

Examiners' Report

June 2022

GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 02

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Introduction

This was the first written examination for 9RS0-02 for 3 years. It was encouraging to find that the vast majority of candidates had risen to the occasion and were prepared for the particular demands of timing, memory and targeting of material relevantly to the questions.

Advance Information was clearly welcomed and candidates had focussed very well on the topics which had been identified in advance of the exam. Nevertheless, there was still evidence of differentiation across the cohort and the most able candidates were able to shine.

Marks were spread across the whole range suggesting that the questions performed as intended and, with the exception of one question, candidates were able to respond in a decisive manner. It was pleasing to see that after the difficulties of the last two years, enthusiasm for Religious Studies A level is unchanged, with candidates showing real enjoyment of the subject and a willingness to engage the examiners in discussion and evaluation.

Centres had worked hard on preparing candidates for the specification areas and this was most notable in Question 4. In previous sessions, Ethical Language (meta ethics) has not been an attractive topic for all candidates, but in this examination series, the vast majority of candidates had learned about this topic and were able to write coherently. It was also evident that Centres had prepared candidates to write on Michael Wilcockson's material about euthanasia, so although question 3b fared better than question 3a, candidates were generally confident.

Pacifism, the topic for question 2, was warmly welcomed by the candidates who generally wrote in detail and with confidence. The least successful question was question 1 on childlessness. Advance information had drawn attention to sexual ethics, but it seemed that candidates were limited in the interpretation of this question and focussed almost exclusively on the implications of IVF and abortion, with some consideration of the potential for same sex couples to have a biologically related child.

Most candidates managed their time well. Some over-wrote on lower value questions, leaving them rushed for question 4. However, if the candidates had something to say, they had the time to say it and appeared to enjoy doing so.

Question 1

This was the most challenging question for candidates with only a few able to provide an acceptable response.

Many candidates were able to reference childlessness in respect of IVF and fertility, surrogacy or whether same sex couples should be able to have a biologically related child. However, there was less consideration of whether childlessness per se was a matter of concern for religious believers.

A few candidates referred to Quiversful (which is identified in the specification) and the implications of this movement. However, the better responses made links with sacred texts, such as the stories of Sarah, Hannah or Elizabeth in the Bible.

The emphasis on fertility treatments for many candidates shifted the focus on the acceptability of overcoming childlessness rather than on the issue of childlessness in itself. Although fertility treatment and surrogacy, and related links to contraception as an acceptable or unacceptable means of overcoming childlessness were irrelevant, the majority of answers lacked specific focus.

The following is a response that was awarded the full 8 marks.

1 Explore religious attitudes to childlessness.

(8)

There are various differing views held across the different Christian denominations as to what can be done about childlessness and infertility issues. The Roman Catholic Church believe that according to natural law theory, procreation is an important part of a marriage, and reproduction should occur in order to further ~~the~~ the human generation, like when God instructed to "be fruitful and multiply". However, if couples realise that they are infertile for any reason, Roman Catholics do not have a moral solution to this. They believe that methods such as in vitro fertilisation are acts of murder and are not permissible, as this involves the selection of viable embryos and termination of others, which, with the view that human life begins at fertilisation, counts as an act of murder of an actual life with rights. Additionally, the use of sperm/egg donors goes against the sanctity of marriage ^{sacrament} ~~sacrament~~, where the man and woman can only reproduce within the bonds of their marriage, and the use of a donor is ~~broken~~ ^{going against} ~~not~~ this holy bond of unity. Catholics believe that the ability to have children is a gift from God and ~~not~~ an inherent right. Other Christian denominations, such as those that fall under the term of Libertarian Protestants, would approve of having children within the bonds of a marriage and raising them. Most would agree that one should procreate, however, if ~~it is~~ the more loving thing to do is to not have children, or they can't, for example if they are a homosexual couple or are infertile they think that this is fine too. Libertarian Protestants approve of all types of official procreation if faced with infertility, such as IVF and donors, if the relationship is healthy and agape love always proceeds.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



The candidate has approached the topic from the perspective of overcoming childlessness. The candidate has shown an awareness of different Christian responses to the matter and make links to relevant teachings and ethical theories.



Be focussed and tailor your answer to the question set.

This is a response that was also awarded the full 8 marks.

1 Explore religious attitudes to childlessness.

(8)

According to St Paul highlights the spiritual significance of celibacy and only ~~so~~ provided marriage to those unable to do so as procreation was only permitted in marriage. According to Jesus said little on sexual ethics are can arguably claim Paul kept Jesus' wish to keep Old Testament laws as valid. Arguably ~~child~~ children weren't as highly valued as celibacy however it should be ignored that according to natural moral law (NML), marriage was fundamental ~~and~~ ^{for} procreation and as long as childbirth took place within marriage then it was something worth celebrating. NML argued that sex outside of marriage destabilises a relationship and therefore the rearing of children and so childbirth outside of marriage according to Christianity was forbidden. Instead people should strive for a lasting, secure, loving monogamous relationship. Christian denominations agreed that all sexual acts should provide opportunity for conception and so childlessness wasn't discouraged, however the Roman Catholic Church ^(RCC) did stress that couples must be able to provide for their family financially whilst also being good stewards of the earth's resources and so childlessness was encouraged if there was a lack of support, justifying why the RCC justified the use of contraception if used widely within marriage as it allowed for family planning.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



The candidate shows awareness of several relevant issues, such as celibacy, marriage, the teaching of Jesus and Paul, Natural Moral Law, stewardship and specific church teachings. Whilst there are several ways of successfully addressing this question, the candidate maintains focus on the issue of childlessness rather than focussing on ways of overcoming it.

