible]g [illegible]mperative, Kant is sometimes seen to his view enshrines the a[illegible]d self-legislation necessary for human beings imperative i[illegible]r l[illegible]short, he describes it as such:

> *Thus the [illegible]practical principle follows […] as the ultimate condition of their the idea of the will of every rational being as a universally legislating will.*
>
> **(Kant, Immanuel, *Grounding for the Metaphysics***

This for Kant is necessary to establish how the categorical imperative does not sim
human beings follow as if machines, but a continuously active principle that peopl
within their lives.

Another additional form of the categorical imperative is also given in the *Groundw*
thought experiment of the 'Kingdom of Ends', an ideal world in which all human b
and not mere means. Kant states:

> *Act according to maxims of a universally le[illegible]ating member of a merely possib*
>
> **(Kant [illegible], *Grounding for the Metaphysics***

This form can [illegible] bring a certain social dimension to the categorical im
towards thi[illegible]ct society Kant envisions, not just within the dimensions of one'

The Kingdom of Ends is mentioned briefly further on in this guide, however it is im
forms of the categorical imperative are not essential to know, and for the purpose
required to understand and critique the first two. However, it is useful to know h
of the categorical imperative into ordinary ethical life, as many issues within his d
its perceived lack of usefulness or applicability to everyday ethical dilemmas.

3. Philosophical Context

The *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, first published in 1785, was Kant'
philosophy and has greatly influenced ethical discourse in the years since. Kant w
the Enlightenment, when the primacy of reason in philosophical matters was bec
prominent as people turned away from traditional Church doctrine to seek the fo
knowledge elsewhere. Within his ethical theory, especiall[illegible]th regards the categ
to see this influence. Kant within the *Groundwor[illegible]* se[illegible]s largely a foundational
determining the core principles and idea[illegible]d [illegible]rality and showing how they
being to discover. This emphasis [illegible]y as linked to rationality stood against
of ethics that were popu[illegible]ne. These generally either put forward that ic
from people'[illegible]ot[illegible]onses to situations or that morality held a purpose to v
which was [illegible]erceived to be what was pleasurable or virtuous.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804)

During Kant's life, philosophy was oriented around a number of disputes between empiricists, who believed all knowledge comes through experience, and rationalists, who asserted that people had innate ideas beyond experiential knowledge. Much of his work was dedicated to these issues and greatly shifted the emphasis and considerations of philosophical writing in the modern world. He maintained greatly that people should seek to think and act autonomously and while believing in God, he was sceptical of many traditional sources of authority. This bleeds greatly into his moral philosophy, where rational beings are treated as ends in themselves and pushed to recognise, through the categori[illegible]mperative, reason as the guiding force behind duty and mora[illegible]ts.

Beyond the *Groundwork*, Kant ex[illegible]s [illegible]oral theories in later works such as *Critique of Practi[illegible]*, which develops the first formulation of the categori[illegible]pe[illegible]nd goodness as a whole, and *The Metaphysics of Morals* w[illegible]cuses on Kant's vision for society and the ethical considerati[illegible]ttached to treating humans as ends, not merely as means.

W D Ross (1877–1971)

Ross was a Scottish theologian, who similar to G E Moore, advocated an intuition-
ethics. This combines Kantian ideas of duty with the notion that these duties can
ethical awareness. Overall he distinguished between seven different 'prima facie'
gratitude, justice, beneficence, self-improvement and non-maleficence. However
recognise these duties in an immediate way, it is how we implement them in diffi
requires further philosophical consideration. For example, in certain situations we
maleficence in the case of an extremely violent criminal.

Ross' theory will be explored further later, but it is a useful example of how Kantia
differently and for many might be closer to how we intuitively perceive morality t
the importance of rationality in deriving moral laws.

Thomas Nagel (1937–present)

Nagel is another example of a modern deontologist and following from Kant, he h
form of moral duties that differentiates between what he calls the 'agent-relative'
action and the 'agent-neutral' ones.

The former (agent-relative) are reasons for you to do something generally from so
relation to the thing under ethical consideration. For example, a person may have
taking care of their children from the special amount of care, investment and love
their children. On the other hand, agent-neutral reasons are generalised and app
beyond human beings' personal attachments. This distinction will be explored fur
addresses an issue with many previous utilitarian and deontological theories whic
forcing people to take a neutral moral stance, contrary to how we live and value t
example, strict utilitarianism struggles to identify why on a sinking cruise ship, a p
their wife over a stranger. If there is a justification for preferring one's wife, it oft
such as marriage providing a greater overall level of happiness, rather than simply
to hold greater moral weight in certain situations.

This criticism can be applied to Kant also, and will be explored in more depth in th

4. Detailed Analysis

Kant's ethical theories have been highly influential but as such they have also attr
While the basic conceptual elements behind the categorical imperative were exam
different areas of difficulty will be given a detailed analysis, looking at not only ho
key issues within his ethical theory, but also how recently deontologists have soug
Kant's moral framework to illuminate modern ethical dilemmas.

1. The first formulation of the categorical imperative

The first formulation of the categorical imperative is one of Kant's most contentio
its usefulness within political theory, arguably it hasn't provided a lasting framew
philosophy. One of the main issues that many critics have identified, is that in ma
unintuitive moral conclusions, or fails to capture all the dimensions of morality tha

Before exploring these criticisms, however, it is important to consider the potenti
the categorical imperative. As stated previously, Kant states the first form of the c

Act only in accordance with that maxim which you can at the same time will th

One can ask from this sentence, what are the grounds for an 'ought' statement to
universalised? In other words, what would make a universal law fail?

One of the main interpretations here is that one has to ask whether a maxim does conceivability. This means that it should be determined whether adopting a maxi particular way as to render the original maxim meaningless. For example, if it was could be conceived that a world where everyone stole would render the idea of p ownership meaningless, for everyone would have an obligation to take any item n would in turn make the idea of stealing meaningless and so as a general moral pri truly conceivable.

Discussion Point 16

Is a contradiction in co[illegible] enough to determine whether a moral law fail philosopher[illegible] preceded the first formulation of the categorical imperative nuances in [illegible]he contradiction is outlined affect what kind of moral laws migh

Perfect and Imperfect Duties

What if we took the statement 'one ought to improve one's knowledge of the out would this have in human ethics? Imagining it to be a maxim, one could argue tha one helps each other or contributes to the general well-being of society. Yet at th regard self-improvement to be a good thing. Advancing knowledge and understa survive and flourish. Without it humanity might simply perish in its own ignoranc

Kant solves this difficulty by dividing between perfect and imperfect duties. The f test of conceivability but also the test of whether we would advocate them as ma should act on consistently. In the case of self-improvement, it is possible to conce governing law (albeit not a pleasant one), but at the same time we wouldn't nece present maxim. Doing so would obligate all human beings to only help themselve towards others.

So self-improvement cannot be a perfect duty, for every rational being cannot be Instead it is an imperfect duty. For Kant these are duties which one is only sparing and are based upon knowledge of the world itself. There may in turn be multiple and they may, the same as perfect duties, be directed towards oneself or towards obliged to improve oneself at appropriate or even sparing times and while doing s others. Failing to meet imperfect duties is not morally blameworthy.

Kant gave examples of a number of perfect and imperfect duties featured below:

	Perfect Duty	
Towards oneself	Not to commit suicide	Self-improvemen
Towards others	Not to lie	Providin

What is interesting to note, is that many of the perfect duties conceived of are ne imperfect duties are positive. For some critics this is an indication that Kant's the moral theories, as they are limited by their conceivability as maxims, whereas for many positive moral principles are supererogatory (beyond the call of duty) in nat

Discussion Point 17

Examining Kant's idea of perfect and imperfect duties, come up with your own permutations of the table above. Is anything left out by Kant's definitions?

The Case of the Inquiring Murderer

There are still a number of issues with perfect duties, even if they are negative. One of the most famous criticisms comes originally from the French philosopher Benjamin Constant, who posited that under Kant's moral law to not lie, were a murderer to come to a person's door and ask for the address of their next victim, the person at the door would be obliged to tell them where it is. Yet this seems an unintuitive conclusion to make and arguably contradicts our instinctive desire to protect and care for other human beings. In real life many people would be moved to act at this point to stop the murder from occurring. Therefore to critics, this is both an indication that the first formulation does not provide real guidance for difficult moral situations and that in at least some way, the consequences of our moral actions hold value.

Kant's response to this issue is largely seen as unsatisfactory. He argues that in the case of the inquiring murderer it is still right to tell the truth, partly because we can't predict the consequences of our actions but also because the va
within its commitment to duty and not in its implications or consequences. Furth
effectively treating him as a mere means to an end and so denying his rationality.

Another difficulty is that Kant did not believe in applying what is sometimes called
reservation' in these scenarios. This distinguishes between forms of deception re
of the truth, and deception from an outright lie. Therefore, the person answering
the murderer a misleading truth such as 'the victim was in place x three hours ago
basic form of deception. Instead Kant states the least one can do is remain silent

However, many people would still see Kant's allowance to remain silent as indicat
categorical imperative, namely that ultimately he is concerned with the conseque
intentionally finds a way to subvert the very aim of one's own ethical theory, it
that one's ethical theory is not exhaustive of all the dimensions of ordinary morali

Hegel's Critique

Is there any part of the first formulation that can be salvaged to provide a more sa
Hegel argues that fundamentally it cannot, for all the categorical imperative prese
of non-contradiction and no actual moral guidance when dealing with ethical dile
how Kant divided between perfect and imperfect duties, with the former often be
possible that even this division struggles to develop when positive action should o
duty of self-improvement, is there any real content to suggest when this should b
might argue it is important while at school, but not necessarily when performing c
perhaps imperfect duties providing some context, Hegel argues that Kant's ethica
being devoid of the human context of actions, it provides no guiding force for our

This means that in the case of the inquiring murderer there is nothing within Kant
human beings to make a decision on whether or not to lie. There is no mention o
attachment to one's neighbours unless one develops a universal law around them
imperative seems ill-equipped to deal with real life scenarios unless directly specif
Either way, Hegel contends that Kant's ethics are existing in the realm of reason and
provide real guidance in situations where our ethical intuition contradicts our com
imperative.

Trivial and [illegible]ral Maxims

One possible response to all this is to simply narrow the moral laws created such t
scenarios. For example in response to the inquiring murderer, one could put forw
to protect the life of someone else'. However, there are other issues with such an
that formulation is open to unintuitive conclusions. Say, for example, I lied to the
genocidal dictator, would that action be regarded as morally correct?

The second issue with this approach is that if one is allowed to simply make moral one can come up with any law to fit any action desired. Alasdair MacIntyre makes that it is easy to create moral laws that are both trivial and immoral, such as *'Do n question is regarded as worthless by its owner'*. This can conceivably be a univers function even with worthless possessions being stolen on a regular basis, howeve still wrong. MacIntyre even argues that the first formulation can play against the *but me can be treated as a means*' can be universalised, although this is possibly i formulation can be criticised for separating moral action from a person's moral c conclusions relatable to a person's own life principles, the moral laws derived fro become simply rational abstractions of what might work within a conceivable wor both meaningful and relatable to ordinary life.

Discussion Point 18

A number of cases are examined above where the categorical imperative is seen conclusions. Is there any way of utilising it more specifically to develop more ap as Hegel describes, simply an exercise in logic devoid of any practical meaning a

Examine the case of the inquiring murderer in particular and draw out some wa for Kant.

Can the Categorical Imperative Capture all the Dimensions of Morality?

So far numerous criticisms of Kant have been addressed and it can be argued that heart of the first form of the categorical imperative. One philosopher in particular theory was Arthur Schopenhauer, who argued that what Kant argues to be moral actually just a veiled form of egoism.

What does this mean? Schopenhauer argues that Kant makes a mistake in thinkin objectively from reason, especially when he fails to provide a grounding or founda should determine what is moral in the first place. Schopenhauer contends that ur empirical, then ultimately it has no real substance. Kant, however, simply assumes th connects them but fails to find validation for them from human nature or this way, Schopenhauer argues, Kant provides a theological account of morality, b to authorise his morality as true or real.

This lack of foundation means that the categorical imperative is not an appeal to r oneself in both the present and the future. When one applies the categorical imp one is simply reiterating the law of 'Do unto others as you would have them do ur case of lying, one is not imagining a world where everyone lies to each other, but to themselves. Therefore, in the case of the inquiring murderer, one does not be one's neighbour but by the abstract imagining of a case whereby oneself and the might solve certain cases in the short run, but Schopenhauer argues that it ignore which is contained within a human being's compassion for others, where the hum being, but also a being within a wider world connected to other people and their f

Schopenhauer's criticism is a contentious one and many have argued he places to importance of compassion, which arguably leads to less moral guidance than Kant does highlight that in cases such as the inquiring murderer, it may not simply be th categorical imperative wrong but that there are important elements missing fro in his commitment to reason as the ultimate source of all moral law.

W D Ross and Moral Laws

One response to the issues facing Kant's ethical theory comes from W D Ross, wh facie duties that are immediately intuitive. Where one might disagree is how they different ethical situations. Throughout the argument between Constant and Kan simply remaining silent when facing an inquiring murderer is never explored and i have to directly conflict when they are assigned differing priorities. In the case of

might simply say someone has a stronger duty to preserve the welfare of people t
when the context of possible violence is unknown.

However, such a graded form of deontology does detract from the force of the ca
its very *aim of universalisability*, naturally leads to absolutes. It can very well be c
correct about the nature of morality as a form of duty, his methodology towards a
inherently flawed.

2. The second formulation and rights

Kant's second formulation of the cat[illegible] imperative holds a great attractivene
provides a foundation to many [illegible] conceptions of respect and equality, value
underpin an ethical s[illegible]. Yet at the same time there are a number of issues wi
maxim to t[illegible]people as ends. They generally rest on the fact that Kant didn't
they are, bu[illegible]r for the 'humanity' or 'rationality' behind them.

What is the issue with this? Well for one, it removes moral rights from any being t
specific idea of rationality. Therefore, under the second formulation, one's behavi
be viewed as immoral, which at first glance seems an unintuitive conclusion. Whil
humans might have more rights, violence or over-exploitation of animals is seen la
can be seen to indicate within our intuitive understanding of morality, rationality is

In reply Kant argues that while directly one's behaviour towards animals cannot b
to them is morally bad, for our actions may influence the way we treat humans, w
Nevertheless, while Kant's view of animals could be seen as antiquated, one can e
formulation towards those who are mentally ill, very young or are in comas. If rat
moral worth, then it opens up the possibility of widespread abuse against anyone
One reply is that it is the potential for rationality that should be measured and do
temporarily incapacitated can be recognised as ends, but others argue a simpler e
person's capacity for rationality is not the only thing w[illegible]ently morally value i

Is There Justification for Treating Hu[illegible]s a Mere Means to an End?

This question is possibly the mor[illegible]one facing the second formulation. Ka
treating human beings as [illegible] and a 'mere means' to an end. In the Summa
noted in the [illegible]ly paying a taxi driver for his service, versus violently f
particular d[illegible]on. The former respects the taxi driver's autonomy, desires an
the latter sim[illegible]treats them as a tool or an object. Such a distinction is arguably
allows Kant to distinguish between normal exchanges of services and those intera
immoral and exploitative, but allows him to develop a stronger moral argument a
each other with respect and dignity in real world scenarios, and not just abstractly

However, despite at first glance the second formulation of the categorical imperat
agreeable principle, there are hypothetical instances, often given by proponents c
greater moral good would seem to be served by treating humans in ways Kant wo
mere means. For example, if faced with the choice to allow the death of one pers
that would kill thousands, there is a strong moral case that preserving that much l
person *as a mere* means.

Discus[illegible]Point 19

At what point does treating a person a[illegible]ns turn into a mere means? For e
economically developed countr[illegible]pts services based on exploitative con
treat people as ends?

