



Religion and Ethics Theme 4:
Determinism and free will
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Religious Studies
for A Level Year 2 & A2
Philosophy of Religion
and **Religion and Ethics**

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T4 Determinism and free will

This section covers AO1 content and skills

Specification content

St Augustine: Doctrine of Original Sin: role of concupiscence, humanity as 'a lump of sin' (massa peccati), an essentially 'free' human nature (liberium arbitrium), the loss of human liberty (libertas) to our sinful nature, God's grace and atonement of the elect/saints.

Key terms

Concupiscence: strong desire for earthly pleasures

Heresy: a belief that is contrary to orthodox Christian theology/dogma and therefore seen as against the will of God

Moral agent: all human beings, when in a moral situation or act

Omnipotent being: a being with unlimited power

Predestination: in religious terms, it is the theory that all events are the result of the will of God, particularly regarding the post-mortem fate of moral agents, i.e. to salvation or to damnation. Predestination is a form of religious hard determinism

Key quote

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. (Genesis 3:6)

quickfire

- 4.1 Why was Augustine angry at Pelagius' free will theory?

A: Religious concepts of predestination, with reference to St Augustine and John Calvin

St Augustine

Saint Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) was one of the most influential early Christian theologians. Though he never became Pope, he was a powerful person in the hierarchy of the early Catholic Church.

Augustine's theological view on predestination started when he reacted angrily to the teachings of the Celtic monk Pelagius (354–420). The free will theology of Pelagius horrified Augustine because, to him, it seemed to diminish the power of God and make God something less than an **omnipotent being**.

Pelagius' theories made it possible for a mere **moral agent** to decide freely whether to be morally good or sinful. The implication of this was that the moral agent would then be able to tell an omnipotent God whether to give them salvation. That, argued Augustine, was an intolerable denial of God's omnipotence and an insult to God's divine majesty. Therefore, Augustine argued that Pelagius' free will theology was a **heresy**, that is, a belief so dangerous that it was a moral sin and condemned to hell all that held this belief.

As a result, of the above, Augustine formally developed an official response to Pelagius' free will theology on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church. It was called the Doctrine of Original Sin and for Augustine this included the theory of **predestination**.



Doctrine of Original Sin

The Doctrine of Original Sin is based on the ancestral sin of Adam and Eve, namely their sin of disobedience in consuming from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. This is known as 'the original sin', that is the first instance of disobedience of humanity to God.

Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin starts by stating that the outcome of original sin is that sin became a radical defect of all human characters. It is a defect that Adam and Eve acquired as a result of committing the original sin and according to Augustine was a wounding of their original perfect nature. Augustine called this defect in the human character, a tendency towards sinning against God, '**concupiscence**'. Concupiscence is a Latin term that translates as 'longing' in a sensual way. In practice, concupiscence means that moral agents have longings for earthly desires such as materialism, food, sex, etc., as opposed to having the desire

to know and love God. In Catholic theology concupiscence is often seen as a desire for lower appetites that runs contrary to a moral agent's God-given **reason**. Concupiscence, in itself, is not a sin but instead it is a deficiency in a moral agent's ability to choose good and resist evil.

This defect of concupiscence, according to Augustine, is passed on from Adam and Eve to every person born into this world for two reasons. Firstly, all humanity is related to Adam and Eve. Therefore, Augustine argued that all of humanity inherited Adam's sin, thus, Adam's guilt is also the guilt of humanity as a whole. Augustine supports this point by considering the writings of St Paul in Romans 5:12 'just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people because all sinned'.

Secondly, all humans are born from sexual intercourse, which is itself a result of concupiscence and thus all humanity inherits concupiscence. The exception to this, argues Augustine, is Jesus Christ who was not born from sexual intercourse and therefore was born sin free.

The result of the above, according to Augustine, is that all humanity is born '**massa peccati**'. Massa peccati is a Latin term meaning a 'lump of sin' or 'mass of sin'. Augustine illustrated massa peccati by stating humanity is 'so hopelessly corrupted that we are absolutely incapable of doing anything good by our own forces; free choice, if it means a choice between good and evil, has been utterly wasted by sin; our will, insofar as it is ours, and not God's, can merely do evil and desire evil'. Therefore, for Augustine, humanity's ability to freely choose is infected with sin and moral agents are as a result predestined to sin.

However, despite the above, Augustine still argued humanity is born with free will. He argued moral agents have an essential human nature that is **liberium arbitrium** (a Latin phrase meaning a moral agent has the power of making choices that are free from predestination). However, concupiscence acts as secondary human nature which overrides a moral agent's essential human nature of liberium arbitrium. As Augustine argues humanity's free will 'has been utterly wasted by sin'. Therefore, according to Augustine, moral agents lose their **libertas** (Latin phrase meaning liberty) to sin. Therefore, moral agents cannot make free will decisions because the dominant concupiscence predetermines all moral agents to sin.

Overall, Augustine believed that every moral agent is predestined to be a sinner, even before they are born, incapable of doing anything that is good, doomed to do nothing but evil deeds and to suffer the full consequences for this evil doing: an eternity in hell. Free will becomes redundant, because humanity becomes incapable of committing any acts but evil ones. Therefore, humanity is condemned to damnation before they are even born.



Adam and Eve committing original sin

Key quotes

All humans were seminally present in the loins of Adam. **(Augustine)**

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned. **(Romans 5:12)**

quickfire

- 4.2** What are the two reasons humanity is born with the defect of concupiscence?

Key terms

Liberium arbitrium: Latin phrase meaning a moral agent has the power of making choices that are free from predestination

Libertas: Latin phrase meaning liberty

Massa peccati: Latin term meaning lump or mass of sin

Reason: the power of the mind to think and form judgements logically

Key quote

Our will can merely do evil and desire evil. **(Augustine)**

quickfire

- 4.3** Why do moral agents lose their free will?



Augustine believed that every moral agent is predestined to be a sinner and therefore is in danger of eternity in Hell.

Key quote

It is unthinkable that He [Jesus] should deliberately have shed his blood for hell-dwellers-to-be. (Augustine)

quickfire

4.4 How do moral agents become 'elect'?

Key terms

God's grace: the love and mercy given to humanity by God because God desires humanity to have it, not because of anything humanity has done to deserve it

Reprobates: those moral agents, untouched by God's grace, left to be consumed by the defect of concupiscence

Sovereignty of God: the ability of God to exercise His holy will or supremacy

The elect: those moral agents chosen, by the grace of God, to be freed of concupiscence

Specification content

John Calvin: Doctrine of Election: the absolute power of God, the corrupted nature of humans, the elect and the reprobates, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the elect.

However, Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin is not without hope for humanity. Augustine argued that through **God's grace** some people will receive salvation because God did not intend that all humanity remain in this desperate state of sin. God's grace is defined as the love and mercy given to humanity by God because God desires humanity to have it, not because of anything humanity has done to deserve it.

By God's grace a few people are purged of their sinful secondary nature of concupiscence. No person can ask for it or do anything to deserve it. Grace, as humanity perceives it, is given randomly to a small fixed number of people. Only God knows why certain people are chosen and not others. Therefore, the choice of to whom God extends grace is totally within God's sovereign discretion. Augustine called these chosen people '**the elect**' (sometimes known as 'the saints'). Those people not chosen were labelled by Augustine as '**reprobates**'. According to Augustine, God decided which individuals would receive grace before any of them were even born.

However, God's grace does not mean that 'the elect' have free will to choose to be morally good. Although Augustine stops short of saying that 'the elect' are coerced, by God, to be sinless, he argues that they cannot resist the calling of grace given to them. Therefore, the elect are predestined to salvation before they are even born.

Therefore, Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin makes it clear that humanity has no ultimate free will. Whether a moral agent is chosen by God to be an 'elect' or a 'reprobate' they are predestined from birth. If they are predestined by God to be 'elect', they will resist sin and ultimately receive eternal bliss in heaven or if they are predestined a 'reprobate' they will sin and receive eternal damnation. One important implication of the above is that Augustine argued that Christ did not die to save all of humankind. He died solely for 'the elect'.



According to Augustine, Christ's death was not to save all of humankind.

John Calvin's Doctrine of Election

Eleven centuries on from Augustine's pre-destination theory, John Calvin (1509–1564 CE) presented his predestination theory. Calvin, who was one of the leading figures in the reformation, developed a theory which became known as the 'Doctrine of Election' (a.k.a 'The Doctrine of the Living Saints'). Calvin's theory revolves around the belief in the uncompromised **sovereignty of God**.

Calvin, like Augustine before him, argued that since humanity is totally depraved due to 'the fall' of Adam and Eve, humanity cannot respond in faithful obedience to the invitation of God through Jesus. In other words, moral agents cannot choose for themselves to obey or disobey God because they are too wrapped up in sin. Calvin was convinced that human beings were totally depraved, so that there was

no good in a person at all, not even enough to want to be saved from sin. Calvin does not mean moral agents are always carrying out sinful acts, but rather that in terms of salvation and being godlike the human race is without hope.

However, this does not mean that Calvin believed that all humanity was predestined to damnation. He believed that some moral agents would receive salvation from God. Therefore, Calvin's theory is based on the idea that God alone determines who will be saved. This idea was supported by theologian Johnathon Edwards (1703–1758 CE), who argued that the concept of free will was incompatible with individual dependence on God. This is because it challenged God's sovereignty since if a moral agent could choose their response to God, that would mean that salvation would be partly dependent upon the moral agent.

AO1 Activity

Work in groups of four. Firstly, divide the 'Doctrine of Election' into four equal parts. Take a part each and think of an imaginative way to present it to the other three that does not involve just reading it out. Each person presents their quarter of the theory to the other three.

Calvin wished his theory to be **sola scriptura**, i.e. to be based purely on biblical teachings. Therefore, he illustrated his theory with several Bible passages. The idea that God alone predestines humanity to salvation was, according to Calvin, clearly highlighted in the following Biblical passages:

Ephesians 2:8

'For it is by grace you are saved, through faith, and this not of yourselves, is the gift of God.'

John 15:16

'Jesus says, "you did not choose me, but I choose you".'

Romans 8:29

'And those he predestined, he also called: those he called he also glorified ...'

Therefore, Calvin believed the choice for salvation was not a human choice but rather a divine one. This was later reflected in the words of the **Westminster Confession of Faith**, that God 'freely and unchangeably ordained whatsoever comes to pass'.

Calvin further developed his theory by stating that God made among moral agents two predestined groups: the elect and the reprobates. This view on predestination is sometimes referred to as double predestination. This is because God has actively chosen people into two predestined groups; either for damnation (reprobates) or for salvation (the elect).

The elect

If a moral agent belonged to the elect then they have been chosen by God to have their sins forgiven, through the sacrifice and **atonement** associated with the death of Jesus Christ. The moral agent has done nothing to deserve this good fortune; it is a divine mystery why some are chosen and others not. Calvin argued that although nobody knows for sure which group they belong to because of the Godly mysterious basis of predestination. However, he did argue it was possible for the elect to guess, or be aware of, their status as an elect.



Key quote

The eternal decree of God, by which he determined that he wished to make of every man. **(Calvin)**

Key terms

Atonement: Christian doctrine concerning the reconciliation of God and humankind, accomplished through the life, suffering and death of Christ

Sola scriptura: Latin phrase meaning scripture alone; highlights the theological idea that Christian scriptures are the sole infallible rule of faith

Westminster Confession of Faith: a confession of faith drawn up in 1646 by the Church of England



Calvin used the parables of Jesus to further justify his position on the idea of election

Key quote

The secret of the Kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables. **(Mark 4:11)**

The first and most important indicator of election is what Calvin called 'the calling of God'. What Calvin means by this is that the moral agent will have an inward certainty that God has chosen them for salvation. Moreover, Calvin believed the elect would generally show traits of being elect, such as they would be hard-working, honest, etc., partially reflecting their Godly status. However, Calvin did state that the elect could still be sinful but God predestines them to have faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, when they sin they cannot resist the calling on their lives to seek forgiveness. Therefore, because of Jesus' atonement, the elect remain sinless and at death achieve salvation.

The reprobates (a.k.a. the damned)

The reprobates also appear, to moral agents, to be randomly chosen by God. Calvin believed that the reprobates were more likely to show traits of why they will go to hell post-mortem. For Calvin, such traits included laziness and alcoholism. At the end of their lives they would go to hell; there was nothing they could have done about it in their lifetime. The reprobates could still be morally good but, according to Calvin, will ultimately fall prey to sin. However, the reprobates will be predestined not to have faith in Christ, therefore their sins will remain with them because they do not seek Christ's atonement. The reprobate is deaf and blind to the message of the gospel. Therefore, the reprobates remain in sin and thus at death will go to hell. Calvin quotes the Bible to illustrate his elect/reprobates theory: 'And he (Jesus) said to them "The secret of the Kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables".' (Mark 4:11)

Calvin accepts that no one can be completely sure whether they are an elect or a reprobate. However, he does argue that this is one of God's purposes in predestination. He argued that the mystery of which predestined group you belong to will inspire wonder and reverence in believers. Indeed, for Calvin the main purpose of predestination is for God to be glorified in this way. Therefore, according to Calvin, God made a predestined choice for all mankind, before they were even born. Certain moral agents progress to eternal life (the elect) and some to eternal damnation (the reprobates). That number, according to Calvin, is fixed by God from eternity and the moral agent cannot do anything during their lifetime to change it.

