

## Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit B (RSS02) *Religion and Ethics 2*

June 2009 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work:

- Candidate B



## 2009 (June) Unit B Religion and Ethics 2

## Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

## Candidate B

- 1 (a) Explain the key differences between deontological and teleological approaches to ethics. Refer to Kant's theory of ethics in your answer.

(30 marks)

AO1

## Candidate Response

1a) Two main approaches to ethics are deontological and teleological. Kant's theory of ethics uses the deontological approach to ethics.

Deontological approach to ethics is where you make a moral decision based upon what is right or wrong but you do not take into account the consequences of that specific situation. E.g. you tell someone they are fat because they are fat, you don't lie to them because that will not be morally correct. Kant uses the deontological approach to his theory of ethics. Kant's theory of ethics uses the categorical imperative. This consists of universal law, which is moral law that everyone is able to follow. This is deontological because it always asks people to follow the same moral obligation and they will not need to think about consequences because everyone is doing the same thing. Also in Kant's theory of ethics he says that we should treat humans as an end to themselves. This is also deontological because we should use human for another goal or end matter, which would be teleological because it looks at the consequences. Also Kant's theory of ethics talks about the summum bonum. This is a theory that humans are an ultimate, but to get to this ultimate, it takes more than one life time. This means Kant thinks that humans are infinite beings. This would make Kant disagree with human to human transplants because it would be using something someone to get to an end which is not deontological because you are thinking about consequences of a action.

On the other hand the teleological approach to ethics is to make a moral decision but to think of the consequences that moral decision may have upon yourself or others. e.g. tell someone they look nice, even if they don't because the consequence of that moral decision is that the other person will still feel good about themselves. Kant would disagree with the teleological approach to ethics because he would say that it is our duty to act in a categorical/universal manner. This is because if everyone thought about consequences then no moral decision would be done properly. He Kant's believe that we should act in a deontological manner because it is our duty to act this way.

To conclude the main differences between deontological and teleological approaches to ethics is that the deontological approach states that we should not take consequences into account when we are making a moral decision, whereas teleological approach states that we should think about consequences when making a moral decision.

### Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

The quality of this candidate's written communication is such that legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar are adequate to convey meaning. With technical words such as 'categorical', and '*summum bonum*', every attempt should be made to memorize these formulations. The answer throughout shows the limited understanding that is characteristic of a Level 3 response. For example in paragraph 1, the deontological approach is described as making a moral decision based upon what is "right and wrong", which is incorrect, whereas the statements that consequences are held to be irrelevant, that deontologists tell the truth, and that deontologists follow universal laws, are generally correct.

Paragraph 2 combines an accurate statement that Kant requires us to treat humans as an end in themselves with an unintelligible statement about consequences. The paragraph about the *summum bonum* is likewise a combination of half-explained ideas, e.g. that "humans are an ultimate". The suggestion that Kant would disallow human to human transplants is arguably untrue, and some would maintain that Kantian ethics would regard many transplants as an enforceable duty.

The penultimate paragraph uses "telling somebody that they look nice" as an example of a moral decision, whereas doing that is really not a moral issue in itself: the moral issue would be *whether or not one should lie* about a person's appearance in order to save their feelings. The candidate does seem to understand this point however, since the opening paragraph includes the rather blunt statement that "you tell someone they are fat because they are fat you don't literally lie to them". Similarly the statement that "if everyone thought about consequences then moral decision [sic] would be done properly" is wrong, but again, the candidate seems to be making errors through muddled thinking or through time constraint, because the mistake is corrected in the final paragraph.

On the whole, as a response to the question set, this response centres mainly on the suggestion that deontological responses are universal whereas teleological ones take consequences into consideration. The fact that there is some attempt to expand on these ideas by the use of examples, and by the reference to the *summum bonum*, for example, indicates that this is a low Level 4 response – key ideas showing some understanding and coherence.

Level 4 (16 marks)

- (b) 'Kant's deontological theory of ethics fails because it ignores the consequences of our moral choices.' Assess this claim.

(15 marks)

A02

Candidate Response

~~Kant's deontological theory of ethics does fail~~  
 Kant's deontological theory of ethics doesn't fail because it ignores the consequences of moral choices, because according to Kant we shouldn't take consequences into account. When we are making a moral decision. (✓)

If Kant used the teleological approach to ethics then it would fail because by using this method you need to take into account the consequences of a certain moral choice.

On the other hand some might say that Kant's deontological theory of ethics does fail because consequences are in every day life and even if you are acting in a deontological way although you don't think about the consequences that a moral choice has it still might affect someone else. ~~else else~~ not clear.

To conclude ~~I do not think that~~ Kant's deontological theory of ethics ~~is~~ doesn't fail because Kant ~~says~~ states that you should not have to take consequences into account when making a moral decision, whereas if his theory of ethics was teleological it would fail because then it would need to take ~~consequences~~ consequences into account when making a moral decision.