While th[illegible]ti[illegible]s when Kant's theory of ends entails treating people with r
from the s[illegible]roblem in presenting no context or practical applicability to mo

While such a case is extreme, it illuminates an issue with practical morality in that
make comparable moral judgements. If it is a case between choosing to save the
theory in presenting multiple absolute judgements seems to present choosing eit
nothing and both people die such an outcome is measurably worse, but the absol

generated by the categorical imperative present unwieldy and difficult to resolve
easily explained by allowing the consequences of our actions to at least partially d

3. Can Kant's ethics capture agent-relative aspects of morality?

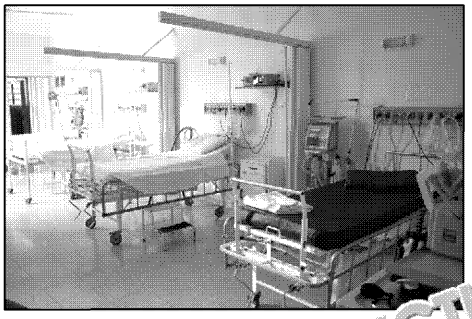
Kant states near the beginning of the extract:

> *Practical good, however, is that which determines the will by means of represen*
> *subjective causes, but objectively, i.e., from grou[nds] that are valid for every rati*

Throughout his development of his moral theory, morality is tied strongly to duty
knowable by reason alone. For many critics, this also has the effect of de
it seem largely cold and impersonal.

This is illustrated by the philosopher Michael Stocker, who puts forward the examp
hospital out of duty rather than friendship. While this may fit the Kantian view of
lack moral value in that it ignores the relative value that exists between friends as
should be respected. Within the *Groundwork* however, Kant argues that what is m

> *… is distinguished from the agreeable, as that which has influence on the will o*
> *merely subjective causes.*



Naturally every person in the world does
one person's friend in hospital, but does
only under this category of agreeability?

Looking towards Nagel, a modern deonto
solution. He argues that in fact other for
for the actual subjective reasons we perform
can be universalised rules that allow
example, one could argue *'One ought to
friendships'* could be a correct moral law similar to other agent-relative princi
such as '*Parents ought to care for their children*'. If one expands Kant's theories to
aspects of r[elationships], arguably these criticisms are diffused.

Yet for some critics there is still an element of duty that fails to capture how we e
lives. The duty *'One ought to cultivate and improve friendships',* even as an imper
arguably still makes the idea of friendship into an obligation and not necessarily as something good in itself. One can imagine a situation of a friend being hurt from another telling them they are only visiting them in hospital so they can fulfil their duty of cultivating friendships. Whether or not there is something alien about duty depends at least partially on how much general laws can encompass the personal aspects of the morality within friendships and relationships.

Disc

Is friendship simp
based on a mutu
some extra mora
understanding it?
ethics effectively

4. Is Kant justified in developing ethics [from] reason alone?

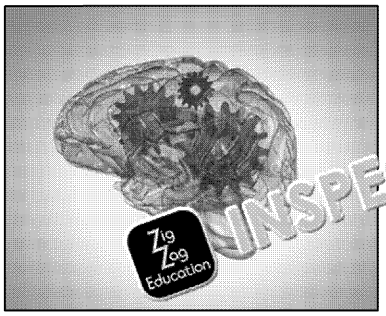
Within the last three criticisms there has been a prevalent issue in that Kant's com
from his a priori categorical imperative seems to create a number of counter-intui
match what we [would] consider to be morally good or worthwhile. It is possible
argue that we are simply mistaken sometimes in mixing up what we find agreeabl
at the same time it is equally possible that reason alone isn't enough to develop fu
people can reliably follow and learn from.

Key Idea

The lack of ability for Kant's categorical imperative to provide moral gu
for many philosophers. While his ideas of duty and obligation may be c
determine what these are in practice, there is little point in normative eth
contended therefore morality has to be linked to how humans work in th
mathematics may be useful as an applicable construct, it does not provi
action by itself. Critics argue that the categorical imperative occupies a

Schopenhauer for example argues that Kant's morality from reason has no practic
Kant nevertheless introduces the idea of duty, which is not tied to experience and
concept that people ought moral law to apply to human beings. But to this one can ask
incentive to act in accordance with moral law? Simply because it can be identified
conceivably work on a universal scale, does not necessarily motivate people to act
Schopenhauer thus accuses Kant of lifting morality from a theological framework,
that back traditional morality in this vein of thought. He notes particularly that fo
to be linked to rewards or punishments. An 'ought' if motivational, has to be mot
if Kant links duty in this way to a reward or punishment, his categorical imperative
Schopenhauer therefore effectively argues that Kant's ethics has no real bearing o
purely as a set of reasoned principles that cannot stand up to the moral turbulenc
human motivations.

Nietzsche can be seem to argue similarly but drawing a more extreme conclusion,
unsubstantiated metaphysical claims about human nature that one has to accept
force or relevance within people's lives. Nietzs
perceives as the assumptions behind Kant's mo
that duty is the basis of morality and moral intu
can create a universal set of objective laws. Fu
is not to identifying oneself as an end and vie
unwarranted; rather it is possible to respect on
respecting others'. This is accompanied by his
explanation of the origins of morality, and he p
seemingly present in modern day humanity are
personal desires and motivations.



If such a theory is true, then the idea of an objective, universal morality is put into
be noted that Nietzsche struggles to provide an account of practical morality at al
or at least discerning agent in some way and it is possible to argue viewing human
any such endeavour. Similarly, noting how morality might have arisen does not n
not also rational elements to ethics, simply that in the past they might not have b

Yet such objections can be difficult to be rid of entirely, as separating what is ratio
conceptually and methodologically tricky process without making equal assumptio
rational in the first place. Overall many critics point out there is a failure of the ca
real contextual account of morality in the first place, and this can be linked to Kan
laws from abstract reason and conceptions of duty alone. For many people, descr
situation are important as they form the basis for evaluation and greater still, it ca
requires a teleological end, such as human happiness or flourishing, rooted in eve
an end, Kant's ethics always end up with a lack of practical applicability and p

5. Wider Issues for Religious Belief

The Enlightenment was a time of rapid change and advancement in philosophical th
were ground-breaking in their development of reason as its own particular source o
believing in God, many theologians and religious philos[illegible]s opposed Kantian eth

The main issue is that under Kant's s[illegible]n [illegible]hics, moral law is discoverable thr
grace of God. For Christians, God is traditionally seen as the legislator of all moral
such claims through s[illegible]sion as the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on t
argues humans, by a methodologically simple test of universalisability, are able to
claims can be applied to the mood at the time of writing, when many thinkers were
from the authority of the Church and there were visible tensions between religiou
it is important to note that any claim of humans having direct access to objective
presence of God as a moral authority and so carries a strong implication that hum
moral faculties that are on a par with any divine being.

For many Christians, therefore, this cannot be the case and some theologians have
arguing that human beings could at once be the legislators of objective law but also
also relies on an understanding of what objective morals are under a Christian theo
commands that carry weight as instructing people towards salvation with God. For
tension might not exist if one accepts moral facts are no different to any other disc
possible to determine that 2+2=4, yet still be subject to what that means in the con
would argue though that morality is a priori in the same way God is and so cannot b
interpretation or determination. Whether Kantian ethics is ultimately compatible w
debatable and many theologians, in the vein of Aquinas' arguments, believe that An
match to Kantian ethics despite Christianity itself containing a good number of abso

Discussion Point 21

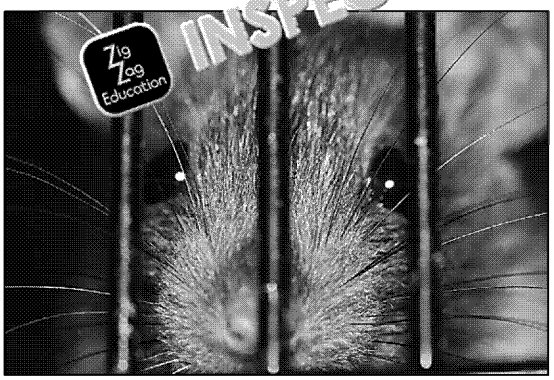
Are there [illegible]ays that Kant's ethics could be reconciled with Christianity? For
a God-given gift through which we discover what is good and right?

Discuss how laws from the categorical imperative might align with traditional di

However, it is also important to note that Kant had numerous positive arguments
include God within a system of basic philosophical principles from which people c
also regarded religion in particular as important in the moral development of hum
hindrance to a pure understanding of morality and metaphysics in the universe. I
from their moral lives and provides a counterpoint to other human institutions th
Therefore, there is both a lasting conception of God that can be understood withi
a position for the Church in his view of human development and growth.

6. Wider Issues for Ethics

Kant's ideas have had a widespread impact on ethics, such that even if many phil theories wholesale, they still carry a broad influence in a lot of modern ethical th formulation of the categorical imperative has had a lasting impact, with many m medical ethical theories using it as a starting point to develop applied ethics base For example, Margaret Eaton uses the importance of auto y to develop ethics right to engage in scientific testing on people, with the conclusion that in order fo sound, the patient must have full knowledge of what they are undergoing. Othe person as a mere means towards some different end.



Key Idea

Kant, in line wit conceived of th hypothetical pl treats each oth presented in the which rational b for some philos starting point w structures of an

Beyond specific fields, there are numerous philosophers who have argued for for distinctly Kantian view. Both Ross and Nagel were examined throughout the guid in Kant's theory and although the first formulation of the categorical imperative is reliably give moral guidance, it has been adapted for use often within the philoso example, uses a similar universalising process as a way to imagine an ideal society to live in.

How does Kant's theory however affect ordinary morality? This is a more difficult logical process, elements of Kant's theory have existed in morality before the *Gro* Christian ethic of the Golden Rule, 'do onto others as you would have them do unt universalising process not dissimilar to the categorical imperative. Therefore, it is theory are present in our common sense moral intuition. Often people imagine th being adopted by the community or world as a whole.

Yet under Kant's ethics, it could be that we would be obliged as per our duty to vi distinguishing what was moral from what was simply agreeable. This arguably wo ordinary morality and it is this conclusion that drives many philosophers to argue fit in with the ordinary thought and patterns of our lives. While there may be dire trying to fit in universalisation around the minute ethical dilemmas that accompa that not everyone can easily undertake. The notion of duty implies that human b level of obligatory perfection, but if a person's rational capacities aren't able to co actions when universalised, then arguably Kantian ethics is a structure too separa If adopted by everyone, Kant's theory would change the world morally w if that could ever be a reality as he envisioned it.

7. Wider Issues for Perception and Experience

Kant's ethics contains a number of implicit consequences for human experience. section how Kant's ethical theory could shift how people view ethics on an ordina whether his project would shift human experience in a similar way. As part of his transcendental idealism, Kant discusses the way humans experience the world in which a priori principles act on a subjective and contingent world. In a similar wa whether the use of reason purely to derive moral laws would impact the way that around them.

As noted throughout this guide, Kant distinguishes between moral duty and mere argue that human experience is filtered through how we interpret what we ought theory means analysing the world and our actions through these duties, derived

Stocker criticises Kantian ethics for seemingly presenting the idea that one should of duty rather than friendship, and there arguably is the implication in Kant's ethi dimensions of one's own experience to guide one's actions through duty.

Naturally Kant would say that not all of life has to always be guided by duty, distin imperfect duties as an example of this, but at the very least, our existence as soci basis, a large proportion of our actions have some moral significance attached to insult my friends out of duty, or because I do not want to hurt their feelings? Wh can somehow be captured by reason and duty determines to what extent Kantian of moral experience. It could even be that despite moral intuition pointing towar important values, it is the duty behind these values that ultimately contains ethic

Throughout this section both Kant's original arguments for the categorical impera
been analysed and it is now up to you to decide whether you believe either side t
particular consider:

- Is Kant's reasoning towards the categorical im[illegible]ive valid? Are there ar
could reasonably be contested?
- Can an accurate distinc[illegible] between imperfect and perfect dutie
- Does th[illegible] inquiring murderer demonstrate the lack of prescript
for[illegible] the categorical imperative can give?
- Is it possible for the categorical imperative to generate immoral maxims?
- Why might the permissibility of trivial maxims undermine the authority of
- Does a graded hierarchy of moral laws answer Kant's critics? Could this b
demanded by the categorical imperative?
- Does the rational nature of all beings justify treating them as ends?
- Does Kant fail to give a convincing account of agent-relative morality? Ca
more modern deontological ethics?
- Is it ever right to treat a human being as a mere means to an end?
- Is the categorical imperative simply a rational tool unable to capture the c
ordinary moral situations?
- Is Kant's ethics irreconcilable with traditi[illegible]ch[illegible]tian theology and mora

-

Activity

Activity 1

Below is a table summarising Kant's arguments within the *Groundwork for the Metap* the left-hand column and using your own interpretation of the anthology, the extrac fill in the blank sections of the table.

Groundwork for the M…ws of Morals – Immanuel	
Kant argues:	**Argume**
Reason is th… …we discover what is moral.	
Duty forms the basis of morality, and can be formulated as what one 'ought' to do.	
Oughts can be distinguished between the hypothetical, and the categorical, which apply universally.	
The categorical imperative, in having universality as its defining property, can be reduced to one command: *Act only in accordance with that maxim which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law.*	
This categorical imperative can be used, by analy… any moral statement for contradictions in co…ivability, to derive the moral laws that app… …ersally to all human beings.	
By noting … …rational nature that allows us to determine … use objects, we can identify rationality or personhood as an end in itself.	
Since every person views their rationality this way, rational nature objectively exists as an end in itself.	
It is possible to therefore make a second formulation of the categorical imperative: *Act so that you use humanity, as much in your own person as in the person of every other, always at the same time as end and never merely as means.*	
Conclusion: The categorical imperative, as derived f…m reason, is the way to determine universal mo…la…	

Activity 2
Working in pairs, picture yourself in the House of Commons preparing to write key been agreed it will be based on a Christian ethic and so a number of the Ten Comn However doubts have arisen as to the reasonability of these ethics and Kant has be or not certain laws should be created.

One of you assume the role of Kant and the other the legislator and work through th examining whether each of them work when universalised under the categorical impe should give his reasons for supporting the moral law, while the legislator should aim t

1. *Thou shall not steal*
2. *Thou shall not commit murder*
3. *Thou shall not commit adultery*
4. *Thou shall not lie*
5. *Thou shall respect thy father and mother.*
6. *Thou shall not litter*
7. *Thou shall pay thy taxes*

At the end, decide whether each of these is universalisable and come to a conclusio made into a law.

After you've finished, note any interesting conclusions you were forced to draw and you might have been forced to either legalise or not legalise a commandment contr

N.B. *Remember Kant distinguishes between perfect and imperfect duties. It might be th always have to be constantly enforced*

Practice Exam Questions

Answer the following questions giving reference to the passage below:

If, then, there is supposed to be a supreme practical principle, and in regard to the imperative, then it must be such from the representation of that which, being necessarily because it is an end in itself, constitutes a subjective principle of the will, hence practical law. The ground of this principle is: Rational nature exists as end in itself necessarily represents its own existence in this way; thus to that extent it is a subjective actions. Every other rational being also represents his existence in this way rational ground as is valid for me; thus it is at the same time an objective principle practical ground, all laws of the will must be able to be derived.

The practical imperative will thus be the following: Act so that you use humanity as in the person of every other, always at the same time as end and never merely this can be accomplished.

a) Outline and clarify the different ideas presented in this passage about

b) Analyse the different implications for ethics in treating all human beings

Level	Descriptor
Level 1	There is limited knowledge, terminology and technical language, oft inappropriately. Only a surface level knowledge of important religio is displayed and religious ideas and beliefs addressed are of a limited always correct, or sufficiently connected to the extract.
Level 2	There is a moderate knowledge, terminology and technica presented, although with a few mistakes. A thorough knowledge an religious beliefs is displayed but with room for further dev and beliefs addressed are of a limited variety, but generally cor nected to the extract.
Level 3	There is a broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical la rigorously presented throughout an appropriate and justified respon thorough and fully developed knowledge and comprehension of imp and concepts is displayed. Religious ideas and beliefs addressed are correct and pertinently connected to the extract.