Question 2

Candidates performed very well on this question. They had prepared well and were able to offer a wealth of material on different types of approaches to pacifism.

It was good to see the high level of engagement with this topic area, although surprising that there was less emphasis on the teaching of sacred texts on war and peace than might have been expected. However, candidates referred to the works of scholars confidently, and to the current conflict in Ukraine.

Overall, this topic area appears to engage the interest and imagination of candidates and it has been well taught by Centres.

The following is a response that was awarded 10 marks.

2 Assess strengths and weaknesses of pacifism.

(12)

~~a Pacifism is the ethical belief that conflict is wrong. But pacifism is used in both a religious and non-religious context. Spakers associated with pacifism is Albert Einstein and for religious believers, such as Quakers, believe that pacifism is the right way to live life as a. Intro. P1 - Absolute P2 - relative~~

Pacifism is the ethical belief that conflict is wrong and can never be justified. This view of pacifism can be exercised in both religious and non-religious context. Within the religion, its roots are founded in the bible and the teachings of Jesus. For non-religious believers, the view on pacifism comes from social movements and responses to injustices occurring at the time of the ^A ~~modern~~ conflict. These types of pacifism are Absolute ^{and nuclear} ~~relative~~ just to name a few.

Absolute pacifism is the belief that any form of conflict is ethically immoral and cannot be justified. For example, going to war to stop a dictator (like in world war 2)

Cannot be justified even if said dictator is mass murderer causing the great genocide of a certain religious or racial group. Quakers would support this ~~claim~~ claim with their 'Peace testimony' as their belief that following the teachings of Christ would spread and exert influence on the aggressors to stop waging war. However, a criticism of absolute pacifism is that it can leave nations vulnerable to attack/invasion. Again, using WW2 as an example, if the allies did not retaliate against Nazi Germany and followed the doctrine within ~~the~~ absolute pacifism the world would have been under Nazi German rule. This criticism is a major blow to absolute pacifism as it shows that ~~it is wrong~~ ~~in a sense that~~ it is unrealistic and can even lead to more conflict ~~as a nation is vulnerable as~~ ~~not nations with strong~~ a strong military force will not hesitate to invade.

In contrast, Nuclear pacifism is the belief that ~~weapons~~ weapons of mass destruction should not be used and can be detrimental to the stability of the world. Einstein argues for nuclear pacifism as he believes

that they are ~~unnecessary~~ unnecessary and can deal more ~~collateral~~ damage than what is needed. He ~~a~~ ~~start~~ A statement to support his view is "WWII will be fought with sticks and stones" referring to his belief that Society will crumble with the use of weapons of mass destruction. However, some may argue that the presence of weapons of mass destruction are merely a deterrent. For example, BEA system create 'Trident' which is a ~~no~~ nuclear defence system which uses weapons of mass ~~destruction~~ destruction to protect the UK from any incoming nuclear attacks. ~~Notes~~ This ~~proves~~ S.G. argument is stronger as the last nuclear bombs which were used were in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Since then, they have not been used.

To conclude pacifism is weak as it is not applicable and impractical in today's society.



The candidate has not given as much detail in this response and it feels less calm and considered. However, it is an engaging and well-structured essay. The candidate uses interesting examples and brings a modern approach to the topic area.



The recommended time for this question is 20 minutes. Use the time effectively to ensure you are assessing and not just exploring the question.

This is a response that was awarded the full 12 marks.

2 Assess strengths and weaknesses of pacifism.

+ tolerance
- Political realism
- Just War Theory
- Niebuhr
- Idealism

(12)

Pacifism states that all violence is wrong and going to war is evil due to the large scale killing and the absolute meaning of life being important. There are many different kinds of pacifism, for example nuclear, relative, active and absolute. Each argues for different things but all agree that the war is wrong as it is better for humanity to exist than not to exist. This movement gained popularity after the Second World War and the cold war due to the extreme threats there was posed to human civilization.

A strength of pacifism is that it promotes tolerance and peace within society. Bertram Russell created the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) during a time where war posed a massive nuclear threat. CND wanted politicians to disarm their nuclear weapons and instead opt for a more peaceful way in solving conflict for example through discussion or agreements. There is no need for war which resulted in millions of innocent lives spared which could have been avoided if you took a pacifist stance. This therefore shows that pacifism has real world applications as it can make society a happier and better place for humanity to live in.

However, a weakness of Pacifism is that it is not idealistic in today's world. Political Realists argue that countries are naturally at competition with each other so will inevitably go to war in order to increase their power / status in the world. Also countries are going to show preference to their citizens if they are under attack so will have a duty to defend them in the face of an unjust aggressor. Absolute pacifism is unrealistic and instead countries should base going to war based on political or economic reasons not just because life has inherent value. Therefore pacifism has no place in war in today's day and age due to the complexity of the climate we live in.

However a strength of pacifism is support from Christians. God gave humanity stewardship over his creation meaning that they have a right / duty to care for it as God made it for us. War inevitably leads to the destruction of the planet in terms of damage to human populations. For example, the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima in Japan. Christians would agree that to uphold this ~~responsibility~~ ~~stewardship~~ their God given stewardship a pacifist stance would be the best way. Quakers are an example of Christians who do this and they are actively campaigning for peace through protests or

negotiations. Due to their pacifist stance they are often used as neutral hosts in meetings after wars to see if any wrongdoing has occurred. This therefore lends credibility to pacifism as Christians uphold its key values.