C. H. Spurgeon, a 19th-century theologian and preacher, supported Calvin's Doctrine of Election by stating: 'I am sure He chose me before I was born, or else He never would have chosen me afterwards; and He must have elected me for reasons unknown to me, for I never could find any reason in myself why He should have looked upon me with special love.'

The Synod of Dort

Several years after Calvin's death his supporters (known as Calvinists) summed up Calvin's theory of Doctrine of Election into five points at the 'Synod of Dort' (1619 CE). The Synod of Dort was an international meeting organised by the Dutch Reformed Church to settle a divisive controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism on the issue of predestination.

The five points of Calvinism are sometimes summed up with the acronym T.U.L.I.P.:

Total Depravity

Humans are totally corrupted by sin because of 'the fall'. They cannot choose good over evil. What Calvinism is arguing here is that sin has extended to every part of a moral agent's personality including thought, emotions and will. This does not mean that the moral agent will necessarily be intensely sinful, but that sin has extended to his entire being.

Unconditional Election

This point states that God alone chose the elect. Election is not based upon any merit/good works the moral agent has undertaken. Moreover, it is not based upon God's omniscient nature to know which moral agents would accept the offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God has chosen the elect, based solely upon his own will. He did this before the Earth was even created.

Limited Atonement

Christ's death and atonement for human sins was for the elect only. Calvinism believes that the Bible teaches that Christ died for those whom God gave him to save, the elect. Therefore, Christ died for many people (the elect), but not all (the reprobates). Calvinists' point to Matthew 26:28 as an illustration of this: Jesus said 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'.

Irresistible Grace

The result of God's irresistible grace is the certain response by the elect to the inward call of the gospel. Calvinists point to John 6:37 as an illustration that Christ himself teaches that all whom God has elected will come to a knowledge of him. This knowledge of Christ will lead to salvation.

Perseverance of the Elect

The elect will remain in God's hand until they are glorified in heaven. Therefore, sanctification which God has brought about in the elect will continue until it reaches its fulfilment in eternal life. The elect will therefore be unable to commit apostasy by giving up their faith.

AO1 Activity

Work in groups of five. Firstly, divide the five points of the 'Synod of Dort'. Take a point each and think of an imaginative way to present it to the other four that does not involve just reading it out. Each person presents their point to the other four.



The Synod of Dort formally summarised Calvin's Doctrine of Election into five points.

Key term

Synod: an assembly of church clergy of a particular church

Key skills Theme 4

This theme has tasks that deal with the basics of AO1 in terms of prioritising and selecting the key relevant information, presenting this in a personalised way (as in Theme 1) and then using evidence and examples to support and expand upon this (as in Theme 2).

Key skills

Knowledge involves:

Selection of a range of (thorough) accurate and relevant information that is directly related to the specific demands of the question.

This means:

- Selecting relevant material for the question set
- Being focused in explaining and examining the material selected.

Understanding involves:

Explanation that is extensive, demonstrating depth and/or breadth with excellent use of evidence and examples including (where appropriate) thorough and accurate supporting use of sacred texts, sources of wisdom and specialist language.

This means:

- Effective use of examples and supporting evidence to establish the quality of your understanding
- Ownership of your explanation that expresses personal knowledge and understanding and NOT just reproducing a chunk of text from a book that you have rehearsed and memorised.

AO1 Developing skills

It is now important to consider the information that has been covered in this section; however, the information in its raw form is too extensive and so has to be processed in order to meet the requirements of the examination. This can be done by practising more advanced skills associated with AO1. The exercises that run throughout this book will help you to do this and prepare you for the examination. For assessment objective 1 (AO1), which involves demonstrating 'knowledge' and 'understanding' skills, we are going to focus on different ways in which the skills can be demonstrated effectively, and also refer to how the performance of these skills is measured (see generic band descriptors for A2 [WJEC] AO1 or A Level [Eduqas] AO1).

- **Your task is this:** Below is a summary of the **five points Calvinists expressed Calvin's Doctrine of Election at the Synod of Dort in 1619**. It is 320 words long. There are three points highlighted for each of the first three doctrines in Calvin's list that are key points to learn from this extract. Discuss which further two points you think are the most important to highlight from the last two.

1. **Total Depravity:** humans are totally corrupted by sin because of 'the fall. They cannot choose good over evil. What Calvinism is arguing here is that **sin has extended to every part of a moral agent's personality; their thinking, their emotions, and their will.** This does not mean that the moral agent will necessarily be intensely sinful, but that sin has extended to his entire being.
2. **Unconditional Election:** this point states that God alone chose the elect. **Election is not based upon any merit/good works the moral agent has undertaken.** Moreover, it is not based upon God's omniscient nature to know which moral agents would accept the offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God has chosen the elect, based solely upon his own will. He did this before the Earth was even created.
3. **Limited Atonement:** Christ's death and atonement for human sins was for the elect only. **Calvinism believes that the Bible teaches that Christ died for those whom God gave him to save, the elect.** Therefore, Christ died for many people (the elect), but not all (the reprobates). Calvinists' point to Matthew 26:28 as an illustration of this: Jesus said 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins'.
4. **Irresistible Grace:** the result of God's irresistible grace is the certain response by the elect to the inward call of the gospel. Calvinists point to John 6:37 as an illustration that Christ, himself, teaches that all whom God has elected will come to a knowledge of him. This knowledge of Christ will lead to salvation.
5. **Perseverance of the Elect:** the elect will remain in God's hand until they are glorified in heaven. Therefore, sanctification which God has brought about in the elect will continue until it reaches its fulfilment in eternal life. The elect will therefore be unable to commit apostasy by giving up their faith.

Now make the five points into your own summary (as in Theme 1 Developing skills) trying to make the summary more personal to your style of writing.

Issues for analysis and evaluation

A consideration of whether religious believers should accept predestination

This issue for debate here is whether predestination is a viable and credible belief for religious believers in light of the whole context of what religious belief entails. As such it can be approached in a variety of ways.