Question No.	Indicative Content (10 marks AO1)
a)	**AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge and u language and terminology, when responding to the question.** **Candidates may refer to the following:** • Kant's project to decipher morality from reason and the identific taking the form of duty or 'ought' statements. • How the practical imperative emerges as the second form of the how it should be interpreted in ordinary human moral actions. • The importance of rational natures, and how Kant establishes ho end means recognising others with rational natures as ends. The differences between treating someone as a means to an end, an • How the practical imperative establishes moral conduct and law imperative, and how all 'laws of the will' in Kant's eyes are deriv • Kant's vision of the Kingdom of Ends, and how this relates to th • How the practical imperative establishes certain rights of the ind these rights are connected to one's persistent rationality or ratio

Level	Descriptor	Mark
Level 1	There is a very limited knowledge, terminology and technical language, often u inaccurately or inappropriately. Some topics and details are chosen with rudin made between a small variety of aspects of the question. Any criticisms or judg only substantiated by general or non-specific evidence.	
Level 2	There is a limited amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language, s well presented, although with some mistakes. Relevant topics and details are c and links are made between a small variety of aspects of the question. Criticisr judgements of a few aspects are made but with little substantiation by a reason evaluation of supporting evidence.	
Level 3	There is a moderate amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language well presented, although with some mistakes. Relevant topics and details are c with a basic progression of reasoned arguments throughout the answer. Links between a lot of aspects of the question. Criticisms and judgements of a few made with an attempt at substantiation by a reasoned evaluation of supporting	
Level 4	A broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language is well pre few mistakes. Relevant topics and details are deconstructed with rational and l progressions of reasoned arguments developed throughout the answer. Links between a broad variety of the aspects of the question. Criticisms and judgemc of almost all of the aspects of the question and are substantiated by a reasoned some supporting evidence.	
Level 5	A broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language is well pre correctly and rigorously, throughout a justified response. Relevant topics and critically deconstructed with rational and logical progressions of reasoned argu strongly developed. Criticisms, judgements and links are made of/between all aspects of the question and completely substantiated by a thorough and reason evaluation of supporting evidence.	

Question No.	Indicative Content (5 marks AO1, 15 marks AO2)
b)	**AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluat be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using speci terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting the AO described below.** **Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1.** • Deontological ethics is the school of philosophical thought that puts morality as the most applicable and accurate form of ethics. This oft 'ought' statements based off the ideas of duties and obligations. • Kant believed these 'ought' statements or rules could be derived fro categorical imperative and the practical imperative. This results in th formulation: that rational nature or humanity is an end in itself. **Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2.** • Discussion of the difficulties behind what is defined as a means to an mere means. Can question whether Kant accurately makes a distinct and whether there are any moral dilemmas that expose the ambiguit • An analysis of whether treating humans as ends naturally excludes a mentally ill, etc. from having rights or being given moral considerati whether rationality is the only important factor in morality. • An analysis of whether the practical imperative provides real guidan moral situations or whether it simply defines the abstract ways huma respect each other's existence. • Examination of whether it is ever right to treat someone as a mere m greater good. Can look at the advantages of consequentialism and an is right or wrong in completely removing moral consideration of con ethical theory. • Discussion about whether the practical imperative can ever capture t relative relationships, or whether it can for human beings to analys relationships from a purely rational perspective. • Can focus on whether Kant is correct in making an intuitive jump fro one's own rational nature as an end to the importance of everyone el • Can discuss whether the categorical/practical imperative a veiled form of egoism? D building of morality from reason leave out important concepts su from moral consideration? • Can discuss how Kantian ideas about human beings as ends can lead modern applied ethics, particularly in fields such as medical or sexua people's autonomy and dignity are often valued. • Can discuss whether there is a problem with motivation at the core o simply knowing other people have rational natures motivate one to a the same way one would treat oneself?

Transcendental Idealism	The term applied to Kant's epistemological project, from which his writings on morality are closely linked. It attempts to find a middle groun rationalism and empiricism, arguing that human beings build sense experience (phenomena) with the independent objects experiences (noumena) remaining beyond human perception
Categorical Imperative	A moral duty that is universally binding across all circumstanc dependent upon any contingent requirements or people's ser
Hypothetical Imperative	A moral duty that only arises or applies if one desires the cont aimed towards.
Formula of Humanity	The second formulation of th ca nical imperative, which h beings should be t ends.
Perfect Duties	Mor a person is obliged to commit to at all times or situation.
Imperfect Duties	Moral duties that a person is required to uphold but not in all contexts.
Agent-Relative	Reasons for action that relate to a person's own desires, moti relationships.
Agent-Neutral	Reasons for action that do not relate to a person's own desire relationships and apply to all human beings equally.
Kingdom of Ends	Kant's hypothetical utopia, where each person treats everyon

13. **Ought Statements –** Students might examine a wide variety of ethical statements. A come from when a moral is contextualised or part of a particular culture, but it is imp arguably arise out of the statement not being formulated correctly.

14. **Laws of Nature –** For Kant laws of nature are univ[illegible], t[illegible]tating the categorical imp that moral laws are universal in the same w[illegible]ha[illegible]y other natural law might be, ty metaphysical philosophy.

15. **Rationality and End[illegible]** [illegible]de[illegible]s might note Nietzsche, who argues against the jump princip[illegible]ers[illegible]g[illegible] quote MacIntyre who argues *'Everyone but myself can be tre* thing to[illegible]ine is whether each person recognising themselves as an end necessi an end itself, or whether the end of Kant's "end" is just the amalgamation of each pe a rational being

16. **Contradictions –** Possible to argue that conceivability is too vague. Students might p and practical contradictions as has often been traditionally thought. Others might po contradiction in willing – even if conceivable they would not will the said law to be u point towards later in the guide where Kant's ideas of perfect and imperfect duties a

17. **Examples of Duties –** Students should attempt to come up with their own, noting at problems with conceivability, or whether something should be classed as an imperfe

18. **Inquiring Murderer –** It is possible to specify laws further, for example 'One should li an innocent person', and yet even such a formulation can present difficult circumsta the existence of evil things so as not to cause distress? Others might state 'One shou people' but this in turn might fall under Kant's imperfect duties and so not be a conti

19. **Mere Means/Ends** – Many equivocate the secon[illegible]fo[illegible]a[illegible]ion with that of respect f arguably even this definition doesn't n[illegible]e[illegible]y define what are the obligations of p towards others. In the case of the e[illegible]ployed worker, it is difficult to know how mean lens of contracts and l[illegible]w[illegible]e[illegible]coercion by poverty count as exploitation or part of might ar[illegible]hat [illegible]i[illegible]ation was produced on ideals of humanity as ends, these pro might a[illegible]t the humanity formula only contains limited practical moral guidanc moral di[illegible]sion.

20. **Friendship –** Students should look at deontology surrounding agent-relative reasons, basic duty to care towards friends, attaching further responsibilities when needed. F their friends concerns'. Others might argue such definitions ignore the basis of frien between different forms of friendship and their accompanying responsibilities.

21. **Kant, Reason and Divine Command Theory –** One possible answer is that if reason is which God has allowed human beings to discover moral law, then laws derived from possibly be aligned with the divine commands present in the Bible. Certainly this fits Commandments or the Golden Rule in the Gospels, however equally, Christian conce corruption of man, place a much higher value on revelation rather than reason, perh Kant's ethical theory can apply within traditional Christian morality and epistemolog

What you need to know before starting…

1. The core ideas behind Aristotelian ethics and how virtues and vices relate to
2. The different ways one might arrive at a concept of v and how different v guidance in an ethical dilemma.
3. Some of the weaknesses behind virtue ethics, in particular whether virtues a cannot be the basis for objective morality.
4. The ways in which virtue ethics has influenced both Christian ethics as well as theory and what parts of Aristotle's thought have survived to the presen

1. Introduction

This extract draws on Section 5.1: Virtue Ethics on the syllabus and you are advise the anthology alongside this topic. Additionally for owners of the ZigZag Course C Ethics Year 2, the section on Virtue Ethics can be found on pp. 28–34.

The passages are taken from Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and detail Aristotl defining virtue and explaining how someone becomes a virtuous person. This gui each section of Book II, drawing out some of the nuances in Aristotle's thoughts a analysing them in light of modern virtue ethics and noting his philosophy's consec ethics and everyday experience.

2. Summary of Ideas

The *Nicomachean Ethics* is one of the first and most important ethical texts in the W outlining the importance of virtue within morality. Throughout its ten books, Aristo develop not only examples of virtues but how a person can cultivate them and how

The basis of Aristotle's ethics lies in a teleological understanding of human life. For Aristo goal and human activity is no different. All of our activities aim at some good and the h in practical thinking is that of **Eudaimonia**. This can be loosely translated as 'happ Aristotle it encompasses a much wider set of concepts. Rather than being fleetin dynamic, specifically linked to the human soul and its excellence.

Book I, preceding the passages from this extract, is largely concerned with defining th total aim of Aristotle's ethics. One important thing to note is that unlike other forms for Aristotle is an imprecise endeavour; all one can do is look towards those people w from a positive upbringing or set of experiences, and move from those observations of ethics as a whole. To develop a theory that allows humans to grow more effective Eudaimonia, one needs to develop a theory about what makes a virtuous, and so ha therefore, is the road to Eudaimonia, and is worked through by phronesis (practical w

Human Beings and Function

What makes Aristotle able to make claims that ethics is imprecise? It is import ethics is not an exact science. Aristotle is simply aiming to begin his ethical project assumptions about what people all consider morality to be and the reasons why w presuppose that we have some experience of virtuous actions and their value, es happy life. For example, he divides between lives led of honour, contemplation a conceptions of a fulfilling life, but beyond these ideals he seeks to find the 'functio the good comes from performing well. Everything has a function or activity, from humans he identifies the function specifically as 'reason', for it is the thing that se forms of life and enables us to lead our lives the way we do.

Virtues from this understanding, are the ways that allow us to live in accordance v
Eudaimonia. There are many people who carve out lives of excess but in doing so
reason and never reach true happiness or flourishing.

A basic understanding of how Aristotle perceives the function and telos of human
why he develops his idea of virtue as he does. It is very possible (and easy some c
idea of human beings having a purpose at all and is certainly a contentious part of
ethics is based in essence off an agreement about common-sense elements of mo
important to note that disagreements about certain elements of *Nicomachean Eth*
virtue and morality, do not necessarily reject the entirety of its arguments.

Discussion Point 22

Is it possible for Aristotle to observe ordinary aspects of morality and derive co
whole? Research moral epistemology and discuss some of the ways philosopher
how we might achieve moral knowledge.

Book II and Virtue

After defining Eudaimonia, human function and the aim of his ethics, Aristotle mo
structure and definition of virtue in Book II. This part of the section will go throug
develop some of the key ideas within.

Chapter 1

This chapter is primarily concerned with how virtue is developed and the form it t
Aristotle first identifies two kinds of virtue:

- **Intellectual Virtue** – formed through teaching and experience
- **Moral Virtue** – formed through habit

Specifically, it is moral virtue that he focuses on here, and he makes a couple of important points. The first is that moral virtues do not come from our nature. If they are formed through habit they cannot have been an essential part of our being previously. Aristotle notes:

> *Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit.*

Key Idea
The distinc
becomes
know abo
Aristotle.
important
habit that

Therefore, virtues are developed through practice. A person could know of every
none if they did not apply them to their life. For example, a judge could know exa
given situation in a court, but fail to be just unless he was committed to giving jus
number of examples:

> *… by doing the acts that we do in our transactions with other men we become j
> acts that we do in the presence of danger, and being habituated to feel fear or co
> cowardly.*

Possessing virtue is therefore dynamic and dependent on one's interactions with
development education and training is vital. He notes at the end that forming a k
is essential. A young person raised wrongly will inevitably develop an un-virtuous
with wrong actions and practices.

Chapter 2

The main point Aristotle seeks to make in this chapter is that virtues as part of their nature are destroyed by excess or defect. For example, courage can be lost by losing all fear and behaving recklessly or by becoming fearful of everything and never standing up when necessary. Virtues are preserved by finding the mean, or point between the excess and deficiency of the virtue itself.

Whether this is a principle that can be up[illegible] all virtues however is a matter of [illegible] honesty as a possible virtue be de[illegible] by someone being too honest?

Chapter 3

This chapter[illegible]ed around a discussion of pleasures and pains. Simply put, Aris[illegible] such a natural part of why some people become good and others bad, pursuit an[illegible] our activities growing up and they often provide a basis for how we measure our [illegible] be based around the human life fully, has to be concerned with pleasures and pai[illegible] he puts:

> *… virtue, then, is concerned with pleasures and pains, and that by the acts fro[illegible] increased and, if they are done differently, destroyed.*

An important detail to note is that Aristotle is not arguing, similar to utilitarianism[illegible] virtuous action. Some pleasures may come from virtuous activities, but they may[illegible] produce an excess or deficiency of a particular trait. For example, one might take[illegible] human being, but such an act would not be virtuous as normally understood. Wh[illegible] developing the right attitude towards pleasure and pain such that it supports virt[illegible]

Discussion Point 23

Is the person who is born [illegible] receiving the correct amount of pleasure fr[illegible] as morally great a[illegible]on who becomes virtuous through perseverance? R[illegible] virtue eth[illegible]ds to address such issues of moral luck?

Chapter 4

One very important point of Aristotle's thought is noted here:

> *… it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who[illegible] temperate men do them.*

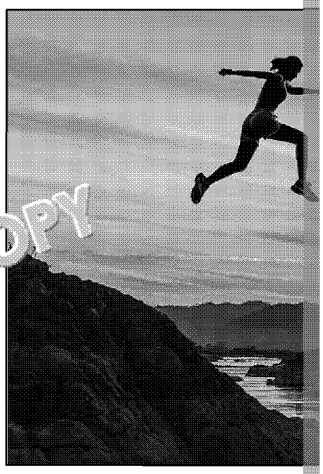
This point at first seems strange, but what he seeks to show is that a virtuous act i[illegible] of a virtuous person. Someone might restrain themselves from gorging on food d[illegible] mean they have practised temperance. A virtuous action has to be done with the[illegible] virtuous person would do, otherwise there is no possibility of moral growth.

Chapter 5

This chapter concerns itself with an investi[illegible]n a[illegible]o what virtue is exactly. Aris[illegible] three different kinds of things – p[illegible]apacities and states of character. Virtu[illegible] not morally judged accor[illegible]t[illegible] we feel. A person might get sad watching th[illegible] really praise[illegible]m[illegible]em for doing so. Virtue on the other hand is compose[illegible] when enact[illegible]

Similarly, for Aristotle virtues cannot be capacities, for people are equally not prai[illegible] able to feel things, therefore virtues have to be states of character.

Chapter 6



Aristotle builds upon the last chapter here, defining further what sort of state of character virtue is. In short, it is that which brings about the excellence of something and makes all acts by that thing excellent. Courage as a virtue, therefore, is the state that both makes a man courageous and causes his actions to be courageous. A person without this state of character would equally both not be courageous and not produce courageous acts.

But Aristotle further argues that this state of character is based around choice, and lies in a mean between two vices, one of excess and one of deficiency. Virtue is therefore what is intermediate between these two extremes, the mean between recklessness and cowardice. In short, he defines a virtue as:

> *… a mean, with regard to what is best and right an extreme.*

However, there are also many actions that do not possess a mean where virtue lie are already bad. If we took cowardice as an example, it would be counter-intuitiv then it could be possible to have in Aristotle's eyes a deficiency of what is already some actions or passions that are always wrong.

Chapter 8

The main point Aristotle develops here is that the mean where a virtue lies is not evenly between its excess and defectiveness. There is often one of these extreme contrary to the virtue from being furthest away from its more conceptual meaning more fitting to argue that cowardice is more contrary to it rather than recklessnes conceptually different. In the case of saving a child from a well, both recklessness saving the child, even if performed for exactly the same motives, while coward jumping in. Therefore just because virtue is a mean, doesn't necessarily mean th as having other actions or passions directly opposed to them.

Chapter 9

Aristotle ties together his development of thought here. Starting with the idea of reiterates his conclusion that moral virtue is a mean between two vices and by its intermediate point between the two.