On the other hand, a weakness of pacifism is that it is too absolute and other ways to minimise destruction of war may be better. For example Augustine's Just War Theory provides a moral framework for going to war just allow it under conditions. This shows that war isn't always necessary but if it is to happen then it must be fair and not unjust. For example you need to have a just cause, last resort, legitimate authority to name some of the criteria. This ^{makes} ~~shows~~ it clear for how countries are to conduct themselves in war. Not only this but it is a secular and ~~more~~ religious theory which is widely upheld as the criteria for going to war by many countries / states. This shows that pacifism isn't the best option to go for in the face of war and that Just War Theory is more practical and realistic in our day and age.

In conclusion, I believe that pacifism is an important stance to take as it promotes peace within humanity, however it isn't realistic. Other options may be more successful in allowing war in an ethical and controlled manner than absolute position against the act of war.



The candidate has given a very clear and well organised response to the question. The candidate works through a range of strengths and weaknesses in an orderly manner, drawing on well learned and reliable material. The candidate arrives at a considered conclusion derived from the evidence.

Question 3

In this examination series, advance information enabled candidates to target their revision on specific texts. Therefore, they were confident and well-prepared on Michael Wilcockson's passage on euthanasia.

However, candidates seemed to prefer part (b), related to assisted dying, then the extract in part (a). Therefore, responses to part (a) were varied in quality. Candidates were evidently able to explain the Doctrine of Double Effect which had been well taught, although there was less sense that candidates understood that it is not such a universally accepted approach in Roman Catholic teaching, as Wilcockson suggests. The weakest responses simply repeated the essence of the passage, whilst the better responses were able to clarify the meaning of the points raised in detail and identify relevant considerations.

The length, depth and breadth of answers to part (b) was impressive. Candidates were able to discuss in detail different types of euthanasia, and they could distinguish between assisted dying and other types, such as non-voluntary euthanasia.

Most candidates were well equipped to offer case studies and details about the law in the UK, as well as other countries. The better responses were analytical and scholarly, enabling the candidates to engage in a detailed discussion and evaluation of the issues arising, including sanctity and quality of life, patient autonomy, the relationship between medical professionals and patients, ethical theory, religious teachings, the development of medical technology, attitudes to pain and suffering, and the concept of the right to die. The weaker responses were heavily factual and missed the chance to analyse the implications of the issues.

In the following response, the candidate was awarded 9 marks for part (a) and 19 marks for part (b).

3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about double effect.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

Wilkinson firstly says that in order for us to justify Euthanasia it must first be made into medical practice, all other forms of Euthanasia are impossible to control. He outlines the British Medical Association view on the matter, that there is a huge difference between treating a patient in a way which death can be foreseen and actively or 'directly intending' to kill the patient. The question he is ultimately answering is, ~~it~~ it is ever right for a doctor to kill a patient?

Re

He first disassembles his 3 moral principles the first of which being the 'act and omission argument'. This is the idea that if A shoots B, a voluntary act, and C watches and

Choose to do nothing; ~~is~~ a voluntary 'omission', it is at all responsible. Religious believers would say that C's failure to act does not excuse them, even if not actively involved. Secondly is the idea of the Doctrine of Double Effect or DDE. The DDE is stated in the passage it is when someone can foresee that something bad may happen as a result of their action, but it is not their active intention for that to happen, such as a agent using self defence and agent dying as a result. Doctors may argue that this is sound medicine but many may argue that this is ~~opening~~ 'open to abuse' and could result in cases of passive involuntary euthanasia. Thirdly is the idea of ordinary and extraordinary force. This is essentially the idea of how far a doctor should go to save a life. Many would argue that a doctor should use whatever medicine they have available but the response to this would be to treat in accordance to the code. For example, a baby born with half a brain missing. There unfortunately is not much a doctor can do and so it is no point in operating, to instead the baby should just be fed, comforted and kept warm as it will die shortly.

As well as that is his argument for ~~that~~ ~~the~~ euthanasia on which are based largely on quality of life and autonomy. He referenced ~~many~~ ^{a few} countries with differing laws. Firstly he mentions the UK, who allow autonomy in attempted suicide but allow no third party involvement and are against assisted suicide and is essentially deemed as murder. He also

The question as to why ~~that~~ the case of assisted suicide is deemed as murder, even if only bringing someone a lethal dose of morphine but not actively injecting. ~~He says~~ By that logic it is deeming ~~as~~ a voluntary euthanasia as a voluntary act. He further referenced the case of the Netherlands. The Netherlands allow active voluntary euthanasia and Wilcockson believes that due to how successful it has operated, that shows it can work.

Finally is his argument against euthanasia. He says that the main point against it is the slippery slope argument. This is the idea that ~~what~~ what is first allowed as an exception will quickly become abused and lead to undesirable end such as cases of active involuntary euthanasia. He argued it may actually take away autonomy as people feel obliged to die as they may feel like a burden. This once again brings in the idea of double effect for although these ~~are~~ consequences are ~~the conclusion~~ ~~that~~ not intended, we can foresee them so could be held accountable.