Commentary

A02 (15 marks)

This evaluation contains two main points. The first is that using Kant's criteria, his deontological theory cannot fail, because it deliberately excludes taking consequences into account. One might reply, 'Well ok, but all assumptions have to be justified, and that includes Kant's assumptions'. The second point is contained in paragraph 3, and is a stronger point: consequences do indeed seem to be important in everyday life, and even if you (as a deontological thinker) don't worry about consequences, the simple fact is that your decisions may well affect somebody else.

In essence, this amounts to a basic attempt to justify a point of view – that consequences do matter, and is a Level 3 answer.

Level 3 (6 marks)

- 4 (a) Outline how pollution threatens the environment, and explain the ethical problems raised by pollution.

(30 marks)

AO1

Candidate Response

4a) There are many threats to our environment in this modern age. One of the main threats to the environment is pollution. One form of pollution is from green houses gases which is harming a whole of our ozone layer, which is causing global warming across the world. This is an ethical problem because people are not thinking about what ethical effect this may have on our planet for future generation. If people do not start cutting down on the usage of appliances that give off green house gases then global warming will become so much of our planet and everything in it will die. Also another ethical problem raised by pollution is that we are not following Stewardship. This is the duty you have to humans to look after our planet and not to waste / use up all of the resources. Another form of pollution that is threatening our environment is littering. Littering is ruining the state of our environment and aesthetically it is bad because it is making our planet look messy. This is also an ethical issue for many religious people because we are not preserving the planet in its perfect state in which God gave it to, we humans. Further more if people keep littering then animals habitats will be destroyed and certain animals will die off, this will have a knock on effect to humans because the animals will die because they have no vegetation to eat. If all our trees and plants humans will die of starvation. This is another ethical issue because according to philosopher "Singer" he believes that animals are part of the human community and that it is our moral obligation to look after and protect them. If we are not do this and polluting then we are ethically sinning. Another type of pollution is dumping masses amount of rubbish all over and streets etc. This is also ethically wrong because

it is our duty to look after the universe.  
 To conclude, pollution is ethically wrong in three many  
 ways. Firstly aesthetic, it doesn't look good and we should  
 look after our environment. Secondly it is morally wrong. And  
 thirdly it is our religious duty to look after the universe that God  
 L2 has given to use us.

### Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

This essay is limited, particularly in breadth. It shows limited understanding, although generally speaking it is relevant. It has some coherence, although it is no more than a summary of the key points. For example it refers to green houses gases (unfortunately omitting the third of those words in its first mention of them), to the idea of stewardship, to the effects of littering, and to aesthetic considerations.

The essay makes basic assumptions without justification. For example it assumes that considerations about God and stewardship are automatically relevant to environmental ethics – a position which many would deny. In paragraph 3, issues about the environment of this world are gratuitously expanded to include this *universe*, and again, the catchword of the creation account in Genesis 1-3, that the world was created 'perfect', and that it was created for human use, are accepted without justification.

The candidate moves towards a reasonable point concerning whether or not animals should be considered as part of the moral community, but this gets translated into a suggestion that Singer includes animals as members of the *human* community. The issue about littering is repeated in connection with dumping rubbish in the streets, and the whole question of littering and dumping is phrased in non-technical language.

The essay concludes by again expanding concerns about humans and their environment to concerns about humans and the whole universe. Also, ethical mistreatment is described as 'sinning', which again begs the question.

The essay fits into the descriptors for a low Level 3 response.

**Level 3 (11 marks)**

- 4 (b) 'The protection of the environment should be only for the good of humankind.'  
Assess this claim.

(15 marks)

AO2

## Candidate Response

Qb) Protection for the environment should only be for the good of humankind. Many people would agree with this claim because humans are the dominant species and everything in the universe is for humankind. On the other hand many people would argue that humankind is not the only species in the environment so their protection of the environment should be for the good of all living species and everything in it.

Some people would say that if you do protect the environment only for the good of humankind, then you would not be following the laws of stewardship set by God which states that you should look after everything and everyone in the environment.

One famous philosopher "Fox" would say that animals are not part of the moral community so you should look only to protect the environment for the good of humankind. However, another philosopher, Singer, would disagree and say that we should protect the environment for everyone not just humankind.

To conclude many people would say that we should protect the environment only for the good of humankind because we are the dominant species and nothing matters. Also I think this claim is true because humans are the most important so you should look to protect the environment for no other reason than themselves.

## Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

This essay is clearly limited by its lack of reasoned support for its arguments. The first sentence does not challenge the view that "everything in the *universe* is for mankind", and in the second sentence, it seems rather obvious that "humankind is not the only species".

In paragraph 2, the claim that "animals are not part of the moral community" is neither explained nor justified. Neither is the riposte from Singer that "we should protect the environment for everyone not just humankind".

The conclusion does at least follow from the line of argument taken, despite its general lack of justification. There is some attempt to see more than one point of view, but the lack of explanation given means that the essay does not score higher than a low Level 4 – "a limited attempt to sustain an argument."

Level 4 (7 marks)