Notably, he also makes the point that cultivating this mean is a difficult task and n achieve it. While this may seem relatively trivial, since Aristotle's ethics is based o understanding, our acknowledgement of whether true virtue is something that is cannot simply be refuted by looking at immoral acts, especially when the context naturally spurred on towards vice.

For example, if I looked at a war-torn country and argued that virtue is not comm regular violence and conflict, it could equally be replied that this is simply an indic linked to external factors and also that upbringing and surroundings are vital to human being.

What are the Virtues Aristotle Identifies?

While the full range of virtues are not listed in the extract, it is useful to note exac
identified as important. From this one can see what Aristotle exactly regards as a
of virtue fit in with their respective vices.

Vice of Excess	Mean	
Rashness	Courage	
Boastfulness	Truthfulness	
Obsequiousness	Friendliness	
Self-indulgence	Temperance	
Reckless Spending	Generosity	
Shyness	Modesty	
Arrogance	Pride	
Irascibility	Patience	
Vanity	Greatness of Soul	
Buffoonery	Wittiness	

It is interesting to note a few things before moving on to the next section. The fir
necessarily correlate with how one might directly interpret the term. For exampl
more to do with the self and knowing the abilities or powers one possesses. In th
of being aware of this knowledge whereas bashfulness would be a deficiency and
worth. The second is that there are certain virtues Aristotle identifies which elude
language. For example, 'greatness of soul' is closest to magnanimity in English wh
megalopsuchia but this translation also possibly has connotations not contained i
Magnanimity conjures images of traditional nobility, but Aristotle identifies 'gr
referring to a person willing to accurately claim the honours they deserve.

It is useful to note these nuances when criticising Aristotle. There have been num
Nicomachean Ethics throughout history and not all of them agree, but in particula
Aristotle's ethics purely on the virtues he identifies. As will be explored in the nex
necessarily have to be universal or objective for virtue ethics to be relevant or imp
of morality.

3. Philosophical Context

The *Nicomachean Ethics* is one of the most important philosophical works to surv
had a widespread influence through medieval theology to modern ethics. It is cor
into smaller chapters and the title is often presumed to refer either to Aristotle's s
of the same name. Some scholars maintain that it is possible that his son edited it
various textual discrepancies.

The book as a whole is dedicated to answering the question, posed by Socrates in
should live, and Aristotle argues that this is not a theoretical question in it
in contrast to pre-Socratic Philosophy.

Aristotle (384–322 BCE)

Aristotle was born in 384 BCE and spent many years studying in Plato's academy u
Plato's death in 347 BCE. While the latter's influence can be seen in many of Arist
works, much of the Nicomachean Ethics is a departure from Plato's ideas of virtue
which are strongly linked to knowledge and wisdom. On the other hand, Aristotle
stresses the importance of habit within morality, arguing that anyone who does n
practice virtue cannot possess it simply through knowled

The influence of the *Nicomachean Ethics* a istotle's ideas as a whole was per
greatest in the medieval era, w m g of his work became synthesised with
Christian theology, mos in the writings of Thomas Aquinas. However, at
dawn of th rn and with the rise in Enlightenment philosophy, his theori
were increa een as an affront to progress, with the idea that reason can
determine moral law becoming more widespread.

Nevertheless, many modern philosophers have taken inspiration from Aristotle in
again a renaissance of virtue ethics has sprung up.

Philippa Foot (1920–2010)

Foot was one of the main philosophers to bring virtue ethics back into philosophic
time when among many of her colleagues, non-cognitivism was popular partially
the Second World War. Central to these debates was the idea of 'thick' concepts,
and 'thin' concepts such as good and bad. Non-cognitivists argue that all moral st
of emotions, but difficulties occur when thick concepts are considered for they se
evaluative element. Foot posits in particular that these terms have a significance
from a simple description. For example, if one saw their friend insulting someone
person would evaluate that situation and say that the n is rude.

This is important for virtue ethics as thick concepts express a connection betwe
concepts of the world, ther irtue is a firm moral feature of the world w
particular, Foot highlights the importance of phronesis (practical wisdom) in huma
goodness; w cal only be good as such when they are employed towards goo
important in next section.

Alasdair MacIntyre (1929–present)

Aristotle argued that man is at heart a political animal, and as such politics should
society where people can be free but also where they can and should aim to live v
upon this idea, arguing that within modern society, when people talk about what
language that has lost its original meaning and context. Moreover when people in
argument they do so erroneously, for there is little-to-no shared or agreed upon g
assumptions. Therefore, where these terms have lost their original meaning (fro
they carry little-to-no force. Anyone can call anything good or bad without the po
common good being reached.

What does this mean? Effectively within modern sec at s rulers can exploit
interest using moral concepts, and people can be fundamentally alienated from w
democracy. MacIntyre would advocate instead a return to participatory democra
values or the collective good. These ideas will prove important when the applicat
human action is exa ed.

4. Detailed Analysis

Analysis of Aristotle inevitably has to accommodate the stretch of philosophy tha
publication of *Nicomachean Ethics*. Naturally some parts of his thought can seem
rooted in a more limited understanding of nature and science. For example, it wa
Aristotle argued that human beings are geared towards some purpose, just like ev
nature, which happens to be reason by virtue of only hum possessing it. Such
and objectionable philosophically not withstandin tic ns rom scientific adva
evolution or the identifying of animal int e rationality. Robert Nozick a

> *If man turned out to b in having a sense of humor, would it follo*
> *energies e telling jokes?*

Nevertheless, ough Aristotle's argument may be flawed, it does not mean his
within religion, morality may have the purpose of following God's Word and there
with him, other secular critics may argue that if general happiness and wellbeing
is? While some posit that morality is an illusion and nothing more than the expre
does not necessarily mean morality is devoid of use within a society. Human flou
of people can agree on even though it may in certain instances stand in oppositio
deontological ethics in interpreting ethical dilemmas. What is important to note
virtue ethics can possibly still be held as important, regardless of the meta-ethics
believes that moral statements are facts or not.

Why Virtue Ethics?

For a long while in modern philosophy, the main branches of ethical thought revo
and deontology. Yet over time obvious flaws emerged in both, such that despite
important in a secondary way as reinforcing moral law a ulators, virtue ethi
answering some of the criticisms levelled agai st ne

One simple distinction (that sc agr or don't agree with) is that virtue ethics i
centred. A continuo h deontological and consequentialist theories of e
seem to de al and decontextualize morality until humans become little m
robots follo set of prescribed rules. Virtue ethics, on the other hand, gives
rationality and evaluative skills to morally judge situations, with experience feedi
people and not simply machines that have made the correct moral choice in a sit
Stocker notes this in particular, giving the example of a person going to see their
rather than friendship as a counter-intuitive implication of deontological ethics. S
should be able to encompass friendship as a personal and particular moral value
Friendliness is one of the virtues Aristotle identified, so in Stocker's example, a m
granted as moral.

Beyond reinforcing the ideas of moral growth and autonomy, however, virtue eth
flexibility within moral choices. Whereas consequentialist and deontological theo
course of action, there may well be multiple courses of virtuous action in any give
ethics removes the strict moral requirements to always b ulating and obedie
person's life and situation to influence their mora de is s. However, some of t
conversely be perceived as failings of vir cs and many philosophers have c
theory to effectively guide peo li

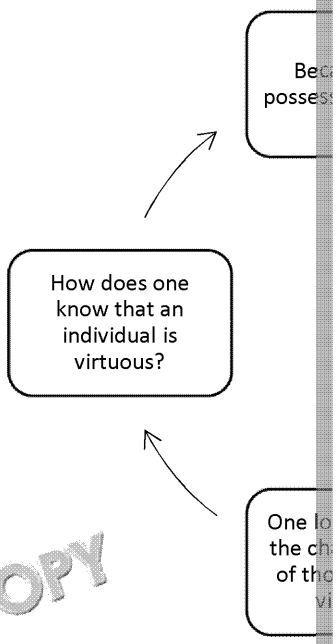
Discussion Point 24

Before reading ahead, research and analyse some of the flaws within pure deon
ethics that virtue ethics could provide a solution to.

Can Virtue Ethics Provide Effective Moral Guidance?

One aspect that was noted about virtue ethics was its emphasis on agent-centred morality. While this may have some advantages in avoiding the charge of depers philosophers have equally said that the existence of rules is a strength of consequ ethics. Rather than it being a limitation, the possibility of there being a morality t practical situations is a blessing. For example J L Mackie writes:

> *… though Aristotle's account is filled out with det[illegible] descriptions of many of t intellectual, the air of indeterminacy persists. We learn the names of the pairs of each of the virtues, but very little about where or how to draw the dividing lines,*



Certainly thi[illegible] identified in much of Aristotle's t[illegible]. For example, if I am looking out onto a person drowning in stormy weather, is jumping in an act of courageousness or recklessness? Even when people die in such situations, we are reluctant to say they acted morally badly or uncourageously, yet at the same time it's difficult to know at what point courage becomes a form of recklessness. The idea of there being a mean in between two forms of vice is an attractive one, but it doesn't necessarily allow us to form effective moral practice throughout our lives, especially if the boundaries are ill-defined. Arguably Aristotle doesn't provide great indications of the methodology of determining virtue from vice; at a push some might even say his philosophy is circular. One could even boil it dow[illegible] to his own statement here:

> *Thus, in one word, sta[illegible]acter arise out of like activities.*

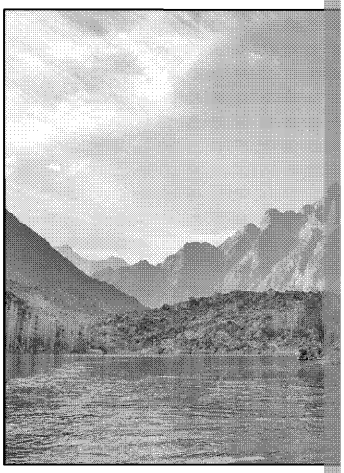
If we take t[illegible] of his that we learn virtues from our experience of virtuous pe know what virtues are? The basic reply Aristotle seems to suggest is that they are virtuous, flourishing people; but if we ask how we can determine whether they ar resolves down to pointing out the virtues they have. While it was noted before th on a common-sense understanding of morality, if it could be shown that there is e understanding, it could be argued he is making a circular argument, or at least on of what morality is. Robert Louden argues a similar point:

> *... we do not seem to be able to know with any degree of certainty who really is v means that moral scepticism is a serious problem for a virtue-based ethical syst*

Yet a similar thing can be said of other ethical theories. The question of whether hu what is good and what is bad is arguably partially answered by the history of ethics constantly faces the issue of how to quantify and measure happiness or pleasure, w many dilemmas over how to interpret mo[illegible]s. It is equally possible to make the identify basic virtue as that we can[illegible] basic forms of good or bad. To disparag the meaning of a large n[illegible] evaluative moral concepts in our language.

MacIntyre and Tradition

One suggestion to partially resolve this comes from Alasdair MacIntyre, who argu
good or bad coming from a vacuum and applying universally to everybody, morali
traditions and values of a community that has grown and developed over time. W
it is with the understanding of its goals or aims and it is not an abstract exercise in
of facts. However, this doesn't rule out morality involving rationality or real evalu
universalisable in a way that direct prescriptive command[illegible] be made for all pe
there can be some direct moral rule for everyone [illegible] idea in the first place
purpose of morality in 'knowing how' to [illegible] the history of how it arises.



How does this apply? W[illegible] up in a community [illegible] where there were regular stor[illegible] as such a code of morality arose as to how to deal with drowning people, I can correctly measure the courageousness of my actions against this history. Whereas if I lived in the desert, only visiting the sea once, on seeing a person drown I would have no historical or communal reference for my virtuous actions. In that situation, it is possible I may even look towards people within the seaside community for moral guidance.

This is a simple example, but one which illustrates the contextual grounding of vir
background, it is arguably more difficult to point out the flaw in virtue ethics of nc
operates and points towards moral action is rooted in more than simple laws or ca
the beginning of Book II, where Aristotle notes:

Again, of all the things that come to us by nature we first acquire the potentiali

By this, we are moral ba[illegible] morality is a process of growth within a certain c
background [illegible] society guided by laws, people still require knowledge of w
apply them.

Discussion Point 25

Is it necessary to provide an account for the origin of virtue? Research different
discuss whether virtue could be seen as a simple extension of our understandin
it is rooted in tradition as MacIntyre suggests.

Virtue Ethics as a Supplement

It is important to be aware that MacIntyre never views virtue ethics as a free-stan
rather sees virtue as a supplement to moral rules. At times he even says his work
about 'virtue ethics' because of this.

Under this sort of approach, one can easily [illegible] ideas of virtue with rule-base
way of mitigating the impersonal [illegible] theories place upon the individual
still be a lot of difficulties [illegible] approach. What is virtuous could stand ag
prove difficu[illegible] within any system of act-based morality. However, if Ma
forming fro[illegible] traditions and beliefs of a community, it may well be that any fo
internal set [illegible] alues, such that not only virtue but also deontological and conseq
and traditions of communities.

However, other virtue ethicists, including Aristotle himself, do put forward that vi
and is enough to establish moral guidance, although of a different kind.

V-Rules and Virtue Centred Moral Action

The issue to resolve, therefore, is how virtue can effectively guide action. Some p
Hursthouse have developed arguments around the idea that virtues don't just ne
rather can be developed to illuminate more complex moral issues. These can co
rules) such as 'do what is courageous' which can equally warn against vice. In pa
one can identify, means many virtue ethicists regard a morality based on virtue a
expansive. In any case the rules 'don't be lazy' or 'don't l… honest' provide eff

But what about more complex issues, su… uthanasia or abortion? Critics hav
directly relatable to these deep… issue… While at first glance that may be the cas
given accounts of virtue… discussions around modern ethical problems. Hur
the idea of … on … lation to not only the ethics of human virtue towards the
the related … f Eudaimonia, and whether abortion can be justified as progres
flourishing in certain circumstances.

Discussion Point 26

By yourself or in pairs, develop an analysis of how virtue ethics could provide et
dilemmas surrounding the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia. Is this possible an

Nevertheless, while this may be a step in the right direction, many critics would st
'effectively' action-guiding. For the less morally educated person, a widespread d
prove difficult when making a decision about a bigger issue such as abortion or eu
them in difficult circumstances. On the other hand, 'do what is the moral law' or
about the most happiness' are simpler moral concepts and while they may be co
do lead towards a more direct conclusion. Especially in A… tle, there is this diffi

… so too we become just by doing just … em… rate by doing temperate acts…

Yet there is an assumptio… …eone who not only has knowledge and the po
virtues, kno… …act… …an act is temperate in relation to a large number of c
may well be … can provide some action-guiding context with more developm
no matter w…, virtue's natural agent-centred basis means it will always struggle
reference for morality that everyone can understand.

Is Virtue Ethics Open to the Charge of Moral Relativism or Scepticism?

It has been noted previously that under Aristotle, it is difficult to determine exact
Mean. Equally, many have contended that the idea of virtue being the basis for e
different cultures across history have had different conceptions of what is a virtue
philosophers to argue that virtue is not an objective phenomenon and even that i
moral facts in a meaningful manner.

The idea that moral facts simply express emotion or sentiment is described as non-cognitivism, and a debate explored in Section 3 is still ongoing about whethe… …ic moral concepts such as the virtues expres… …cti… …oral facts or simply states of emotion. … …leads on from David Hume's argument t… …e… …not derive an 'ought' from an 'is'. … …or … …e, I can't, on observing a tree, make the ju… …arguing that the tree is bad. Similarly, there is a log… …gap between me seeing a person stealing, and making the case that people ought not to steal.

Key I…
It is imp…
moral r…
challen…
morality…
reject m…
could st…
pragm…
valuabl…
lack of …

This issue has greatly pervaded and influenced modern ethical debate, even towa
justice or courage. The difficulty with these kinds of concepts, however, is that th
simple goodness or badness. When I say someone is being selfish, it may be from
more than others, for example, but it evaluates parts of their behaviour and impo
condemnation. In the case of Foot, this particular evaluative aspect is vital to und
gap Hume identifies is bridged. It is the mechanism by which we morally evaluate
conclusions and facts that are more than simply states of [illegible]tion.