In conclusion I believe Wilcockson believed that there were circumstances in which euthanasia was acceptable but that in order for that to happen it must be official medical practice, and that the concept of the doctrine of double effect did not hold doctors responsible for the ~~the~~ unintended consequences of their actions.

(b) Analyse the persuasiveness of arguments in favour of assisted dying.

(20)

I believe the arguments in favour of assisted dying are indeed persuasive largely due to the argument for quality of life, the view of Jonathan Glover, and the view of Peter Singer.

Firstly, the quality of life argument refers to the extent to which a person's life is happy or pleasurable. I believe this idea should be prioritised over sanctity of life and that if a person has ~~no~~ no or very little quality of life, then they should be allowed to be actively euthanised if it is over with. A prime example of this can be seen in the case of Dianne Pretty. Dianne was a victim of motor neurone disease who lived in pain, unable to move or really do anything enjoyable. Dianne said herself that she was 'essentially dead' and ~~to~~ to appealed to be actively euthanised. However she lost her appeal and so could not. I believe that many people would agree that such as in the case of Dianne, it would be better for that person to die ~~rather~~ have no quality of life, than continue to live in pain and suffering until their illness ~~was~~ ~~fatal~~ kill them. ~~to~~ I believe that it thus a strong argument in favour of assisted dying.

Secondly are the ideas of Jonathan Glover.

Glover believed that if a person was deemed mentally stable and was persistent in their wish to die, then we as a society had a duty to facilitate this choice. He cited Willkison's idea of 'the right to die' and argued that we ~~to~~ already have the right to refuse life - during surgery, ~~and that difference~~ as opposed to voluntary passive euthanasia, so what difference does it make allowing active euthanasia? Thus, this shows why Glover put forward a persuasive argument for assisted dying.

Thirdly is the view of Peter Singer. Singer ~~too~~ places further emphasis on quality of life and argued that society was clashing at his favour. He reformed the Netherlands in order to undermine the Slippery Slope argument, saying that there had been no recorded cases of active involuntary euthanasia and so showed that assisted dying can be allowed without it being abused and so is a persuasive argument for the matter.

However, the idea of ~~that~~ assisted dying is firmly against Natural Moral Law. One of the primary ~~premises~~ premises of natural moral law is to always preserve life and thus the concept of assisted

dying strongly goes against this. However, Natural Moral Law is a severely outdated theory and so is not compliant with ~~modern~~ modern society. For example, Natural Moral Law technically prohibits homosexuality on the grounds that it cannot lead to natural reproduction. However, we accept homosexuality widely nowadays, so ~~to~~ surely we can also accept the concept of assisted dying, and so Moral Law is a weak argument against assisted dying.

Secondly is the idea of the Palliative Care argument. ~~Palliative~~ Palliative Care is highly - or ~~highly~~ - specialised, typically tailored end-of-life pain relief conducted by top medical professionals and many ~~more~~ may argue a more effective solution than assisted dying as it preserves life as best as possible. However, I believe this is not always an effective method and that only the ~~most~~ ^{most} painful cases are permitted. As well as this, I believe by doing this we are taking away personal autonomy and not honouring a person's decision to die and it thus is a weak argument against assisted dying.

In conclusion I believe the arguments for assisted dying outweigh the arguments against assisted dying as the arguments against are either flawed and/or far outdated.

and thus the arguments for assisted dying are more persuasive.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

In part (a), the candidate has avoided repetition of the extract and placed it firmly in the context of the whole article. The candidate has given a clear foundation and relevance to the clarification of Double Effect.

Part (b) is very well organised and structured. The candidate's use of case studies and scholars gives the answer academic creditability. Although the response is not particularly lengthy, it is confident and responds to the question set.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

The most important tip for answering part (a) is not to rely on repeating the passage. Quote from it, whilst not simply reiterating it.

In this response, the candidate was awarded 8 marks for part (a) and 19 marks for part (b).

3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about double effect.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

This passage was extracted from Willcockson's 'Issues of life and death' where he explores and illuminates the different positions on Euthanasia.

Referring to the passage it says 'Another indirect argument has a long tradition in Natural Law ethics. The indirect argument being discussed here is the doctrine of double effect. The doctrine of double effect says 'there is a difference between foreseeing an event and directly intending it to happen'. What is meant by this is a doctor may act in a certain way to bring about a specific outcome, and this leads to an unintended consequence arising. With reference to Euthanasia and medicine an example may look like this: A doctor gives a potentially lethal dose of medicine to his/her patient. The specific outcome which is desired is to relieve the enormous amount of pain. However an unintended consequence may arise, and

they die as a result.

It is important to note, as Wilcockson does that it 'is different from the act ~~omissions~~ and omissions argument'. The act and omissions argument makes a distinction between an act and an omission. An act, refers to when someone actively does something to bring about a consequence whereas an 'omission' is a failure to act when one 'foresees what was to happen'. The Roman Catholic Church (and Natural Moral Law ethics), don't believe there is a distinction between acts and omissions, so rather adhere to the DDE. Wilcockson later expresses his view that a failure to act does not absolve you from moral responsibility, we can infer that he neither sees a distinction between acts and omissions.

The DDE, gives flexibility to NML and therefore the Roman Catholic Church, because under DDE it 'does not hold A to be blameworthy' meaning the doctor in my previous example, who's patient died as an unintended consequence of an attempt to relieve suffering cannot be held accountable.