One line of argument is that religious believers should accept predestination because this is what holy texts suggest. This point could be explored from several different religious traditions or could just concentrate on one tradition. Potential holy texts on predestination include (but there are many more):

- Judeo-Christian Bible: In Job 14:5 it states: 'A person's days are determined, you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.'
- Bible New Testament: In Romans 8:29–30 St Paul writes: 'For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those justified, he also glorified.'
- Qur'an: In 76:30 it states: 'And you do not will except that Allah wills'

However, the above line of argument could be countered by a consideration of holy texts that suggest humanity has free will. Again, this point could be explored from several different religious traditions or could just concentrate on one tradition.

Potential holy texts on predestination include (but there are many more):

- Judeo-Christian Bible: In Joshua 24:15 it states: 'But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve ...'
- Bible New Testament: In John 8:36 Jesus stated: 'So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.'
- Qur'an: In 54:49 it states: 'Allah then created man, and showed him the two ways, good and evil.'

Another line of argument that religious believers should accept predestination is to consider the theological support for predestination, e.g. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin and/or Calvin's 'Doctrine of Election'. However, what is more important to say is why these two doctrines work to illustrate that a religious believer should accept predestination. This could be done by considering the support each doctrine received, i.e. support from other theologians, historical acceptance of the two doctrines, etc.

For example, one potential support for Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin is to look at the outcome of the **Council of Carthage** in 418 CE. In the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries 'Councils of Carthage' were assembled by the Catholic Church to discuss theological matters of great importance. In 418 CE one such

Council of Carthage fully approved Augustine's predestination Doctrine of Original Sin and denounced the contrary view as presented by Pelagius.

Another example that could be used is to consider the Synod of Dort in 1619. The Synod of Dort was an international meeting, organised by the Dutch Reformed Church, to settle a divisive controversy between the predestination arguments of Calvinism and the free will arguments of Arminianism. The Synod concluded with a rejection of the Arminian view and the acceptance of all five of the Calvinist points, namely; total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the elect.



The Council of Carthage supports Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin.

This section covers AO2 content and skills

Specification content

A consideration of whether religious believers should accept predestination.



Holy texts can be used to justify the idea of predestination.

Key term

Council of Carthage: Catholic Church meetings or synods held between the 3rd and 5th centuries in the city of Carthage, in Africa

Key terms

Methodism: religious movement founded primarily through the work of John Wesley, whose preaching centred upon the theology that God's grace was given to all

Monotheistic religions: Monotheism literally means the belief in only one God. The major monotheistic religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam

Mormonism: religious movement founded by Joseph Smit in 1830, the people that belong to this religion are called Latter-day Saints or Mormons

Omnibenevolence: the quality of being all-loving, sometimes stated as being all-good

AO2 Activity

As you read through this section try to do the following:

1. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
2. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.
3. Can you evaluate here by drawing a mini conclusion about whether theological support illustrates that a religious believer should accept predestination.

This activity will help you to start thinking critically about what you read and help you to evaluate the effectiveness of different arguments and from this develop your own observations, opinions and points of view that will help with any conclusions that you make in your answers to the AO2 questions that arise.

However, the above line of argument could be countered by a consideration of the theological arguments supporting free will, e.g. Pelagius and Arminius. Again, however, what is more important to say is why these two free will theories work to illustrate that a religious believer should accept free will rather than predestination. This could be done by considering the support each doctrine received, i.e. support from other theologians, historical acceptance of the two doctrines, etc.

For example, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, also known as **Mormonism**, has accepted a great deal of Pelagius free will theories. Indeed, Mormon theologian Sterling McMurrin argued that: 'The theology of Mormonism is completely Pelagian'. An example of this can be seen in the Book of Mormon, the sacred text of Mormonism, where it states about humanity: '... because they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good and evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon ...'

Another example is that despite defeat at the Synod of Dort, Arminianism continued to grow and has influenced several church denominations, particularly the theology of the Methodist Church. The Methodist Church's doctrine on salvation is almost entirely based on Arminian principles. For example, one of the founders of **Methodism**, John Wesley, taught that a person is free not only to accept salvation but also to reject it. Moreover, he also taught that the Holy Spirit guides a Christian to their salvation.

Another line of argument that religious believers should accept predestination is to consider the theological consequences of predestination, in terms of God's attributes. **Monotheistic religions**, like Islam, Judaism and Christianity, generally attribute the quality of omnipotence to their deity. Omnipotence is the quality of having unlimited power. The concept of predestination seems to support the concept of God's omnipotent nature. This is because only an omnipotent deity could have had eternal predestination plan for all of humanity, that He was able to execute. The above point can be exemplified from Augustine's theory. This is because, as we seen, Augustine reacted angrily to the teachings of the Celtic monk Pelagius because his free will theology, according to Augustine, seemed to diminish the omnipotent nature of God. This is because Pelagius' theories made it possible, according to Augustine, for a mere moral agent to decide freely whether to be morally good or sinful. The implication of this was that the moral agent would then be able to tell an omnipotent deity whether to give them salvation. That, argued Augustine, was an intolerable denial of God's omnipotence, an insult to His divine majesty.

This point is further supported by the theologian Johnathon Edwards who argues that the concept of free will is incompatible with individual dependence on God. This is because if a moral agent could choose their own response to God and morality then salvation would become partly dependent upon the moral agent therefore reducing God's omnipotent nature.

However, the above line of argument could be countered by a consideration of the theological consequences of free will on God's attributes. Monotheistic religions also generally attribute the quality of **omnibenevolence** to their deity. Omnibenevolence is the quality of being all-loving, sometimes stated as being all-good. The concept of free will, not predestination, seems to support God's omnibenevolent nature. This is because free will theory opens up the possibility that all moral agents can achieve salvation by freely following God's eternal moral laws. This is a better illustration of God's omnibenevolence than the doctrine of predestination. This is because predestination theory, as stated by both Augustine and Calvin, shows that God only appears to predestine some moral agents, therefore, only some moral agents will ascend to heaven post-mortem. The rest, the reprobates, will not be saved by God

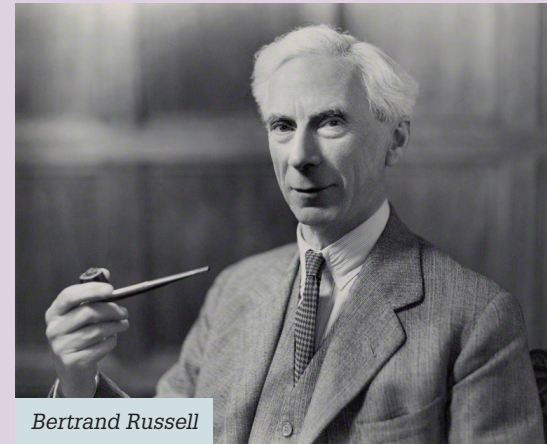
and will inevitably descend to hell post-mortem. This can be seen to have grave implications for God's omnibenevolent nature. This is because God is punishing and rewarding certain moral agents on behaviour only He had control over. Based on the above point Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) stated that God must be 'a monster'. This is because, as Russell stated: 'A God that punishes or rewards on the basis of God's own eternal decisions is unfair and immoral'.