Another argument present by MacIntyre [illegible] because morality is developed in th
such as Eudaimonia in virtue ethics, [illegible] statements are evaluative facts in relati
the end point to which [illegible] are guided, they can be understood as more tha
For example, [illegible] cowardly act in leaving behind my friend in a burning bu
evaluation [illegible] cowardliness is in light of its negative impact towards overall hum

Can Virtues be Anything More than Relative?

Nevertheless, despite these responses providing an answer to arguments for gene
be posited that whatever one considers virtue to be is culturally relative. This wo
no applicability beyond whatever tradition it is located in, and for many people it
to judge whether something is objectively right or wrong. This has a number of p
there are no universal truth conditions for morality; there is nothing we can direct
applicable to all people. The second is that it can affect the way we interact with
philosophers argue that because we cannot determine universal truth conditions
attempt to impose their morality on those from other cultures.

There are a number of important things to point out, however, with this criticism.
first is that a logical jump has been made from observing that people disagree to a
that this disagreement means there is no overall truth. For example, two mathem
might disagree about whether a sum adds up to a particular number but this does
mean there is necessarily not a right answer. Many advocates for forms of objecti
morality often argue that there is not a strong argument to suggest why disagreem
between competing ideas of morality mean there are no objective moral facts.

The second [illegible] all forms of normative ethics can be objected to in a similar fas
the same way as there are competing sets of virtues, there are also competing mo
laws, or moral ends. While one society might value human happiness as the conc
maximise, another might view justice or love as the most important goal of morali
fact, some proponents of virtue ethics have even argued virtue ethics is better po
provide an account of universal morality. For example, Martha Nussbaum argues
there are a number of virtues universal across all cultures; where people disagree
their local or community's interpretation of them.

Therefore, while some might press arguments against virtue ethics for leading to
important to note that these arguments are not unique to virtue ethics. Moreove
equal burden of proof to show that disagreement is permanently unresolvable an

Virtue and Right Action

A final problem for virtue ethics will be [illegible] here; namely that if as Aristotle s
a good action without being virtuous then is there really a relationship between g
Similarly, one could point out that it is equally possible for a virtuous person to re
performing [illegible] Aristotle reinforces this issue in Chapter 4:

> *Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or te
> not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also do
> men do them.*

For critics, if this is true then there seems to be some discrepancy between what is
Under Aristotle's definition, it could well be that a person could do the right things
conceiving themselves as acting as a virtuous person, they are never actually virtuo
and for some critics is an indication that virtue cannot be the whole picture of how

However, some proponents of virtue ethics equally argue that this view of moralit
right action based around duty or law. In this way, the pe[illegible] is only doing the rig
endorsed by the relevant law as being moral, and [illegible]ticism of virtue ethics i
assumption about what is a right action i[illegible]ontrary to critics, philosophers ha
come up with an account of mor[illegible]ty w[illegible]at defining actions as being 'right' or 'v
a good person, and enco[illegible]ctions from virtuous states without recourse to
or duty.

Others, however, argue that virtue ethics does not have to reduce every moral act
It was explored previously how virtue ethics does not have to replace other moral
complement them and along these philosophical lines there may very well be acti
from duty or their consequences which designates them as 'right'. Therefore, dep
ascribes to virtue ethics as the only ethical theory, or whether it complements oth
numerous ways to answer this objection.

Discussion Point 27

One issue within virtue ethics is that seemingly an action could be virtuous but
invading soldier might be courageous on the battlefield but only to commit furth
virtue requires some other moral component in order to be 'good'?

Aristotle Versus Modern Virtue Ethics

Many of the objections presented a[illegible]es which are not directly answered by Ar
note how philosophers hav[illegible]ly criticised his theory, but the possible answe
have develope[illegible]fro[illegible]original starting point. For example, while the Golden M
component[illegible]to[illegible]le's thought, it is not entirely necessary for one to advocate
one's ethica[illegible]osophy, especially considering the difficulty of identifying where
falling. Therefore, it is useful to note in your own views, where you might agree w
from this thinking.

5. Wider Issues for Religion

Aristotle arguably has had a huge effect on religion in the past, especially through many of his ideas on natural law and virtue into a Christian context. For Aquinas, which is expressed in turn by virtue. To this end, our aim ppiness in this worl reconciliation with God and entry into heaven. Th id s have filtered down th influenced much of Christian moral thinki

For example, with the Cat he Catholic Church, there are seven virtues lin orrowed from Aristotle and ancient Greek philc /pi dence, justice, temperance and courage) and three Christi ues (faith, hope and charity/love). Whereas the Greek virtues are available to humans naturally, many theologians identify the others as only available by building a relationship with God. Therefore, it is very possible for virtue ethics both to be its own ethical theory as well as a subset of Christian morality. Both aim towards a particular goal of human flourishing, Christianity simply extends this idea to the afterlife.

Where there may be difficulties however is in whether virtue ethics can ever be t system of ethics that identifies what is right in the form of moral laws. In the cas could act virtuously without becoming a virtuous person. It is thus important to a person could act according to God's word without becoming virtuous.

In other words, does virtue ethics present a greater scope for Christian morality t absolute moral laws? Certainly Aristotle in suggesting Eudaimonia as the end goa fitting with Christianity, but there is a tension as to wh s idea of virtue can end and placed within an absolutist ethical struct re. Fo example, the idea of a might well oppose various virtues depe how a person judged the Golden virtuous lie to have greater signifi human flourishing than an absolute law

6. Wider Ethics

The *Nicoma Ethics* has had a long-lasting effect on morality and ethics throu falling out of favour during the Enlightenment era, various issues with consequenti theories have meant that in the past fifty years it has started receiving considerabl broadly seen influencing ethics as a whole is through a shifting of emphasis from a agent-centred morality; that is, rather than prescribing people a set of rules based people are educated in the importance of 'thick' evaluative concepts which they t

How is this important? Well one of the important points Aristotle makes through virtue is a fine balancing act which is only developed through education. This mea specific idea of moral growth. If someone simply follows rules without understan meaning then their moral actions are not significant to their moral development. understanding of how virtuous people act in any given situation, not just performi

Dis usion Point 28

Does Aristotle's emphasis on a elf-sufficient understanding of virtue m how we view virtue in r lationships? For example one might be inspir does that m o s take the immediate step of abstracting the idea of a fulfil that within one's own life?

Discuss whether Aristotle's development of virtue is too impersonal or whethe models of virtue could build up within communities and societies.

Where this may have significant consequences is on how morality is instilled and
Rather than simply informing people of rules, which neglects their own perspectiv
understanding morality, it is almost a requirement that examples of virtuous peo
to truly grasp an understanding of morality. Arguably for many, therefore, follow
a much different emphasis on moral education than other ethical theories.

Similarly, this also presents virtue ethics as a much less readily codifiable form of
formulated into rules or obligations and its focus on "thick" ethical concepts that h
component, rather than the simpler ideas of what is good and bad, means that if
moral theory, it may be much less straightforward than forms of deontological a
both these latter theories, there are generally seen to be right and wrong actions,
responsibility if they commit a bad action, even unknowingly. Yet within virtue e
springing from virtue could have multiple outcomes. Some see this as a flaw, for
should be a right or wrong action at any point in time. However, it is also possible
containing a different idea of moral responsibility, one less dependent on outcom
on a person's intentions and virtue as a whole.

What's important to note throughout all of this, is that for many philosophers, vir
of how humans morally develop and grow. In this line of thought, rather than virt
and more radical idea of how morality functions in human beings, our intuition sh
consequence theories only present a partial picture of how morality operates. Fo
moral theory by itself, while for others, it supplements the gaps in other theories.
virtue ethics on how ordinary morality might function are numerous and, dependi
human psychology as well as the state of Eudaimonia humans might achieve, dep
might be implemented within various ethical dilemmas and issues.

7. Wider Issues for Perception and Experience

While virtue ethics potentially does not have huge consequences on how people
note from the discussions earlier within the guide about thick ethical concepts, ho
a greater part within virtue ethics than other moral theories. It was noted how th
an evaluative aspect to these to judge if someone is selfish for example depen
Someone at first might appear to be hoarding things for themselves, only at a late
then raises significant nuance within virtue ethics. While in deontological and
idea of good can be quite easily translated across different cultures or perspective
difficult. They are often rooted in various practices and social behaviours and mo
beings interpret those behaviours.

For some philosophers, this has led to the conclusion that virtues are relative to a
pleasure are not. Yet there are others, such as Nussbaum, who have argued that th

Setting aside for the moment whether this debate can be resolved, there can argu
these ideas about how people might experience the world if they are taught to lo
virtue. Aristotle and other virtue ethicists have stressed moral education and spe
perceiving what is both a virtue and a vice in equal measure. Moreover, within su
conforming one's pleasures and pains to align with what is virtuous and unvirtuou
perhaps more than any other moral theory, contains within it the implication that
important shift in the way one perceives and experiences the world. An unvirtuo
kleptomaniac, may in the process of becoming virtuous, develop an entirely differ

Some might argue that this is the case for any moral theory, especially within Chri
the importance of the sublimation of unacceptable desires. But there are situatio
a person could for following rules or pleasure-maximising principles as a form of s
in character where it is possible to see the difference is that virtue ethics require
experience for it to apply and relate to human beings, whereas deontological and
possibility of a person doing what is good by set rules, without a change in charac
that one is able to cleanly make is a matter of debate, but it is important to note s
consequences virtue ethics might have beyond other ethical theories.

Form and Justify an Argumen

Throughout this section both Aristotle's original arguments within the *Nicomache* have been analysed, and it is now up to you to decide whether you believe them t particular consider:

- Should all morality be viewed as aiming towa[illegible]da[illegible]monia? Is it import teleological in this sense?
- Is moral virtue develop[illegible]by [illegible]? Can it be possible to be a moral pers virtue?
- Is v[illegible]e [illegible]edian between two vices? Are there any virtues in particul this [illegible]ient?
- What advantages might virtue ethics have over other ethical theories? Ar a moral theory by itself, or should it be understood within the framework consequentialist ethics?
- Can virtue ethics provide effective moral guidance, or does it simply desc character consists of?
- Is Aristotle, in forming his arguments from ordinary moral intuition, cultur virtue? Does this open virtue ethics to the charge of moral scepticism or
- Is there really a relationship between virtue and right action? Could a per *reference* to virtue at all?
- What are the possible consequences in adopting a virtue ethics perspecti better with our natural moral intuitions and p[illegible]o[illegible]y than other ethical

Activities

Activity 1

Below is a table summarising Aristotle's arguments within *Nicomachean Ethics*. Read and using your own interpretation of the anthology, the extract and any other ideas sections of the table.

Nicomachean Ethics – Aristotle	
Aristotle argues:	**Argume**
It is possible to distinguish between intellectual and moral virtues, virtues only being developed through habit.	
Virtues are destroyed by excess or defect. Every virtue lies in a (golden) mean between two vices.	
Becoming virtuous is not simply about performing virtuous acts, but performing them as virtuous people would do.	
There are some actions that are simply bad and can do not fall between two vices.	
Virtue is not always weighted completely evenly between two vices. Often there is a vice, that by its being further away from the original virtue, can be identified as a virtue's counterpart or opposite.	
Virtue is concerned with pleasures and pains, in so much that a virtuous person will cultivate their pleasures and pains to align with what is virtuous and what is unvirtuous.	
Virtue is concerned with choice and as such cannot be a passion or capacity, but rather a state of character.	
Conclusion: Virtue is a state of character, in a mean between two vices.	

Activity 2

In pairs or groups, consider the recent political discussion around Edward Snowden, blower on a large number of unlawful data-collection practices that the NSA was p revelations on the surveillance state caused a great deal of uproar, yet there are p Snowden that have emerged.

The first is one of Snowden as a hero, who courageously exposed the corruption an surveillance of ordinary people, something which many people wishing for a degree greatly disturbing.

The second is that of Snowden as a traitor, who in exposing a lot of classifi potentially put security agencies for the USA at material risk in their operatio gone so far as to say has contributed to global destabilisation.

The first task for group to is discuss from an Aristotelian perspective, whether Snow have performed a virtuous or unvirtuous action. Consider especially what the groun whether these shift depending on the context and environment of a particular actio

Next consider whether even if Snowden was courageous or reckless, was his action say he was courageous but overall his action was bad, does this mean something is appreciation of the situation? Similarly if he was reckless, but the action was good, sometimes be good?

Lastly consider whether virtue in deeper situations such as the one above might be b deontological or consequentialist framework. Is what matters most here the moral r Snowden's actions, and how might virtue fit into both of these pictures?

Practice Exam Questions

Answer the following questions giving reference to the passage below:

We must, however, not only describe virtue as a state of character, but also say what kind of state it is. We remark, then, that every virtue or excellence both brings the thing of which it is the excellence into good condition and makes the work of that thing be done well; e.g. the excellence of the eye makes both eye and work good; for it is by the excellence of the eye that we see well.

Virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relatively to us, being determined by reason, and by that reason by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it. Now it is a mean between two vices, that which depends on excess and that which depends on deficiency. Again it is a mean because the vices respectively fall short of or exceed what is right in both passions and actions, while virtue both finds and chooses that which is intermediate. Hence in respect of what it is and defines the essence of it virtue states its essence, virtue is a mean, with regard to what is best and right an extreme.

a) Outline and clarify the different ideas presented in this passage about

b) Analyse the different implications for virtue ethics as a foundation for

Level	Descriptor
Level 1	There is limited knowledge, terminology and technical language, oft inappropriately. Only a surface level knowledge of important religio is displayed and religious ideas and beliefs addressed are of a limited always correct, or sufficiently connected to the extract.
Level 2	There is a moderate knowledge, terminology and technica presented, although with a few mistakes. A thorough knowledge an religious beliefs is displayed but with room for further dev and beliefs addressed are of a limited variety, but generally cor nected to the extract.
Level 3	There is a broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical la rigorously presented throughout an appropriate and justified respon thorough and fully developed knowledge and comprehension of imp and concepts is displayed. Religious ideas and beliefs addressed are correct and pertinently connected to the extract.

Question No.	Indicative Content (10 marks AO1)
a)	**AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge and u language and terminology when responding to the question.** **Candidates may refer to the following.** • Virtue is for Aristotle a state of char ra her than a passion o with choice. • Virtues are means between two vices of excess and defect. The neither re a coward. The virtue of courage in turn bri co person as well as the acts they perform. Th mean of virtue is destroyed by excess or defect. What is a vi much of a particular state of character. • The Golden Mean applies to all virtues, but not to all vices; there wholly bad and do not fit into a scale of virtue and vice. • The Golden Mean does not always lie in the middle, often there away in character from the virtue can effectively be classed as its cowardice and courage.

Level	Descriptor	Mark
Level 1	There is a very limited knowledge, terminology and technical language, often u inaccurately or inappropriately. Some topics and details are chosen with rudim made between a small variety of aspects of the question. Any criticisms or judg only substantiated by general or non-specific evidence.	
Level 2	There is a limited amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language, s well presented, although with some mistakes. Relevant topics and details are deconstructed and links are made between a small variety of aspects of the ques Criticisms and judgements of a few aspects are made but with little substantiati reasoned evaluation of supporting evidence.	
Level 3	There is a moderate amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language, well presented, although with some mistakes. Relevant topics and details are deconstructed with a basic progression of reasoned arguments throughout the a Links are made between a lot of the aspects of the question. Criticisms and judg few aspects are made with an attempt at substantiation by a reasoned evaluation supporting evidence.	
Level 4	A broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language is well pres few mistakes. Relevant topics and details are deconstructed with rational and lo progressions of reasoned arguments developed throughout the answer. Links a between a broad variety of the aspects of the question. Criticisms and judgemen of almost all of the aspects of the question and are substantiated by a reasoned e some supporting evidence.	
Level 5	A broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language is well pres correctly and rigorously, throughout a justified response. Relevant topics and d critically deconstructed with rational and logical progressions of reasoned argu strongly developed. Criticisms, judgements and links are made of/between all o aspects of the question and completely substantiated by a thorough and reasone evaluation of supporting evidence.	