The last line of this passage says 'but is the DDE open to abuse'. The doctor in the 80's named 'doctor death' arguably abused the DDE. He cured for old patients who were sick and it was later proven that he ~~speed up~~ ^{hastened} his patients death, through many ways but sometimes giving an overdose of drugs. He managed to pass these deaths off as 'unintended consequences', which the DDE does allow for. He was a doctor so for many years no one questioned it, but ultimately he abused his power and the DDE allowed him to cover it up as nothing more than an unintended consequence. This is what is meant by 'open to abuse' it allows

things to slip through

2008. Purdy.

Helga
Utilitarian
Mill
Fletcher
Macquire

Glover - duty to do it for them if they are unable.

N
R
James Rachels
Siddons
G12R2

(b) Analyse the persuasiveness of arguments in favour of assisted dying.

(20)

Assisted Dying, is the premature ending of someone's life, but they are assisted in doing so as they cannot perform the act of dying themselves.

The legal situation in the UK is that assisted dying or suicide it sometimes referred to is illegal in the UK. Arguments in favour of assisted dying, refer to human autonomy and dignity. They usually focus on the value of life as being important. A utilitarian and situation ethicists would argue in favour of assisted dying along with scholars such as Helga and Macquire. However, there are other arguments ~~there are~~ which are strongly opposed to assisted dying including Natural Moral Law ethicists, the Roman Catholic church, and other scholars namely James Rachels and Henry Sidgwick. This essay will explore both sides of the argument and will conclude with which argument is more persuasive.

One argument in favour of assisted dying would come from the utilitarian perspective. A utilitarian would argue that the immense amount of pain someone who requests assisted dying should be taken into account. A negative utilitarian would argue that we should aim to minimise pain and suffering and would therefore allow for assisted dying, as it would put a stop to this pain. In addition to this an Act utilitarian would argue for the 'greatest happiness for the greatest number'. Many families also want to stop the pain of their loved ones, so not only would the sufferer be included in the greatest number but the families would too. Therefore, if they all agreed it would bring the greatest happiness, assisted dying should be allowed.

However, Natural Moral Law ethicists would argue not in favour of assisted dying. This is because assisted dying doesn't adhere to the Primary precepts. The first Primary precept is preservation of life, the premature ending of someone's life is evidently in conflict with this precept. Secondly, from a Natural Moral Law perspective passing the assisted ^(dying) suicide act would certainly bring disruption to an 'Ordered society', which is another primary precept. They would adhere to the slippery slope argument and say that it would end up allowing for many other forms of euthanasia 'slipping through'.

The slippery slope argument says that when we make an exception, the law were to pass the 'assisted dying act' it would mean this particular form of euthanasia (the exception) would be made the rule and it would give way to many other acts which should stay illegal. They would also say that the assisted dying bill would be easily open to abuse and that it could lead to unintended consequences, whereby people die who don't actually wish for that outcome. James Rachels says that it could be the start of a slippery slope, whereby human life would become subordinate to economics and personal convenience.

However, Helga Kuhse responds to this argument and explains how she doesn't believe making assisted dying legal would lead to a slippery slope. She cites the situation in the Netherlands and argues that since they have allowed for voluntary euthanasia, tight restrictions and regulations has meant that the slippery slope that many refer to has been prevented. Kuhse's response and research has proven this argument against assisted dying to be rather weak and based on no empirical evidence. Helga also argues in favour of assisted dying because she believes it only lends respect to human autonomy and dignity.

Henry Sidgwick argues from a religious perspective and says that assisted dying or what ~~that~~ ^{Christians} would refer to as a means of suicide, would break the bond between God and man. Other Christians would argue that only God can have control over our time of death.

However, Maguire as a respondent in favour of assisted dying would refute this claim by Sidgwick. Maguire calls for us to respect and value life but says we are not obliged ~~we do not need~~ to prolong it in every situation. Maguire opposes to the idea that God holds all the power. He would argue that we intervene to save lives, and that there is no real difference between this and intervening to end lives. For Maguire they both contrast with the idea that God holds all the power. Therefore, once again a strong reply weakens the argument against ~~the~~ assisted dying, and restores strength in favour of assisted dying. This adds to the persuasiveness of legislating assisted dying.

Glover argues that we respect personal autonomy. He believes that if the reason behind a wish to die is judged sound then he sees no problem. He also said that society has a duty to facilitate this if the person is unable to do so themselves. Glover is therefore a supporter of assisted dying, and adds strength to this position.

Fletcher as a situation ethicist would also argue in favour of assisted dying. He would say that people here should prevail. Therefore if assisted dying is the most loving outcome this should be allowed. However, no legislation could be drawn from the situation ethicist approach as they would argue we should break the rules whenever if it prevents people from dying. PTO

Overall, I believe that the arguments in favour of assisted dying are persuasive. I agree with negative utilitarians that pain should be minimised, and that in situations like this we should do what is the most loving. I also agree that the arguments in favour successfully refute all the arguments opposing assisted dying, for example the slippery slope argument. In judgement, I deem the argument in favour persuasive and successful.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

In part (a), the candidate has focused clearly on Double Effect and drawn from the extract to clarify the issue. The candidate has avoided lengthy repetition and is not distracted by other issues.

In part (b), the candidate has provided a well-balanced and structured argument applying ethical theories and relevant scholarship.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Part (b) offers the candidate a chance to showcase their knowledge. Ensure that the answer is well developed and sustained.