However, free will theory can defend God against such accusations and thus support God's omnibenevolent nature. This point is illustrated in Pelagius' theory arguing that when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, to create the 'original sin', God would not punish all of humanity for the sin of Adam and Eve. Pelagius argued this was a very important point because an omnipotent God would not punish all humanity through no direct fault of their own. As he stated: 'we (humanity) may not seem to be forced to do evil through a fault in our nature'. Therefore, Pelagius argued that 'the fall' remained Adam and Eve's sin alone. Therefore, according to Pelagius, an omnibenevolent God, was allowing moral agents not to be predestined by inherited sin and thus all moral agents had the ability, within themselves, to achieve salvation. This point was supported by Arminius' supporters, called Remonstrants, at the 'Synod of Dort' in 1619. One of their 'Five Articles of Remonstrance' was that salvation (or condemnation) on the day of judgment is freely conditioned by the faith (or unbelief) of the individual moral agent. Therefore, God's omnibenevolent nature is supported by free will theory because it opens the possibility that all moral agents can achieve salvation by freely following God's eternal moral laws.

Moreover, free will theory can also enhance the idea that God is omnibenevolent in nature because God is allowing moral agents to make their own choices, as opposed to being mere pre-programmed robots. This is because if a moral agent's life was predestined by God they would be no more than an automated robot just carrying out their God-given pre-programmed life; with no willpower to change anything. An analogy would be it is like a young person playing with their teddy bear: sometimes they would be caring, other times they might be careless with it, but the teddy bear cannot choose not to be played with. God would appear to be doing the same with moral agents; and it could be argued this is not the behaviour of an omnibenevolent being. Arminius agreed with this, in his free will theory, because he wished to illustrate that: 'man is not an automation in the hands of God'. Therefore, free will theory enhances the notion that God is omnibenevolent because God is giving moral agents free will to decide the outcome of their lives themselves. This could be argued to be more the behaviour of an omnibenevolent being than predestining all moral agents.

Study tip

It is vital for AO2 that you actually discuss arguments and not just explain what someone may have stated. Try to ask yourself, 'was this a fair point to make?', 'is the evidence sound enough?', 'is there anything to challenge this argument?', 'is this a strong or weak argument?' Such critical analysis will help you develop your evaluation skills



Bertrand Russell



A child's teddy bear has no control over how it is treated.

AO2 Activity

List some conclusions that could be drawn from the AO2 reasoning from the above text; try to aim for at least three different possible conclusions. Consider each of the conclusions and collect brief evidence to support each conclusion from the AO1 and AO2 material for this topic. Select the conclusion that you think is most convincing and explain why it is so. Try to contrast this with the weakest conclusion in the list, justifying your argument with clear reasoning and evidence.

Specification content

The extent to which God predestines humanity.



According to the Bible God has appointed a set time for a person's life.

Key term

Omniscience: the state of knowing everything

AO2 Activity

As you read through this section try to do the following:

1. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
2. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.
3. Can you evaluate here by drawing a mini conclusion about the extent of God's predestination, when considering holy texts.

This activity will help you to start thinking critically about what you read and help you to evaluate the effectiveness of different arguments and from this develop your own observations, opinions and points of view that will help with any conclusions that you make in your answers to the AO2 questions that arise.

The extent to which God predestines humanity

This issue is not too dissimilar from the issue above. This is because this issue is also centred around a consideration of religious views on predestination. Therefore, some of the lines of argument above will work for this question as well, but with a different emphasis.

One line of argument is that the extent of God's predestination of humanity, according to holy texts, is total. This point could be explored from several different religious traditions or a candidate could just concentrate on one tradition. Potential holy texts on predestination include (but there are many more):

- Judeo-Christian Bible: In Job 14:5 it states: 'A person's days are determined, you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.'
- Bible New Testament: In Romans 8:29–30 St Paul writes: 'For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those justified, he also glorified.'
- Qur'an: In 76:30 it states: 'And you do not will except that Allah wills'

However, the above line of argument – that the above holy texts suggest that the extent of God's predestination for humanity is total – could be countered in two ways:

Firstly, do the above texts mean that the extent of God's predestination for humanity is total? For example, the quote from Job 14:5 'A person's days are determined, you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed' could point to the fact that God is omniscient and not predestining humanity. Monotheistic religions, like Islam, Judaism and Christianity, attribute the quality of **omniscience** to their deity; which means God is all-knowing; or put another way God knows everything. If God does know everything then this is why God knows the limit of a moral agent's life span not that God is controlling it. Even if God is determining a moral agent's lifespan this is still not necessarily suggesting that God is controlling what a moral agent does in this predetermined life span.

Secondly, different holy texts suggest the extent of God's predestination of humanity is non-existent, i.e. God gives humanity free will. Again, this point could be explored from several different religious traditions or could just concentrate on one tradition. Potential holy texts on predestination include (but there are many more):

- Judeo-Christian Bible: In Joshua 24:15 it states: 'But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve'
- Bible New Testament: In John 8:36 Jesus stated: 'So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.'
- Qur'an: In 54:49 it states: 'Allah then created man, and showed him the two ways, good and evil.'

Another line of argument about the extent to which God predestines humanity is to consider theological arguments for predestination. It could be argued that theological arguments for predestination mean that the extent of God's predestination for humanity is complete. One could exemplify the doctrines of those predestination theorists that have been studied, e.g. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin and Calvin's 'Doctrine of Election'; however, what would illustrate this point better is the support these two theories received from fellow theologians.

For example, one potential support for Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin is to look at the outcome of the Council of Carthage in 418. In the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries 'Councils of Carthage' were assembled by the Catholic Church to discuss theological matters of great importance. In 418 one such Council of Carthage fully approved Augustine's predestination Doctrine of Original Sin and denounced the contrary view of Pelagius. Therefore, the Council of Carthage was in many ways agreeing with the assertion that the extent of God's predestination for humanity is total.