Question No.	Indicative Content (5 marks AO1, 15 marks AO2)
b)	**AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluat be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using speci terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting the AO described below.** **Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1.** • Aristotle saw virtue, being moderated by practical wisdom as the fo morality. This can be called virtue ethics and has seen a resurgence philosophical thought. • Virtue ethics is not always the only foundation of moral philosophy, incorporated it into deontological or consequentialist systems of mo flaws in those theories. **Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2.** • The Golden Mean may well be inaccurate for it is entirely relative to mean may lie or even if one exists. Can look at whether a person co truthfulness. Aristotle argues the mean is where a man of practical v determine it but equally how does one judge what is wisdom? • Moral relativism possibly poses a threat to virtue ethics as a foundati virtue is dependent on cultural outlooks then it is possible to questio ever be objective knowledge of virtue transferrable between differen • Virtues as thick ethical concepts contain an evaluative component and than the simple good or bad present in deontological and consequenti • Aristotle based his idea of virtue from common-sense observations. I question whether the aim of morality is human flourishing or perhap • Virtue ethics may not be accurately action-guiding as it is difficult to complex situations. Can think of v-rules but it is possible to criticise providing clear standpoints on complex, modern day ethical dilemm • It is arguably possible to identify good and bad actions without refer possibly indicates it is not a complete foundation for morality. • Virtue ethics can be considered as a supplement to consequentialist ethical theories similar to how Aquinas incorporated it into Christia • Virtue ethics may be too demanding and dependent on moral luck. e is rare under Aristotle, this seems against common-sense mora ordinary lives many people live.

Phronesis	Practical wisdom that guides how we discern virtue and virtuous acts and apply them to our own lives.
Eudaimonia	Human flourishing or happiness, and the central aim of all virtue and morality.
The Golden Mean	The theoretical, desirable point between two vices of excess and defect where id virtue is supposed to lie.
Is-Ought Problem	A problem developed by David Hume; it poses how one can derive a moral law a 'ought' from other forms of descriptive knowledge when there is no logical basis do so.
Thick Ethical Concepts	Concepts such as 'selfish' or 'untrustworthy' that both have a descriptive and an evaluative moral element.
Moral Relativism	The idea that there are no objective mor[illegible]hs[illegible]d any moral statements are true in so far as they align or are [illegible] prevailing social or cultural standards
Moral Scepticism	The idea that it is im[illegible]for anyone to possess moral knowledge or that such knowledge[illegible]os[illegible]le.

22. **Moral Knowledge –** Students can explore a number of different positions, including
moral facts are natural or non-natural. Can examine also how Aristotle derives his id
capacity for virtue as part of our nature but not virtue itself.

23. **Moral Luck –** Students can question whether virt[illegible] places less of a burden on
environment. Similarly, does it condem[illegible] are unlucky to be unvirtuous all
question whether this affects o[illegible] moral responsibility. If virtue is governed
it ever right to blame so[illegible] their actions?

24. **Activity** [illegible] own work. Can look at the high burdens on people placed by co
deontol[illegible]thics, etc.

25. **Origins of Virtue –** Can argue that providing an account on how a person gets objecti
all forms of ethics. Where virtue ethics might differ is its evaluative component whic
individual's perception as rooted in cultural traditions. However it may also be that
extension of 'ought' morality which moves on from simply defining rules for what is

26. **Virtue Ethics and Euthanasia –** Students can look at how courage, compassion, bene
into an encounter with a person wishing to die. There is no strict rule against killing,
virtuous ending of life. However at the same time, some might argue respect, empa
create reasons to favour things like palliative care.

27. **Virtue and Right Action –** Some philosophers have identified a virtue as only being a
good context. The person courageously doing evil deeds then is acting primarily out
to question this, for it is difficult to always judge what might b[illegible] good and virtuous. I
sensitive time displaying virtue or ignorance?

28. **Virtue Ethics and Impersonality –** Ari[illegible]rds friendship as important within be
be open to the same alienati[illegible] as deontological and consequentialist ethics.
important because it i[illegible] but rather because we morally value friends themsel
do as a [illegible]s [illegible]oes, or can they simply do as their moral idols do?

'Euthanasia and Doctors' Ethics' – Michael W

What you need to know before starting…

1. The concepts of sanctity of life and quality of life and how they apply to ethic euthanasia.
2. The different ways one might approach m ra co erations around the lega
3. Some of the weaknesses behi lit al slippery slope or 'wedge' argumen legalisation of volunt asia.
4. The wa hic an and virtue-based ethical arguments have been made and wh recent years these are becoming more prominent than religious v

1. Introduction

This extract draws on Section 6.1: Medical Ethics on the syllabus and you are advi of the anthology alongside this topic. Additionally for owners of the ZigZag Cours Ethics Year 2, the section on Medical Ethics can be found on pp. 36-47.

The extract is taken from contemporary philosopher Michael Wilcockson's book *Issu* as an illumination of the various different philosophical arguments for and against le it looks at the competing ideas of 'Sanctity of Life' (SOL) and 'Quality of Life' (QOL) ar ideas gives rise to various perspectives on whether there is a difference between pas whether it is the right of someone to choose their own death. This guide will begin b concepts involved in the discussion around euthanasia, before analysing them in ligh noting the consequences that legalising euthanasia would or religious belief, e

2. Summary of Ideas

While suicide has been dis ady throughout history, modern medical adv more attentio as ed in recent years towards euthanasia and whether interests of suffering from terminal illness and those in wider society who m consequenc galisation might bring.

What is euthanasia?

Wilcockson's essay begins by noting specifically what is under investigation when Simply defining it as mercy-killing leaves a lot of room for interpretation and he n a moral society where killing is not indiscriminately allowed, it has to be part of m means euthanasia has to be practised by a doctor and regulated to only be allowe

> *The consideration of 'euthanasia' at present, is rightly a medical issue. Put sim his patients in some circumstances?*

Sanctity of Life

The concept of the sanctity of life has been prominent in of religious thought often formed the basis for a general opposition to ed asia. If every life is a gift sacred then only God has the right to tak owing humans to end life as they for that person and therefore sinful. is often accompanied by the idea that su essential parts of life ar being obstacles to a happy life or death, they growing clo Go one's own faith.

Discussion Point 29

Sanctity of life is generally seen as a religious principle, but are there any possibl understanding of life as sacred or intrinsically important? Discuss and note down support such a belief.

Quality of Life

Another concept that many people argue is more important than the sanctity of life the general happiness and welfare one experiences over the course of one's life and greater significance than the sanctity of life, argue that it forms the basis for a stron passive but also active euthanasia. Wilcockson notes the views of Peter Singer in th

> *Singer suggests that the SOL belongs to an older more absolute value view of li Christianity the philosophical basis which establishes life as a gift from God or p longer be sensibly sustained.*

While there are secular people who believe in forms of the sanctity of life, Singer that ethical theories based from religious beliefs have often been more accep euthanasia often encompass a greater variety of moral considerations and inclined to adapt to changing practices and advances in medicine. Wilcockson in pointing out that with ever greater technological complexity come new issues wit quality of life arguments equally have to contend.

Active and Passive Euthanasia

Every doctor is considered to have a duty to save and preserve life wherever possible. This forms a big part of the Hippocratic Oath which states:

> *I will give no deadly medicines to anyone if asked, nor suggest any such counse*

This has often formed the basis for the British Medical Association's (BMA) opposition to euthanasia. However, the BMA also state that there is a large difference between active euthanasia (direct killing) and passive euthanasia (indir killing), even if they do not speak of the latter as cases of euthanasia, but rather withholding or withdrawing treatment.

How is this justification made? Wilcockson explores three moral principles which s a greater degree of moral culpability in ending someone's life than simply or save it in all circumstances. These can be seen to form the basis for the UK's cu explicitly forbid active but not passive forms of it. Altogether they uphold the sanc which doctors, for the sake of patient autonomy or wellbeing, may act in ways tha

Discussion Point 30

The imperative to give no deadly medicines to anyone if asked is part of the orig However, there are other modern formulations which present similar but differ doctors. Could any of these modern formulations give a different perspective o

1. Acts versus omissions

This distinguishes between different forms of acts that we might regard as blamew omissions that are intended are morally equivalent to intended actions. Wilcocks

> *If A chooses to shoot B then we classify this as an intended act; if C sees A and f this is an intended omission.*

Many people would argue that C is still responsible in failing to stop A, and that at are at least partly as bad as intention. However within medical ethics, th be that not attempting to save a patient in certain circumstances may be regarde was to be for the sake their quality of life would be too low or that saving them request. Wilcockson examines issues around premature babies in this respect:

> *If a baby is born very prematurely a doctor might have to consider whether they Some argue that morally they may withhold treatment either as a form of passiv voluntary euthanasia) or simply 'letting nature take its course'.*

Note this does mean doctors have an automatic right to withhold treatment from acknowledgement that in extreme circumstances there is a significant moral diffe patient and simply omitting to treat them. Similarly, it can be presented that if o patient before considering to withdraw treatment on the basis they might not ha life, what was once passive euthanasia could be argued to become active euthan

2. The doctrine of double effect

This has had a long history of discussion, especiall w hi Natural Law ethics. It a perform a morally good action that has a de-effect, so long as the side-effec This can even include the side-eff t e g foreseen. Wilcockson gives the examp

> *For instan A d themselves against an attack from B using reasonable f result in th but it is not their intention that this should happen. If B the the DDE does not hold A to be blameworthy for an act they did not intend.*

This principle is often used to justify the use of high amounts of pain-relieving dru even though the doctor knows the drugs may also have the side-effect of hasteni ending of their life can be foreseen but it is not the intended purpose of the treat

However, it is difficult to say whether the principle isn't open to abuse as Wilcock double effect relies on someone's correct intentions and there may be cases whe intends the hastening of a patient's death despite indicating otherwise. Similarly, distinction between intention and foresight is enough to justify certain cases of pa ideally should know the effects of the medicines he is providing and if administeri normally bad medicine, then giving explicit overdoses to patients may well count the patient properly.

Discussion Point 31

How might the examples W cks n gives of self-defence and the doctor's app morally differ? Is ther g contained in the doctor's practice that might re doctrine ble ect?

3. Ordinary and extraordinary means

This principle concerns the lengths that one is obliged to go to when preserving lif proportionate and disproportionate means. While suicide has been traditionally the sanctity of life, equally some have recognised that people do have a limited a wish their lives to be.

The most standard case of this as Wilcockson notes, is the BMA allowing compete treatment, including that which will prolong their life. This can in effect be seen a Yet such an argument places the idea of a doctor's intervention as a purely artifici doctor the autonomy to save a patient. If a doctor, for example, withholds treatm the patient's wishes, they may well be guilty of negligence o t worst wilful omiss suicide. To this end some argue that it is a doctor's d ty t treat their patients th of the circumstances. This can encompass n on ality, so that the doctor isn't patient with the most extreme po e sures, but instead to find what could towards the good of both t d doctor. Wilcockson gives the example of a

> *For inst very handicapped baby… might be considered so ill that no amo their con significantly. In this case a doctor might then prescribe 'nursin their needs, knowing that the baby will die shortly.*

The question overall is whether to accept that allowing the end of life in some circumstances is good and proportionate medicine. While there are great difficulties in determining what would form a basis for a minimally good quality of life, there can often be a general consensus as to when a life requires too much to save for too little. Wilcockson mentions John Finnis' 'basic goods' argument, which attempts to provide a list of what is valuable in life, such as aesthetic experience, social ability and more, yet it is also important to note that those sticking strictly to sanctity of life arguments may regard such ideas as irrelevant to the consciousness of human life itself.

The Case for Legalising Euthanasia

Wilcockson identifies two main reasons why people argue for the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia: personal autonomy and quality of life. The debate is largely focused on voluntary forms as various forms of passive euthanasia are regarded as acceptable, and therefore issues in severe pain and/or terminally ill wanting assistance to end their lives.

Personal Autonomy

In Britain it is noted that the 1961 Suicide Act permits people to choose to die with forbids others from helping them. This has led many critics to argue that this creates who have the means to end their lives and those who don't. For why should a person to have the personal right to suicide but a person physically incapable of committing unable to have help performing the same act? If the law was consistent, then everyone to die, with help or not, without recrimination from the law.

While some may argue that a third-party involvement unfairly shifts the responsibility another, perhaps unwilling or reluctant participant, there is good grounds for this from perspective of equal rights. In the eyes of proponents of voluntary euthanasia, despite it being professionals to help someone to die, there is often an unequal burden for families as their loved ones suffer.

Discussion Point 32

Should one argue a person has the right to take their own life? Or do we simply have physically stop it in many cases? Discuss whether the right to die is one we should have whether we should simply grant the right to self-ownership over one's body.

Quality of Life

The other case made for euthanasia is based on the argument that it is acceptable if quality of life is unbearable and no medical advancement can save them. In this case to die than to make them keep on living. Wilcockson cites the model of practice in how this could be enacted in another country. There are a number of stipulations such be explicit, persistent and without coercion as well as the patient must be facing an future improvement. Furthermore, two doctors have to give advice and approval to with doctors then submitting their proposal to a public prosecutor who accordingly whether or not to allow euthanasia.

For many proponents of euthanasia, this rule governing model reflects a caring society for welfare is still observed without any reference to the sanctity of life. While permitted, many argue that there are extreme cases that don't meet the requirements sanctity of life principles in these cases is fundamentally inhumane.

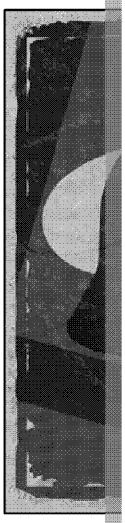
Objections to Legalising Euthanasia

On the other hand there are a number of arguments, oriented around the idea of demonstrate that legalising euthanasia possibly devalues the inherent sacredness autonomy and can lead to a series of negative consequences that outweigh any value euthanasia might have.

The Wedge Argument

This argument is given the greatest treatment by Wilcockson as often it is the mai
are still fearful to legalise voluntary euthanasia. The reasoning goes that were ass
euthanasia to be allowed, it would lead in practice to widespread abuse and num
beyond the original intentions of the law. As Wilcockson notes this can be seen t
which argues that something *'permitted initially as an exception becomes the rule*
premises, such as:

- *There are always those who exploit a weaker rul*
- *What begins with the best of intenti[illegible] sults in undesirable ends*



Yet the great difficulty with this argument is that it seems beyond simply being [illegible]or [illegible]. It makes an empirical, inductive claim, that because things have gone badly in the past with some laws, things will on probability go badly in the future. This logical jump for many people is unwarranted, especially when there is little evidence of widespread abuse of modern euthanasia practices where it is legal.

Some supporters of the wedge argument have used the Nazi euthanasia and eugenics programme as an example against legalisation, but as Helga Kuhse points out the issues with this were less to do with euthanasia itself and rather the racial prejudices behind it. What the wedge argument seems to warn against really is the slipping of morality, which arguably is not beholden to any law. An equal argument could be made that we should not imprison people because people with power might abuse it and imprison whomever they desire. Naturally this happens to a great extent throughout the w
argument against prison but rather the understanding of the correct moral use and
can be made of the wedge argument regarding euthanasia.

Another argument closer to modern practices, however, comes from abortion law
abortion being legal for [illegible] extreme cases, the large number performed every da
form of birth control than an illegal but occasionally necessary practice. Yet again
separate issue with its own set of moral principles under discussion and many crit
such analogies as lacking and not addressing the core arguments in favour of legal

Patient Autonomy

Earlier it was explored that many advocates for the legalisation of voluntary eutha
as infringing upon the choice and autonomy of those suffering in constant pain. A
arguments on the other side that equally put forward that legalisation would redu
overall. How does this work?

The BMA in particular is very resistant to legalisation due to their belief that it wo
to the relationships between doctors and patients and destroy the trust that is re
administer care effectively. This argument effectively puts forward that maintaini
all people is more morally important than the case-by-case issues of pain and disc
people face, and while legalisation might help a few it presents a greater danger t
vulnerable individuals such as the elderly who may no longer trust doctors to have
their hearts.