Question 4

This was another question for which Advance Notice supported candidates in their preparation for this examination.

Although a few candidates appeared to be working it out on the spot, the majority were able to talk coherently and at length on the question of emotivism in ethical language. The range of scholarship was impressive, although, interestingly, fewer candidates talked at length about A J Ayer's work than we had expected. We strongly recommend that Centres enable their candidates to explore Chapter 6 of *Language, Truth and Logic*, which unpacks the emotivity position in fascinating detail.

The range of interpretations of ethical language were used with skill and interest. Overall this question performed excellently, whilst enabling differentiation.

The following is a response that was awarded 28 marks.

Buddham - no right or wrong

is ought - naturalism
reductionism
naturalist fallacy

emotivism
AJ Ayer
Skinner

SECTION C

Write your answer in the space provided.

RM Hume premisses

4 Evaluate the view that ethical language is inherently emotive.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Religion and Ethics have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Philosophy of Religion
- New Testament Studies
- Study of a Religion.

Deism - non cognitivism
naturalism - Deism
non naturalism - GE Moore
realism - Antirealist
utilitarian (30) utilitarianism

Emotive language is completely subjective, and simply expresses personal opinion over an issue. When we say something is good, it is not inherent, but simply a statement of an opinion.

It can be agreed that ethical language is inherently emotive. AJ Ayer took many of his ideas about emotivism from his study of the Vienna circle and the logical positivists. They believe that for language to be meaningful, it must be either analytic or synthetic, so true by definition, or through empirical evidence. They say that ethical language is not analytic or synthetic, so has no inherent meaning. Therefore, arguing that all ethical language is emotive.

Ayer argues that when we are expressing an ethical statement, we are simply giving our opinion. It is also called the basic human theory, as when we say 'giving to charity is good', we are just saying 'humans to giving to charity.' This also applies to 'bad' acts, we are just saying 'bad to stealing' for example. His argument is important as it shows that there are no inherent moral rules, and we are free to make our own depending on our experience of the world. One strength is that it takes into consideration those with twisted moral views. If a person believes stealing to

be good, emotivism can explain this, as it is simply their opinion.

Emotivism also allows for cultural differences. Many cultures have a different set of moral standards, for example, Indians may allow baby girls to die if there is no hope for a husband in the future, but they do not see this as morally wrong. This shows that a difference of morality can be explained using emotivism, as all language is simply an opinion.

~~However, there are some issues with emotivism. Some may agree~~

This fits synoptically with my study of Buddhism. ~~But~~ Buddhists do not see behaviour as right or wrong in the way that many other religions do. Instead behaviour is either kusala and Akusala, and allows them to generate karmic merit. This shows that not all religions believe in a set rule book of right and wrong behaviour, and instead just view it as an impermanent state of being, that in the cycle of samsara, will simply effect which rebirth occurs.

However, there are also some major criticisms of emotivism. It can be argued that Ayer is simply ~~or~~ putting forward 'simple subjectivism'. This is an argument that says all views are subjective and people can make their own decisions on right and wrong. This does not fit with what most people think about ethical language. When a person says 'rape is wrong', they are not expressing an opinion, but what they believe to be a factual statement. When we see injustice, we truly believe it is wrong. To say that this is just an opinion is reducing emotive language down to be meaningless. Emotivism also allows for twisted ideas about morality, and accept beliefs such as murder is okay because all ethical statements

are valid and equal. This is not how most people view the world, so emotivism may not be the best way to describe ethical language.

Another way to understand ethical language would be ~~the~~ RM Hare's prescriptivism. It is also non-cognitivism, meaning it thinks there are not moral truths, but it says ethical language tries to tell others what they ought to do in a situation, as well as expressing an opinion. When a person says 'stealing is wrong', they are actually saying 'you ought not to steal, and neither will I'.

This is slightly stronger than emotivism as it fits closer to how people actually use ethical language.

However, it still faces the same criticisms as emotivism. It allows for twisted and terrible views and invalidates the importance of people's ~~ethical~~ ethical and moral opinions. Also, how do we know whose prescriptions to follow?

This leads us on to the argument for cognitivism. This argues that there are moral truths in the world that do exist ^{intrinsically} ~~empirically~~. Bernard Williams argues that we can observe moral truths ~~empirically~~ empirically in the world through pleasure. This fits quite closely with utilitarianism, where pleasure is goodness and pain is bad. This is a solid argument as it fits with how most people view the world. It validates feelings of injustice and can be verified through experience. Most people also believe that there are right and wrong things intrinsically, and gives strength to laws that prevent people from doing these wrong things.

However, with all arguments, there are many criticisms. First of all, G.E.

~~also~~ Moore accuses Barclay of committing the naturalistic fallacy. This is because ~~just as~~ Moore disagrees that we can find good intrinsically through nature. It can also be argued that some people will find pleasure from doing morally wrong things, such as ~~for~~ torture. Moore also brings into the debate the open question argument. To Moore it is clear that pleasure cannot tell us what is good, because it makes sense to ask the question 'is pleasure good?'. If pleasure and goodness were the same, the question would not need an answer, but it is ~~clear~~ clear that you can debate the answer to the question. Barclay is also criticised for turning an 'is' into an 'ought'. Just because one thing pleases is good, doesn't mean it ought to be. ~~we can~~ We cannot jump from what is true into what ought to be true, as of the time. These weaknesses show that naturalism is a weak argument for ethical language.