Another example that could be used is to consider the Synod of Dort in 1619. The Synod of Dort was an international meeting, organised by the Dutch Reformed Church, to settle a divisive controversy between the predestination arguments of Calvinism and the free will arguments of Arminianism. The Synod concluded with a rejection of the Arminian view and the acceptance of all five of the Calvinist points, namely; total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the elect. Therefore, the Synod of Dort was in many ways agreeing with the assertion that the extent of God's predestination for humanity is total.

However, the above line of argument, that the extent of God's predestination for humanity is total, could be countered in two ways:

Firstly, do the predestination arguments of Augustine and Calvin really illustrate that the extent of God's predestination for humanity is total? For example, in Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin he concedes that humanity is born with free will.

He argued moral agents have an 'essential human nature' which is *liberium arbitrium*. *Liberium arbitrium* is a Latin phrase that means a moral agent has the power of making choices that are free from predestination. However, Augustine then argues that concupiscence acts as secondary nature which overrides a moral agent's essential human nature of *liberium arbitrium*. Therefore, it could be argued that Augustine is actually putting forward a version of **soft determinism** as an argument and not a predestination argument. This is because humanity has two natures, one of which is free willed. Therefore, if this is correct then perhaps the extent of God's predestination over humanity is not complete.

Moreover, Calvin concedes that even the 'elect' could still be sinful but God predestines them to have faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, when they sin they cannot resist the calling on their lives to seek forgiveness. However, the point still remains that the elect appear to have enough free will to choose to do sinful acts despite the fact that they will be predestined to ask for forgiveness. Therefore, it could be argued that Calvin is also presenting a soft determinist theory not a predestination theory. Therefore, if this is correct then perhaps the extent of God's predestination over humanity is not complete.

Secondly, it could be argued that the extent of God's predestination over humanity is not complete because there are theological arguments supporting the opposite, i.e. free will. One could exemplify the ideas of the free will theories of Pelagius and Arminius. Again, however, what is more important to say is why these two free will theories work to illustrate that the extent of God's predestination is limited or non-existent. This could be done by considering the support each doctrine received. For example, the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, also known as Mormonism, has accepted a great deal of Pelagian free will theories. Indeed, Mormon theologian Sterling McMurrin argued that: 'The theology of Mormonism is completely Pelagian'.



A puppet on a string has no control over its movements; do we have control over ours?

Key term

Soft determinism: a theory that human behaviour is partly predetermined but some free will remains



Sterling McMurrin

An example of this can be seen in the Book of Mormon, the sacred text of Mormonism, where it states about humanity: '... because they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good and evil; to act for themselves and not to be acted upon ...'

Another example is, that despite defeat at the Synod of Dort, Arminianism continued to grow and has influenced several church denominations, particularly the theology of the Methodist Church. The Methodist Church's doctrine on salvation is almost entirely based on Arminian principles. For example, one of the founders of Methodism, John Wesley, taught that a person is free not only to accept salvation but also to reject it. Moreover, he also taught that the Holy Spirit guides a Christian to their salvation.



The Methodist Church's doctrine on salvation is almost entirely based on Arminian principles.

Study tip

It is vital for AO2 that you actually discuss arguments and not just explain what someone may have stated. Try to ask yourself, 'was this a fair point to make?', 'is the evidence sound enough?', 'is there anything to challenge this argument?', 'is this a strong or weak argument?' Such critical analysis will help you develop your evaluation skills

AO2 Activity

List some conclusions that could be drawn from the AO2 reasoning from the above text; try to aim for at least three different possible conclusions. Consider each of the conclusions and collect brief evidence to support each conclusion from the AO1 and AO2 material for this topic. Select the conclusion that you think is most convincing and explain why it is so. Try to contrast this with the weakest conclusion in the list, justifying your argument with clear reasoning and evidence.

AO2 Developing skills

It is now important to consider the information that has been covered in this section; however, the information in its raw form is too extensive and so has to be processed in order to meet the requirements of the examination. This can be achieved by practising more advanced skills associated with AO2. The exercises that run throughout this book will help you to do this and prepare you for the examination. For assessment objective 2 (AO2), which involves 'critical analysis' and 'evaluation' skills, we are going to focus on different ways in which the skills can be demonstrated effectively, and also refer to how the performance of these skills is measured (see generic band descriptors for A2 [WJEC] AO2 or A Level [Eduqas] AO2).

- **Your task is this:** Below is a one-sided view concerning **the extent to which God predestines humanity**. It is 120 words long. You need to include this view for an evaluation; however, to just present one side of an argument or one line of reasoning is not really evaluation. Using the paragraph below, add a counter-argument or alternative line of reasoning to make the evaluation more balanced. Allow about 200 words for your counter-argument or alternative line of reasoning.

Another line of argument about the extent to which God predestines humanity is to consider theological arguments for predestination such as the ones presented by Augustine. It could be argued that theological arguments for predestination mean that the extent of God's predestination for humanity is complete. For example, one potential support for Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin is to look at the outcome of the Council of Carthage in 418. In the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries 'Councils of Carthage' were assembled by the Catholic Church to discuss theological matters of great importance. In 418 one such Council of Carthage fully approved Augustine's predestination Doctrine of Original Sin and denounced the contrary view of Pelagius. Therefore, the Council of Carthage was in many ways agreeing and confirming that this was authoritative Christian teaching.

Next, think of another line of argument or reasoning that may support either argument or it may even be completely different and add this to your answer.

Then ask yourself:

- Will my work, when developed, contain thorough, sustained and clear views that are supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence?

Key skills Theme 4

This theme has tasks that deal with specific aspects of AO2 in terms of identifying key elements of an evaluative style piece of writing, specifically counter-arguments and conclusions (both intermediate and final).

Key skills

Analysis involves:

Identifying issues raised by the materials in the AO1, together with those identified in the AO2 section, and presents sustained and clear views, either of scholars or from a personal perspective ready for evaluation.

This means:

- That your answers are able to identify key areas of debate in relation to a particular issue
- That you can identify, and comment upon, the different lines of argument presented by others
- That your response comments on the overall effectiveness of each of these areas or arguments.

Evaluation involves:

Considering the various implications of the issues raised based upon the evidence gleaned from analysis and provides an extensive detailed argument with a clear conclusion.

This means:

- That your answer weighs up the consequences of accepting or rejecting the various and different lines of argument analysed
- That your answer arrives at a conclusion through a clear process of reasoning.

This section covers A01
content and skills

Specification content

Hard determinism: philosophical (John Locke – free will is an illusion, man in bedroom illustration).

Key quotes

Determinism (without these additional and controversial assumptions) does not have the consequence that our ‘journey’ through life is like moving down a road; the contrast between determinism and non-determinism is not the contrast between travelling on a branching road and travelling on a road with no branches.