Moreover, [illegible]e the law might bring about a change in society's overall attitu
encourage changes in attitudes towards disability, illness and old age such that peo
and healthy might be labelled differently. From this, rather than being drawn into
legalisation point out that the ideal society is one that cares, and allowing voluntar
institution risks undermining this dedication to care, especially for those unable to

What are the Responsibilities of a Fair Society?

So far arguments have been outlined for and against legalisation of voluntary eut consider the best form of society and the responsibilities that accompany it. Put s the individual and the community?

Wilcockson cites John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, which outlines the function of law t and to in turn protect the rights and existence of individuals, in order that the maj not exploit minority sections. Law in this way is minimal and non-interfering. Loo from personal autonomy, it can be seen that legislating is inherently a difficult ent In one way it is important that the law does not affect those suffering and wishing same time, if legalising euthanasia threatens the autonomy of those most vulnera prioritise the protection of minorities and legislate against it.

There is also the question of law in practice which often has to accompany how th about a particular issue. Some point towards a shift in popular support, as Wilcoc legalising voluntary euthanasia; but as Bernard Williams notes, in what he describ legalisation for something can be seen to give tacit approval towards certain beha were decriminalised or legalised, despite many people possibly urging others to re those who would feel vindicated in throwing their rubbish on the streets. Therefo arguments in favour of legalising voluntary euthanasia, there may well be pragma time, to refrain from permitting it in medical practice.

Discussion Point 33

Does legalising something effectively psychologically or socially permit it? Give o for and against this belief.

3. Philosophical Context

There have been numerous parliament discussions over euthanasia in the UK as st any form of assisting a person in their suicide is counted as illegal and pun imprisonment. The debate is further muddied by other European countries havin and British people travelling abroad for these services, an act which no one has be of writing.

At various times bills have been introduced to parliament but none have passed. vulnerable people, and medical organisations such as the BMA strongly opposing euthanasia and pushing for better palliative care for those suffering. Nevertheles *Journal* in an editorial urged organisations such as the BMA to refrain from partisa arguing it was obstructing real debate within Parliament on the issue.

The possible negative consequences of euthanasia are often linked to atrocities wh world when euthanasia has been adopted by a state. The Nazi party is a particular many people fear what legalisation could lead to. Studies on attitudes towards eut greatly between different sections of the population. Dignity in Dying, a charity in campaigning for legalisation of assisted dying, state that 86% of people with a disa law, yet at the same time in a 2009 British Medical Ethics questionnaire, 49% of doct current laws on euthanasia. This illustrates a difficult set of circumstances over who s authority and for what universal support may be needed before an effective chan

Peter Singer (1946–present)

Singer is an Australian philosopher who has written extensively in applied ethics, particularly from a utilitarian perspective. He argues that many of the traditional sanctity of life arguments against abortion, euthanasia and other modern medical practices are slowly giving way to quality of life arguments, which focus more on what brings the greatest pleasure or happiness within a given situation. As such, he has argued for voluntary euthanasia to be legalised, along with some form of non-voluntary euthanasia. He has particularly drawn criticism at times for suggesting that it could be acceptable in some circumstances to euthanise some severely disabled babies.

Jonathan Glover (1941–present)

Glover is a moral philosopher who has written about euthanasia in his 1977 book *Causing Death and Saving Lives*. He particularly focuses on the concept of autonomy, arguing that when the rational reasons a person might have and judged sound, then if that person has a right to end their life, society equally h that if the person is incapable of doing it themselves. Furthermore, he criticises th these circumstances from a consequentialist position. Whether or not one intends predicted and allowed to occur, the results are still the same regardless of whether happen. In the case of euthanasia, therefore, a doctor engaging in passive euthana as if it were active, with double effect simply being a guilt-avoiding rationalisation

4. Detailed Analysis

As part of the Summary of Ideas, a number of different arguments both for and ag examined. Within this section, a number of the key issues and concepts will be ex philosophically at both the moral grounds for legalising voluntary euthanasia and legislation might face.

Personal Autonomy and Rights

One of the strongest arguments for euthanasia can be perceived to be from an un right to die. The UK does not legislate against people attempting to commit suicid would argue that it would be inhumane. Naturally, it is expected that proper supp health would dissuade people from committing suicide, but sometimes it is accep life that they might have had valid reasons for committing suicide, even if their fa preferred them not to.

In a similar fashion, if a person has a right to die, then many people argue this cor society and others to respect the wishes of people who exert this right. In the pri extraordinary means, Wilcockson notes the position of the BMA and others that:

> *… a person is within their rights to refuse surgery on grounds that it is over a ordinarily for bare existence.*

Yet on the other hand, if we examined in natural law a person who kills themselve under traditional Christian theology this would not be allowed. It is possible to as real life between a person exerting their right to let nature take its course and a p

For the utilitarian there is none. If the only moral end is a person's welfare, pleasu course of action promotes that most is the right one. For someone who holds life difference if one accepts any sort of active human intervention in these matters a has to define what is natural and what is unnatural, such that standard medical pr technology such as pacemakers aren't also outlawed. For many it seems a strang artificial preservation of a life as natural but the artificial ending of a life as unnatu

Discussion Point 34

Would a Kantian system of ethics treating humans as ends effectively rule out a
them die? Arguably this would be simply treating another person as a mere mea
there any way to avoid such an objection?

More difficult to determine still is a place in be w en ere a person might rega
end, in the vein of Kantian ethics, yet is p importance in the consequences
where many people ethically li nd i Glover who makes a case for euthanasia

*… volun ut is justified in those cases where we know that the pers
could, an e we believe that the conditions that would make it right to allo*

Why is this the case? We can consider three parts to this conclusion. The first is
would want to commit suicide, which is realising for some people that death is pr
that we can realise that for them living is worse than dying.

The second is that the individual's will must be persistent. In cases of depression, fo
person's mind will change and they will re-examine their reasons for wanting to die
mental illness may not meet the psychological criteria. Rather, a person has to be
their mind, not just in the present but in the total possible future of their life. If the
then they will commit suicide if able and if they are stopped then it is denying them

The third is considering when it would be right to assist suicide. For someone who h
physical criteria, if they have a rational wish to die and their autonomy is respected,
be respected in turn. For a right to be a right, there has esponsibility on beh
everyone's autonomy in light of their rights is being fulfilled. For example, if people
person couldn't physically bring it to th m , it would be regarded as inadequat
die of dehydration. In the sa v ght to life means states must provide health
people, then an actual ht to die means states are required to provide means for th

Therefore, s as one accepts that people have a right to autonomy and so a ch
die, there is a strong case to be made that a society should in principle legalise assis
euthanasia. Yet it is possible to criticise Glover in places. For example, one could sa
being in sound enough mind to determine that they want to die. While someone is
to see possible future medical advances helping them, or picture a time when their
through habituation. Similarly it ignores familial rights. What if a person's family w
them, or knows a person well enough to determine they are not completely sound
presupposes that the only person in question is the individual and the right to die tr

The Wedge Argument

A number of forms of this argument were presented in Section 2 from a historical
euthanasia practised in the past, and from a value-based perspective, from organi
are more anxious about the overall effect on doctor-p r lationships. But as
the Nazi's is not an effective comparison, espe ia y w n the discussion is aroun
euthanasia in liberal Western democr s, n involuntary euthanasia in a histori
such worries are generated or ba is or a slide in moral values rather than the

Philosophic at wedge argument more specifically states in these cases, is th
euthanasia w to widespread non-voluntary or even involuntary active euthana

There are a number of ways to address such a fear. The first is to ask why, when t
support it, this link should be made in the first place. While there are some ethici
voiced their support for non-voluntary euthanasia, there is nothing inconsistent w
rights in individuals to suggest a society can adopt voluntary euthanasia and not n

people can criticise the argument from examining euthanasia by the Nazi party, it the differences in opinion between legalising forms of euthanasia are simply diffe fear of non-voluntary euthanasia as not fitting into a country's prevalent value sys legislation can occur that allows one form but forbids the other. This could occur requirements for consent and making sure any patient is fully aware of the conse decision. Therefore, while there may be a fear of a slippery slope towards involun this is more an argument for careful legislation and not simply avoiding a practice people has the potential to end their unnecessary and debilitating suffering.

The second argument is to simply argue that in some cases non-voluntary euthana there have been controversial cases made by Singer for euthanising severely disab contentious examples are coma patients, where they might have expressed a wish while living, but since injury are unable to express that wish when needed. In man UK have in the past eventually switched off life-sustaining medical equipment, an passive euthanasia. One key example is Tony Bland, who in 1993 was the first eve to die in this way after suffering severe brain damage that left him in a persistent

Therefore, critics of the wedge argument can point out that if such forms of non-v permitted, the idea of active non-voluntary euthanasia in cases where patient aut present moment is less threatening so long as there is legal protection. In the Net euthanasia has been legalised for over twenty years, there have been a number o out in 1995, 2001, 2005 and 2010. The findings have been greatly poured over bu has been that no slippery slope has occurred. A 2009 study by Judith A C Rietjens the majority of physicians thought the euthanasia act improved legal certainty an terminating acts. One important thing to note however is that around sixty perce euthanasia, with the remainder generally being cases where patient autonomy wa and family members in turn making judgements. Many people would argue from moral distinction between voluntary and non-voluntary euthanasia isn't always ju medical circumstances, the latter may be permitted. The important thing, is that carefully regulated and monitored to prevent abuses of power.

ca

With wedge arguments, it is important to consider how evidence provid examining from a strict idea of an intrinsic value of human life, then the legalised euthanasia might be a disagreeable enough result to justify it quality of life is the main priority, small outlying cases of abuse of the l greater benefits it provides. Therefore when taking into account past e how and to what extent they refute the wedge arguments in principle a

The Active/Passive Distinction

An interesting aspect of medical practice was noted in the previous section, speci be okay to turn off a comatose patient's life support in certain circumstances but that patient's death. This distinction was examined in the idea of acts versus omis being a doctor simply respecting a patient's or family's wishes against taking the s directly. However, is this distinction really helpful?

In both cases the same result occurs and if one imagines a situation with a comatos judged they would no longer want to be alive, what plausible difference is there be support and giving them a lethal cocktail of drugs? While some might feel the doct first case, it is difficult to determine exactly where there is a difference in moral sign doctor purposefully takes steps they know will result in the death of another perso a patient on morphine knowing it may kill them but that it will relieve their pain, it i doctor would not be fully aware of what they were doing. Therefore, in many case active/passive distinction within euthanasia is misleading. Good medical and patie times with passive euthanasia, but there arguably is still a large active component t

Euthanasia and Doctor-Patient Relationships

Considering the empirical evidence from the Netherlands, it is also possible to qu
euthanasia would irreparably harm doctor-patient relationships. Critics of volun
concerns here, arguably it would be worse if vulnerable people felt as if their doct
interests at heart and social attitudes changed such that illness or old age were vi
removed. Yet at the same time the argument can be made that such fears can be
education. Outlawing voluntary euthanasia on grounds of [illegible] is one option and
open for the possibility is another. As it is, currently [illegible] ninety people have trav
countries seeking life-ending treatment [illegible] equally arguable that doctor-pati
person cannot express their right to die within a particular medical system.

One trickier [illegible] of argument is that it is not necessarily about the legal barriers, b
ones. Patients might not be able to place their trust in doctors who they feel have
them. Yet in a regulated system, it is possible to ask whether medical professiona
people with irrational interests. This can already be seen in other areas, where or
refuse operations or blood transfusions, so what is the difference between an irra
preserving life versus them helping someone end it? The latter might be open to
certainly, but no doctor is perfect and beyond moral fears or trust in a doctor's int
more important to set up medical practice to best reinforce this trust. Some migh
certain practices, but equally others will simply argue that this is a fault in educati
especially apparent in the previous criticism of the active/passive distinction. If pa
known to be prevalent, why would active euthanasia harm doctor-patient relatio
difference in moral significance?

Can a Person Ever Make a Fully Competent Decision to End Their Own Life

One further argument that can be made for legislating against voluntary euthanas
fit to make an informed decision about their own death. When a person is wracked wi
they may be unable to think rationally about alternatives or further
treatment for their condition. If it can be agreed that a person can
make a fully competent, voluntary and clear decision to die, it may very
well be an immoral act to prohibit them to take their own life.

However, there are still difficulties with this thought. Some might argue
that people should form an opinion prior to any form of terminal illness
or extreme incapacitation, but it can equally be argued no one could
reliably form an idea of their wish to die prior to these conditions
occurring. 'Living wills' often do exist as legal instruments and so long as
they can be regarded as authoritative in a court of law, they can be seen
as evidence of people's true beliefs to a certain extent.

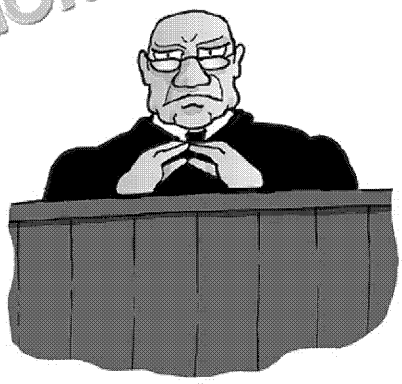
Discussion Point 35

Part of the difficulty in deciding on cases of euthanasia is whether someone is ra
life. If there can be no objective criteria to decide what counts as a rational deci
emotive context play an important role? Discuss whether the potential emotion
should influence decisions on euthanasia.

There are, however, grounds for disagreement with denying the autonomy of a suffering pati
happy to let [illegible] person make unhealthy or dangerous decisions, believing th
grant the same privilege to someone dying or in pain. To question the mental co
situations may be condescending in the minimum and may actively deny the pati
many critics of euthanasia argue could be lost if it were legalised. So even if critic
the rights from the consequences of legalised euthanasia, they arguably can appe
rights through their opposition to its practice.

Utilitarian Considerations

If the arguments from rights or potentialities are inconclusive, how can one weigh around euthanasia? One prominent way of examining the issue is to simply look a effectively maximise happiness, or at least minimise suffering. While some may a the basis of morality, they are often at least the basis for law. A government that population receiving positive benefits is often seen as bad or neglectful in the leas the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia should occur, it is often important to cons responsibilities that a government may have versus their individual citizens.

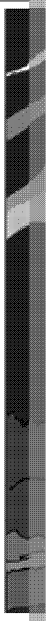


The particularly forceful argument from utilitarian supporters of euthanasia's lega ending widespread suffering among those who are terminally ill or in severe pain or peace of mind that might result from preventing it from occurring. This is far fr impossible to accurately quantify or weigh up each side, but from the basic consid on the whole is something that should be actively minimised to ensure happiness might still be effective. While it is possible to identify a purpose to suffering in so in religious considerations, then arguably when a person is on the brink of death c brought by suffering is greatly outweighed by the negative impact on the person's

If we consider Glover's argument that a person in such a condition wishes suicide to suffering, a value judgement about their own life. If we accept the validity of then despite a lack of precision, the utilitarian argument for minimising suffering happiness of a general population is considered to be important. There are critics that the rights of a patient or populace trump such concerns, but arguing that gre keeping voluntary euthanasia illegal becomes a difficult position to uphold. There not only to consider the wedge argument in terms of negative consequences, but equally a vital argument for proponents of euthanasia to point out the benefits of against the possible negative implications of it.

5. Wider Issues for Religious Belief

Most Christian denominations have long been opposed to the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia or assisted suicide. For example, a general synod for the Church of England (CoE) voted in July 2005 29[illegible] against the bill by human rights lawyer Lord Joffe to legalise a[illegible]. While in statements the CoE has acknowledged the [illegible] passionate reasons behind people seeking to legalise euthanasia, they largely argue the aims of euthanasia are better achieved by other forms of palliative care. Other denominations such as the Catholic Church have also spoken out against the legalisation of euthanasia, both from a religious perspective and also from worries about the possible risk of overwhelming negative consequences should legalisation occur. But does religion still hold an important role within the arguments around voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide?



It was noted previously that Singer points towards a change in emphasis in society from sanctity of life arguments to quality of life arguments and it can be argued that Christianity is a major factor behind the belief in the sacredness of all life in the Western World. If life is a gift from God and ultimately also part of God's plan and should not be artificially ended before its natural conc such ideas of artificiality and naturalness are complicated by the arrival of moder ago many people died from ordinary infections that are now treatable, yet such tr unnatural. Many have argued that such distinctions, unless [illegible]e advocates the pr meaningless with modern technological advances.