However, cognitive non-naturalism solves some of these issues. G.E. Moore says we use our intuition to know what is good in the world. We all have intuition, but some people's intuition is less developed than others. This explains why some people misinterpret what is actually good. This fits synoptically with my studies of natural moral law and Catholicism. They believe in the 10 commandments, and that morally wrong behaviour or sins, do exist intrinsically. They believe that God has given us intuition to find what is wrong and what is right. Pritchard develops this further by saying ~~that~~ we have reason and intuition, to find what is right and wrong. W.D. Ross also contributes to the argument, saying that we have prima facie duties, that are duties at first sight.

Our intuition allows us to make correct moral decisions, but when there is a conflict of interest, we must look to our first sight duties and do what we believe is the most important. This non-naturalist view is quite realistic to many most people's morals, as most people believe there are intrinsically right and wrong things, but we must use our intuition to find this, ~~that~~ with the guidance of law and the 10 commandments.

However, G.E. Moore does not provide any proof for there being intrinsic ethical language. How do we know that ethical truths exist at all if there is no empirical evidence? The logical positivist would say that ethical language has no meaning due to there being no empirical evidence for it. Moore also does not address the issue of intuition. How do we know that we actually have intuition or that it is worth trusting? Ross' prima facie duties also pose an issue, as he does not explain what to do if they conflict. People do not always have the strength of intuition to make the right choice. ~~The~~ Non-naturalism also may excuse morally wrong behaviour, on the grounds that their intuition is simply less developed. This goes against the idea of intrinsic right and wrong, as people should be held accountable for their wrong actions.

Overall, Naturalist Cognitive Theories do not succeed in proving that ethical language is intrinsic. Naturalism has three main issues, of the is-ought gap, naturalistic fallacy and the given question argument, all that G.E. Moore uses to weaken Descartes' arguments. This shows that we cannot find ethical right and wrong in nature. However, G.E. Moore's argument of non-naturalism also has issues. It claims we have intuition

that will allow us to know what is right and wrong, but there is no proof of this, and Ross' prima facie duties are unclear and confusing. Although most people believe there are moral truths intrinsically, the changes through society and cultures, and is simply due to strong moral feelings, rather than there being any truth to it. Emotivism does a good job at describing what ethical language actually is today. It expresses a feeling, and the huge range of moral opinions that we can experience today proves this. However, it is prescriptivism that has the most accurate definition of ~~emotive~~ ethical language today. Prescriptivism has all of the strengths of emotivism, that allow for differences of opinion and cultural differences, but also is more accurate in how we use language. It is used to influence others and tell them what they ought to do. Ethical language is not just a personal opinion, but a way to change how others behave and tell them what the right course of action is. Therefore, ~~prescriptivism is actually the~~ ethical language is inherently prescriptive.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate has provided a strong overview of ethical language, including significant appraisal of Ayer's approach. Synoptic links are clearly made and a good discussion is maintained.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Don't be oblique about links with your other area of study. Make them obvious to the reader.

This is a response that was awarded the full 30 marks.

Ethical language can be understood in 2 ways: cognitive (moral realism) or non-cognitive (moral anti-realism). Cognitivism believes that ethical language is objective whereas non-cognitivism believes that it is subjective. There are different arguments for what ethical language in reality is and I will discuss in this essay. Ethical language is concerned with what is good or bad.

A.J. Ayer believes that ethical language is inherently emotive due to the fact that ethical statements are purely just personal expressions of your beliefs. Ayer also believes that ethical language is meaningless by using the logical positivists and the Vienna Circle's Verification principle. It states that for language to be meaningful it has to be analytic (true by definition) or synthetic (observable). But because ethical language is neither of these things it is therefore meaningless and purely emotive. By this, he means that when you say that you don't like chocolate

you are only expressing subjective opinion not objective facts. This is why A.J. Ayer's Emotivism has been called the Boo / Hooray theory as you are simply either saying Boo or hooray to something. A.J. Ayer theory believes that ~~ethical~~ ethical language is simply emotive.

However, Rachels sees a problem with Emotivism from A.J. Ayer as he believes that this position renders all language meaningless. For example, the statement genocide is wrong doesn't mean anything and is just personal opinion. This would mean that there are no objective moral truths in the world and that nothing can be meaningfully talked about which is an issue when trying to say why genocide is wrong. This therefore shows that ethical language should not be emotive as it raises issues for the meaningfulness of language.

However, Stevenson agrees that ethical language is inherently emotive as he believes in similar things to A.J. Ayer yet doesn't use the verification principle but instead believes that when we use ethical language we are not only trying to express personal opinion but we are also attempting to

influence other peoples attitudes. Peoples attitudes are based on beliefs that are influenced by your culture or upbringing. For example when someone says that chocolate is bad, according to Stevenson this emotive claim is also going to make someone else believe the same thing as you. This therefore proves that ethical language is inherently emotive as it is simply personal opinion which tries to influence others.

Macneil disagrees with the view that all ethical language is inherently emotive as he says that ~~other~~ ethical language has implications. For example, saying that you like chocolate is the same as saying that you like murder to someone who believes that religious language ~~is~~ is emotive. Clearly these two statements mean completely different things and both shouldn't be reduced to entirely equal emotive statements. Macneil sees this as a major issue with saying the ethical language is inherently emotive as it doesn't account for objective facts that should be inherently wrong or right.