(Stanford Encyclopaedia)

It follows... about states of the brain as effects, as correlates and as causes, that on every occasion when we decide or choose, we can only decide or choose as in fact we do.

(Honderich)

Any other future set of outcomes than the one fixed from eternity is impossible. (James)

Key term

Universal causation: belief that all human actions and choices have a past cause, leading to the conclusion that all events that happen are determined by an unbreakable chain of past causes

B: Concepts of determinism

Hard determinism

The idea of determinism is firmly grounded in the principle of causality. The world around us is very much a ‘closed’ or holistic phenomenon. Causality and the interaction of phenomena are empirical observations. For the philosopher who rejects dualism and embraces materialism, even the interaction between mind and body has a physical cause. Everything has to have an explanation; therefore, so too does the way in which we choose to act. Any decision made has a cause. If this is the case then it is illogical to speak of ‘free’ choice or free will because it is clear from observing the interaction of phenomena that everything is determined by causality.

Hard determinism is the belief that moral agents only have preconditioned, programmed choices over which they have no control. Therefore, moral agents are not free to act; free will is no more than an illusion. An analogy to illustrate the above is that a moral agent’s life is like a train running along fixed rails.

Therefore, there is no need to praise good deeds, for example, because the moral agent who did them had no choice to do differently. However, conversely, neither can a moral agent be blamed for a bad deed.

In other words, hard determinism takes the no nonsense line that everything that occurs in the universe has a sufficient explanation through causes and conditions, that is, the scientific law of cause and effect. That is, our actions, the ones we actually do, are the only ones that we can do. In effect, human freedom becomes an illusion, nothing more than a misguided interpretation of what is happening in our world. In essence, hard determinism suggests that essentially we have an ignorant view of what is going on.

Philosophical determinism (John Locke – free will is an illusion, man in bedroom illustration)

John Locke (1632–1704) was an English philosopher who is widely regarded as one of the leading enlightenment thinkers. Locke developed a philosophical determinism theory based on **universal causation**. This is the belief that all human actions and choices have a past cause leading to the conclusion that all events that happen are determined by an unbreakable chain of past causes.

For example, recently someone crashed into my car. When I analysed why the person who hit me had done it, it was due to a chain of causes going back six months. The person had been made redundant. One outcome of this was that they could not afford to have their car serviced. An outcome of this was that when they had to brake at a set of traffic lights, their brakes failed and they crashed into my car. Therefore, a chain of past causes, over which I had no control, ultimately led to someone crashing into my car.

Therefore, if this view is correct, then the future must logically be as fixed and unchangeable as the past. William James later summed up this theory as ‘the iron block universe’. From this theory Locke coined the phrase: ‘free will is just an illusion’. This is because moral agents who believe they have free will think they do because they can pause and reflect before making a choice. However, Locke believed that all such thoughts can be accounted for by the moral agent’s ignorance of universal causation. Indeed, Locke argued, most people do not have the intelligence to see that there are no choices at all to be made.

Locke developed the idea of universal causation by creating an analogy to illustrate the theory. His analogy starts with a man who wakes up in a room that, unknown

to him, is locked from the outside. He chooses to stay in the room believing he has chosen freely to stay there. In reality, however, he has no option but to stay in the room, it is only his ignorance of the fact that the door is locked, that gives him an illusion of freedom.

The analogy clearly illustrates that 'free will is just an illusion'; just as the man is ignorant of the fact the door is locked and thus has no choice but to stay in the room, so moral agents have no choices to make because it is just their ignorance of universal causation that gives them the feeling of free will.

Scientific determinism (biological determinism – human behaviour is controlled by an individual's genes)

Charles Darwin (1809–1882) and August Weismann (1834–1914) initially developed the theory that every living organism, which had evolved, had a genetic formula. Weismann called this genetic formula 'determinants', which would later become known as deoxyribonucleic acid, commonly shortened to **DNA**. As Darwin had illustrated that humanity developed from the evolutionary process, therefore humanity must also have a genetic formula. The implications of the above are that humanity is not free but is determined by their genetic formula.

The above theory was considerably developed by the discovery of DNA. The discovery of DNA was a gradual process and had several important contributors including Nikolai Koltsov (1872–1940) and Frederick Griffith (1879–1941) but it wasn't until James Watson (1928) and Francis Crick (1916–2004) developed the double-helix model of DNA structure in 1953, that this theory was universally accepted in the scientific community.

On a basic level, it can be said that moral agents are determined physically by their genes, i.e. the size of their nose, eye colour, etc. Moreover, there is a clear link between genetic faults and various physical and mental issues in humans, i.e. a person born with Down's syndrome. However, some scientists, generally referred to as 'biological determinists', argue this should be extended further, by stating that human behaviour is also determined by our genes. Therefore, a moral agent's behaviour is no more than their genetic makeup, and any effort to change these behavioural patterns is useless. Biological determinist Daniel Dennett (1942) called this idea 'genetic fixity'. The theory of genetic fixity basically states that the genes of parents inevitably determine the characteristics of their children. Therefore, a child's characteristics, and thus behaviour, is determined at the moment of conception.

Genetic fixity received a boost from the **Human Genome Project** (1990–2003) which attempted to map the genes of the human genome. Some of the findings of the project were seen to support genetic fixity. For example:

Addiction

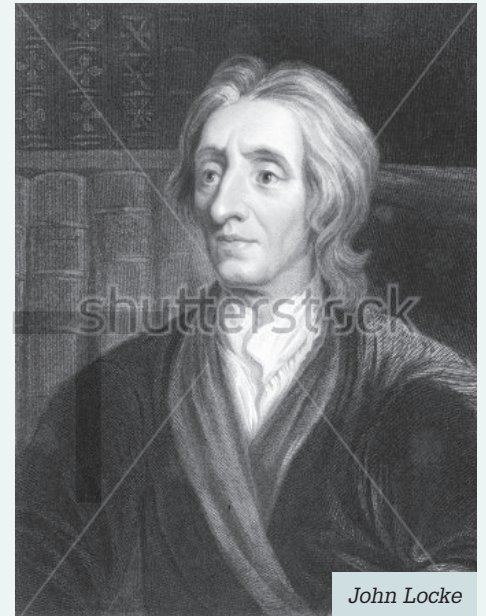
Although scientists concede that addiction is not down to one particular gene, multiple genes can add up to make a moral agent susceptible to addiction. For example, a particular gene can make one moral agent feel sick to a particular stimulus (such as a drug) but another moral agent to feel happy to the same stimuli, making it harder for the latter moral agent to give up the stimuli; thus, increasing their risk of addiction. Another particular gene may make one moral agent have an adrenaline rush to a perceived risk but another moral agent may simply feel fear. In this case the former moral agent is at greater risk of addiction, etc. Therefore, whether a moral agent is an addict could purely be determined by a series of genetics.

quickfire

- 4.5 Explain why the analogy of the bedroom illustrates determinism?