Yet if voluntary euthanasia was legalised in a widespread fashion across the West hold great consequences for [illegible], even if as just a marker for the increased se making. At the very least it would be a fulfilment of Singer's prediction that the tr sanctity of life becoming in relevance when considering the moral functioning of

6. Wider Issues for Ethics

Within the discussion around the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia there are m conundrums. For example, the legalisation of euthanasia in medical ethics might active/passive distinction is not a strong one and that the doctrine of double effec much of the modern medical practice around those who are terminally ill. Curren acceptability of passive euthanasia in the UK means that doctors can effectively al responsibility when allowing a patient to die. However, if active euthanasia were argue this gives plausibility to the view that doctors have been actively euthanisin even simply guilty of bad medicine.

While it may not be necessary entirely to place that moral responsibility upo pre-existing legal system that values a certain form of medical care, the legalisatio effect would place an even greater moral burden on doctors such that the ethical to accommodate such a responsibility. While the BMA has warned against such a simply the duty of care towards people if voluntary euthanasia is legalised will hav surrounding the value of life, suffering and to what extent a person's rights trump a person wishing to die but their doctor doesn't think the grounds are strong enou morally defer to? Unless there is a clear moral understanding of each person's rig might not be a perfect answer.

Similarly ideas about the importance of life and suffering will have to be weighed
the duty of care we have to people in advanced illness or old age. There are a ho
naturally need to be clarified if voluntary euthanasia were legalised, just as the m
established upon its legalisation. While it is possible to craft the argument from a
legalising voluntary euthanasia would bring more happiness, the grounds for such
to be established beyond simply giving people the informed ability to choose thei
circumstances. For example, would the happiness a famil[illegible]s from spending tim
their death outweigh the individual suffering a pe[illegible]t face?

One particular example is whether to [illegible]e euthanasia for the 'incurably ill' as v
case of the former, the i[illegible] that there is a longer time to live and the gre
treatment. If [illegible] did request to die as incurably ill but then a cure was f
certainly be [illegible]rall net loss of happiness. Whilst this might be a prediction bey
people, it certainly is a possibility to be aware of and gives rise to the question of
moral responsibility to be aware of the possible moral outcomes of each case of e
rights or decisions are taken into account.

Lastly, such philosophical issues may result in a certain calming of people's worrie
briefly looked at in the next section, but how human beings morally approach dea
change with legalisation of voluntary euthanasia. For example, in the case where
extra six months of life if they had not requested euthanasia, there may be a susp
consider right and wrong from those parts of our moral outlook that intrinsically v
might become less of a moral issue in certain situations and as such a more neutra
developed. While this may be part of viewing life in terms of quality, the moral st
will possibly lead to a suspension, if not outright removal of sanctity of life attitud
effectively work in modern society.

7. Wider Issues for Perception and Experience

While debate of the legalisation of euthanasia is often focused around the moral a
experiences suffering a[illegible]ments leading up to death form an important pa
Within existentialist philosophy there is often a discussion on authentic and inauthe
that is how [illegible]ur experience of others dying constrains our free attitude towa
Philosophers such as Martin Heidegger have pointed out that death itself cannot l
nature it is the extinguishing of all possibilities and experience and as such what is
actually just one's perception of others dying and the anxieties attached to this, n
of death itself.

However, in cases of euthanasia, where a person wishes to die, this fear or percep
BMA would argue that legalisation of voluntary euthanasia would lead to a shift in
attitudes towards healthcare as primarily an institution to preserve life, it is equal
allowing on some grounds for voluntary euthanasia to occur would allow more au
experiences of death to be part of our ordinary lives. Recognising that death, in th
assisted suicide or more, is something that is not always a potential loss may redr
perceptions of death and suffering into a more nuanced [illegible]standing of the valu

This can be seen to be speculation, but it [illegible]portant to note that the debate aro
just because of the individual rights [illegible]nts but because of the collective effec
people's perceptions of [illegible]human life. For many the immediate reaction t
seeming int[illegible]lly [illegible]le or sacred is that any expectation of death is inheren
might argue [illegible]galisation of voluntary euthanasia would only help to shed inau
and death, thereby allowing consideration about improving the quality of life for

Throughout this section arguments presented by Wilcockson both for and against euthanasia have been presented, and their various flaws have been analysed. It is whether you believe them to be persuasive or accurate. In particular consider:

- Why do traditional proponents of the concept of the sanctity of life oppos euthanasia?
- Has there been a shift towards a greater emphasis on the quality of life be sanctity?
- Can a effective distinction be made between active and passive euthana medical knowledge and care in doctors' ethics make this distinction mean
- Can the doctrine of double effect ever be justified in cases of euthanasia?
- To what means should a doctor seek to preserve a patient's life? Where d extraordinary means?
- Can a patient ever make a truly informed decision about dying? Is this a r voluntary euthanasia should be legalised?
- Is there evidence that legalising euthanasia could lead to a slippery slope? simply speculation based upon fears about human nature and historical a
- To what extent is it important to ensure healthy doctor-patient relationsh individual's potential right to die?
- Can a utilitarian consideration of the issues surrounding euthanasia ever a regarding legalisation?

Activities

Activity 1

Below is a table summarising the major points of Wilcockson's discussion within 'Euth
Read through the left-hand column and using your own interpretation of the antholo
ideas you have, fill in the blank sections of the table.

'Euthanasia and Da[illegible]ics' – Michael Wilcock	
Wilcockson notes:	**Argume**
Traditional sanctity [illegible] guments that opposed euthanasi[illegible]ivi[illegible]way to arguments focused more on a patie[illegible]lity of life.	
Passive euthanasia is often thought of as morally acceptable from a number of philosophical principles. 1. There is a difference between an act and omission in passive euthanasia. 2. The doctrine of double effect allows euthanasia as an unintended bad effect of a greater moral good. 3. There is a difference between killing someone and not taking extraordinary means to save their life.	
Some people identify in the idea of patient autonomy that if one has the right-to-die then voluntary euthanasia should be legalised.	
Others ar[illegible]t l[illegible]anising euthanasia would have irreversible[illegible]s on the way hospitals conduct their care and will overall reduce patient autonomy.	
Some critics of euthanasia cite the wedge argument and that legalisation would or potentially could bring about severely unwanted consequences.	
Others argue that pre-existing models of legalised voluntary *euthanasia in countries such as* the Netherlands demonstrate that the wedge argument is based on little evidence and not a strong argument when patient happiness and welfare it at stake.	
Conclusion: There are numerous [illegible] looking at the arguments for and against [illegible] that are greatly influenced by [illegible] plus the quality or sanctity of life as [illegible]ant.	

Activity 2

Research and discuss the case of Terri Schiavo, an important right-to-die legal case between 1998 and 2005. For fifteen years she was in an irreversible persistent ve Michael Schiavo argued that her feeding tube should be taken out in 1998, contra her to be kept alive.

In particular, in the absence of a living will, her husband and numerous witnesses te wished to be kept alive artificially, while her parents insist[ed] her Catholic faith mea any attempt at what could be seen as euthanasia. Over fifteen years her feeding t only to be reinserted when appeals and [other] interventions overturned any d

In 2007, two years after her feeding tube had been removed, the head of the Unit Bishops posed [four] clarifying questions to the Congregation of the Doctrine Church resp[onsible] for defending and communicating church doctrine.

The first question was about whether artificially giving food to a patient in a persist obligatory act. The Congregation argued yes and regarded it as still a proportion person's life.

The second was whether it was morally acceptable to discontinue feeding a person and to this the Congregation argued no as it was infringing on a person's human dig is due proportionate care, which includes artificial feeding.

In groups or pairs, one side take the position of Michael Schiavo in court, building a right to die and why continuing to feed her does not fit into wider utilitarian and au

The other side take the position of Terri's family and the Catholic Church, arguing w why human dignity, rights and faith should take priority over other considerations.

Allow three rounds of presenting arguments and evidence, [each] side attempting to well as putting forward their own before deciding as a group which side had the st

Answer the following questions giving reference to the passage below:

In practice, though, the law has to take into account a general moral feeling and once legislation takes place, in the mind of many it is seen to give tacit approval. Bernard Williams has described this as the precedent effect. Others more fearful slope or the thin end of the wedge – for instance, voluntary euthanasia were to would inevitably lead to other forms of illicit killing. The British Medical Associ euthanasia should not become law:

Doctors have a duty to try to provide patients with a peaceful and dignified death BMA considers it contrary to the doctor's role deliberately to kill patients, even if view, liberalising the law on euthanasia would herald a serious and incalculable

(Medical Eth

a) Outline and clarify the different ideas presented in this passage about the argument.

b) Analyse the different implications of this passage for quality of life arg voluntary euthanasia.

Mark Scheme

Level	Descriptor
Level 1	There is limited knowledge, terminology and technical language, oft or inappropriately. Only a surface level knowledge of important reli concepts is displayed and religious ideas and beliefs addressed are o not always correct, or sufficiently connected to the extract.
Level 2	There is a moderate amount of knowledge, terminology and technica presented, although with a few mistakes. A thorough knowledge an important religious beliefs is displayed but with room for further de ideas and beliefs addressed are of a limited variety, but generally co connected to the extract.
Level 3	There is a broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical la and rigorously presented throughout an appropriate and justified re question. A thorough and fully developed knowledge and compreh religious beliefs and concepts is displayed. Religious ideas and belie wide variety, correct and pertinently connected to the extract.

Question No.	Indicative Content (10 marks A
a)	**AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge a specialist language and terminology, when responding to th** **Candidates may refer to the following:** • The wedge argument stipulates that legalising (generally v a series of unintended and unwanted consequences that m • Some have pointed to evidence such as the Nazi's euthana legalisation of abortion to show how permitting such prac has led to widespread abuse. • Others such as the BMA argue it will lead to erosion of tru belief in many patients that doctors are there to care for th • This could also lead to the marginalisation of the sick and pressure on them to justify their use of resources in societ • This is supported by the idea that if something is legalise that its practice may be encouraged, which opponents of e

Level	Descriptor	Mark
Level 1	There is a very limited knowledge, terminology and technical language, often u inaccurately or inappropriately. Some topics and details are chosen with rudim links made between a small variety of aspects of the question. Any criticisms o judgements are only substantiated by general or non-specific evidence.	
Level 2	There is a limited amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language, s well presented, although with some mistakes. Relevant topics and details are deconstructed and links are made between a small variety of aspects of the que Criticisms and judgements of a few aspects are made but with little substantiat reasoned evaluation of supporting evidence.	
Level 3	There is a moderate amount of knowledge, terminology and technical languag generally well presented, although with some mistakes. Relevant topics and d deconstructed with a basic progression of reasoned arguments throughout the Links are made between a lot of the aspects of the question. Criticisms and jud of a few aspects are made with an attempt at substantiation by a reasoned eval supporting evidence.	
Level 4	A broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language is well pre with few mistakes. Relevant topics and details are deconstructed with rational logical progressions of reasoned arguments developed throughout the answer. made between a broad variety of the aspects of the question. Criticisms and ju are made of almost all of the aspects of the question and are substantiated by a evaluation of some supporting evidence.	
Level 5	A broad amount of knowledge, terminology and technical language is well pre correctly and rigorously, throughout a justified response. Relevant topics and critically deconstructed with rational and logical progressions of reasoned argu strongly developed. Criticisms, judgements and links are made of/between all aspects of the question and completely substantiated by a thorough and reason evaluation of supporting evidence.	

Question No.	Indicative Content (5 marks AO1, 15 marks AO2)
b)	**AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluat be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using speci terminology when responding to the question, and in the meeting AO described below.** **Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1.** • More secular perspectives on euthanasia often tend to emphasise the quality of life over sanctity of life, such that volu ntary euthanasia is who are in great suffering with no chan ec very. • Often quality of life can be mea re by ternal factors such that ut pleasure or happiness a le important good, can argue that there w greater happin vo ntary euthanasia were legalised. **C te ay refer to the following in relation to AO2.** • wedge argument is a common rebuttal to utilitarian arguments forward that there is such a risk, or likelihood, of great harm from le euthanasia that it should remain forbidden. • Medical institutions such as the BMA argue that legalising voluntary lead to harm to ordinary people's quality of life through the erosion doctors and patients. One can argue this harm is greater than the be allowing terminally ill individuals to end their lives. • Can point to the models of legal euthanasia in places such as the Net of how quality of life can remain the same or improve with legalisin • It can be argued that there is an argument that maintaining individu death are more important than basic discussions of the quality of life critics might contend euthanasia should be legalised regardless of w are comfortable with it being part of the fabric of modern day medic • Legalising euthanasia for some might set a l precedent for its en to marginalisation of the sick and th ly and a reduction in thei are forced to consider their li s a burden. • Can question wheth or life will be improved by allowing a euthanasia distinction between active/passive is false whe llo ive forms of euthanasia may prevent abuse. • nomy plays into ideas of quality of life; a society where people over their own bodies or lives is one that may be repressive for some • Responsibilities of law and society may override individual cases of greater good is lost by allowing rights to the few, many would argue consequence simply to improve a few people's lives. • Difficulty of seeing into the future. As hospice care improves, it is i whether quality of life would increase compared to allowing a perso

Active Euthanasia	The ending of someone's life through a direct, physical act overdose of drugs/painkillers.
Passive Euthanasia	The ending of someone's life through omission, for examp treatment.
Involuntary Euthanasia	Where a person is euthanised without informed consent a the patient.
Non-voluntary Euthanasia	Where a person unable to give explicit consent, from ill-he development, is euthanised.
Voluntary Euthanasia	Where a person is [illegible] euthanised with their inform
Sanctity of Life	T[illegible] all life has an inherent value or sacredness th [illegible] away by other human beings.
Quality of Life	The comfort and welfare experienced by people living thei
Doctrine of Double Effect	The philosophical idea that it is permissible to allow a seri effect so long as one intends a greater good effect.
Autonomy	The ability for humans to act freely of their own will and k

29. **Secular Sanctity of Life Arguments –** Some might present a Kantian-type argument. their life is intrinsically valuable then a common agreement might be made in favour Students can look up Consistent Life Ethic movements and the supporting secular gr

30. **Modern Hippocratic Oath –** Students can look up the modern Hippocratic Oath, ofte not include the famous line 'Neither will I administer a poison to anybody when aske course'. Rather it affirms only a commitment to care for the sick. It may be possible 'benefits' the sick the most in any given situation.

31. **Pain Relief, Drugs, Double Effect –** It can well be argued that the person acting in s their reasoning will kill their attacker, whereas the doctor would be in the knowledge th indeed kill a patient. However, in the self-defence case there are nuances to explore, attack you with their fists and in defence you shoot them through the head, that may immoral to some.

32. **Legalisation of Suicide –** This depends perhaps on the distinction between decrimina former tacitly argues something is forbidden whereas the latter might endorse it in t regards the right to one's own body, if measured by consequences alone, this divide prosecution of the dead either way.

33. **Legalisation and Permission –** Some would see abortion in the UK as an example of t routinely exploited. However this may simply be due to the growing acknowledgeme health in pregnant women and a greater emphasis on quality of life. An example opp legalisation of cannabis in some US states, with studies showing that overall consum

34. **Kant and Euthanasia –** Kant thought suicide was strictly wrong if one is supposed to destroying oneself or another person is using a human being as a means to a more ag does not necessarily rule out euthanasia if, say, in the Categorical imperative, everyo practice of euthanasia in conditions of extreme suffering is correct. Furthermore, it c suicide/euthanasia is a means but not a mere means as Kant argues.

35. **Emotional State and Euthanasia –** Discussion of this issue hinges on to what extent one sufferin the midst of such experiences people might argue the ability to give con be difficult to argue there can be rational assent towards anything separate from one be necessary to find some philosophical and psychological method to determine obje emotional state may be ignoring the possibility of future happiness or welfare in thei conditions could be reliably set out, others might argue it is impossible to ever guara these decisions.