F.H. Bradley, a cognitivist and ethical naturalist would

agree that ethical language isn't inherently emotive but rather it's objective moral facts. Bradley believes that goodness is a natural property that can be observed in the universe that we can use to infer what goodness is. This demonstrates that ethical language is objective and observable. Bradley also believes that ethical and non-ethical statements are the same. This therefore proves that ethical language isn't inherently emotive.

However an issue with this ~~belief~~ ~~is that~~ position on ethical language ~~is that~~ comes from a criticism of G.E. Moore. With Moore's naturalistic fallacy he argues that you cannot give natural properties non-natural properties such as goodness. This therefore shows that ethical language cannot be reduced to natural properties and that ethical language would be emotive instead.

There are also criticisms Bradley's ethical naturalism through his 'is-ought' argument. There argues that you can't derive an 'is' from an 'ought'. For example saying that Game of Thrones is the best TV program, doesn't mean that everyone ought to watch it. This shows that ethical language can't be seen as a natural property and is this criticism and instead would be emotive.

G.F. Moore would disagree with the position that ethical language is inherently emotive and instead argue that we know what goodness is through our intuition - People use their intuition that they are born with to tell what goodness is. For example, we know what the colour yellow is, but we can't describe it to you because we know it is yellow due to our intuition. This ~~thought~~

theory towards ethical language is a cognitivist theory that ~~thought~~ is ethical non-naturalist. A strength of this approach to ethical language is that it is similar to how ~~real~~ we really approach making decisions about what goodness is. For example, our intuition may tell us if someone really is a good person - This is indeed support to this argument and may prove that ~~the~~ ethical language isn't inherently emotive.

However, a weakness of intuitionism to explain how we use ethical language is that it doesn't account for differences in people's intuition. For example, how can I want to hurt one person's intuition over someone else. Everyone's intuitions will be different because of subjectivity and people being untrustworthy. This ~~therefore~~ proves that ethical language may be inherently emotive and as intuitionism isn't an effective way of describing how we use ethical language.

A strength that ethical language is ~~present~~ emotive comes from R. M. Hare. He believes that ethical language is prescriptive so when you make an ethical claim from personal belief, you are telling everyone else that they must do the same thing too.

For example 'I don't want to steal' means that no one else should steal too. The importance of this non-cognitive theory is that your actions must be universalisable otherwise they are meaningless. Ethical statements are not descriptive, but evaluative as they tell you how to live your life. This therefore ~~supports~~ supports the view that ethical language is inherently emotive as it is a personal expression of view, however for Hare you have to universalise your actions.

However, an issue with Hare's position is that it is too legalistic. For example, it is unrealistic that people will universalise all of their actions as it goes against human nature. If someone was a ^{murderer} ~~Attender~~ they wouldn't want people to universalise their actions. This leads to the problem of whose actions do we universalise as some people have a greater moral compass than others. This shows that ethical language maybe shouldn't always be emotive due to the differences in people's morals.

From my prior studies of Philosophy of religion when studying religious language you come to learn that the Vienna Circle and Logical Positivists would disagree that ethical language is emotive but would instead agree that it is meaningless. For something to be meaningful for them it has to be either analytic or synthetic if not then it is meaningless. For them, because ethical language isn't that by definition or observable it is meaningless. This is known as the Verification principle. However A. J. Ayer creates weak verification which argues that statements can be verified through observation statements. This can be applied to ethical language as if someone can observe that murder is wrong then this can provide synthetic proof that something is wrong. Therefore, in general the Vienna Circle would agree that ethical language is not inherently emotive, but instead meaningless ~~as it tells us~~ nothing about the nature of reality. *

In conclusion I believe that ethical language isn't inherently emotive as it leads to the issue that nothing is inherently meaningful and everything is reduced down to subjective world views. This is an issue in the current world that

we live in as we need objective ethical language for people to follow so that we can live good and moral lives. Therefore, an ethical language isn't inherently emotive.

* However, from my further studies of philosophy of religion I know that Post Modernism would agree that all ethical language is ~~potentially~~ ^{inherently} emotive. They believe that subjectivity is important and having no objective facts in the world creates a more tolerant and accepting society. This leads to pluralism of personal beliefs as everyone's opinion is equally important as beliefs or purely just emotion claims about the nature of reality based on attitudes or your culture. This therefore supports the view that an ethical language is inherently emotive.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate has given a confident, detailed and knowledgeable response with clear use of synoptic linking. An excellent full mark answer.



Advance information worked in candidates' favour this year as this is often a neglected topic. This years' experience should help Centres to appreciate that it is an interesting and varied area of the specification.

Paper Summary

Based on performance on this paper, candidates should:

- Choose relevant material specifically tailored to address the question as set. This is particularly important for question 1 where candidates need to focus their response to the marks and space available.
- Read the question thoroughly and reference it throughout to sustain the focus within the answer. Practice writing to time on a regular basis.
- Be mindful of the use of the command words (assess, analyse and evaluate), by offering an assessment of, or verdict on, a stance and not to merely present an alternative view, eg, 'some scholars disagree' without demonstrating relevant reasoning why some scholars disagree.
- Ensure scholars are used accurately in respect of the ideas ascribed to them and support points made with examples and relevant detail.
- Make the synoptic link explicitly clear in question 4. Convincing synoptic links are usually more than a sentence or two in content and draw attention to the issues being linked.

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