Specification content

Hard determinism: scientific (biological determinism – human behaviour is controlled by an individual's genes).



Key terms

DNA: Deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA, is the hereditary material in humans. Nearly every cell in a person's body has the same DNA

Human Genome Project: an international scientific research project with the goal of determining the sequences that make up human DNA, and of identifying and mapping all of the genes of the human genome from both a physical and a functional standpoint

Key quote

This is the first example of a predictive model for sexual orientation based on genetic markers. (Ngun)

Homosexuality

A recent study carried out by Doctor Tuck Ngun on 47 pairs of identical twins found that nine small regions of the human genetic code played a key role in deciding whether a moral agent is heterosexual or homosexual. Indeed, so confident with their findings, Dr Ngun's team predicted it was possible to carry out a DNA test on a baby to predict their sexual orientation with 70% accuracy.

The implications of genetics for hard determinism can be seen as extensive. At its extreme, moral agents can be reduced to no more than genetic robots; programmed and determined by their DNA. This is sometimes referred to as 'puppet determinism' because metaphorically moral agents just act on the strings of their DNA. According to genetic researcher Christiane Nusslein-Volhard, who won a Nobel Prize for her research on genetics, 'in the fertilised egg, the genetic program is complete'. Implying a moral agent's programmed life is decided at conception.

An illustration of how a moral agent's genetics are being used to illustrate hard determinism came in 2005, in Hall County, Georgia. Stephen Mobley tried to avoid execution by claiming that his murder of a Domino's pizza store manager was the result of a mutation in a specific gene, i.e. the Monoamine Oxidase A gene (MAOA). In the end, the judge turned down the appeal, saying that the law was not ready to accept such evidence. However, the basic idea that the MAOA gene is a determining cause of violence has now become widely accepted, and it is now commonly called the 'warrior gene'.



Does DNA really support the idea of 'puppet determinism'?

quickfire

- 4.6 Explain how your DNA determines your actions.

Specification content

Hard determinism: psychological (Ivan Pavlov – classical conditioning).

Key terms

Behaviourism: also known as behavioural psychology, is a theory of learning based on the idea that all behaviours are acquired through conditioning

Conditioning: a theory that the reaction to an object or event by a person can be determined by stimuli

Psychological determinism (Ivan Pavlov – classical conditioning)

Psychological determinism is associated with the psychological school of thought of **behaviourism**. An early behaviourist concept of determinism was classical **conditioning** a.k.a. reflex conditioning. Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936), a Russian psychologist, is most famously connected with classical conditioning. Pavlov's work on classical conditioning is associated with the work he did with dogs. Therefore, Pavlov experimentation is often referred to as 'Pavlov's Dogs'.

Pavlov found that the normal reaction of a dog to food was to produce saliva. Pavlov called this an unconditioned reflex, i.e. a dog does not need to learn to salivate in the presence of food it is just a normal biological reaction. However, Pavlov rang a bell, which he called a neutral stimulus, every time food was ready for the dogs to eat. Therefore, the dogs began to associate the bell with food. Pavlov eventually rang the bell but did not produce food; however, the dogs still produced saliva. Therefore, the dogs had been conditioned to produce the unconditioned reflex of saliva to the neutral stimulus of the bell. Pavlov defined conditioning as the subconscious repeating of behaviour to certain environmental conditions, i.e. the dogs subconsciously salivated to the environmental conditions of a bell ringing.

John Watson (1878–1958) furthered Pavlov's work by attempting to show the same conditioning in humans. He took an eight-month-old baby who had

previously shown no fear of rats. The baby's neutral stimulus was a loud sound just behind his head, which made him have the unconditioned reflex of crying. Every time the rat appeared, Watson made the loud sound and the baby cried. Watson eventually presented the rat to the baby but made no noise; however, the baby still cried. Therefore, the baby had been conditioned to produce the unconditioned reflex of crying to the sight of a rat. In fact, Watson found that the baby had generalised his fear to all furry objects.

From the above work by Pavlov and Watson the behaviourist school of thought in psychology postulated that all human reactions are just conditioned responses associated with the environmental conditions of one's upbringing. Therefore, all of a moral agent's actions are determined by their own unique environmental conditioning. For example, a young child may enjoy walking and splashing through puddles. However, a parent may chastise the child for doing this. The child may well cry as a response to this and more importantly develop an association with puddles and sadness/crying. Therefore, in later life as the moral agent approaches a puddle they will walk around it. They may believe this is a free choice but in fact it is just a determined conditioned response. This is because the moral agent is just subconsciously repeating taught conditioned behaviour.

Behaviourist psychologist B. F. Skinner (1904–1990) supported the above theory. Indeed, Skinner proposed a further development of classical conditioning, called operant conditioning, that moral agents are conditioned to always repeat behaviour that is rewarded, and do not repeat behaviour that is punished. For example, a moral agent will go to the toilet, when they feel the need, rather than soil their underwear because they were conditioned with rewards for such behaviour when they were toddlers. Skinner argued that all human reactions come from such determinist conditioning.

AO1 Activity

Work in groups of three. Firstly, divide the three types of hard determinism argument (philosophical, scientific and psychological) between the three of you – one each. Each person summarises their type of determinism in no more than 50 words. Each person then presents their summary to the other two people in their group.

Soft determinism

Soft determinism is an attempt to combine the opposing theories of hard determinism and libertarianism (the idea that we can be totally free in our moral decision making). This is the position that the world is conditioned by causality but due to the random nature of this causality, there is a need for free will in order to make sense of the moral and social order. Soft determinists are sometimes called compatibilists as they see free will and determinism working together. The term soft determinism was coined by philosopher William James.

Soft determinists argue that human beings are both free and yet also determined by background, genetics, education and the laws of nature. Freedom, then, requires determinism in order to make sense of things otherwise everything would be random with no explanation. Freedom involves the empowerment to act and thus control the desired effect. A. J. Ayer states this clearly when he writes: 'If I suffered from a compulsion neurosis, so that I got up and walked across the room, whether I wanted to or not ... then I should not be acting freely. But if I do it now, I shall be acting freely ... For it is not when my action has any cause at all, but only when it has a special sort of cause, that it is reckoned not to be free.'

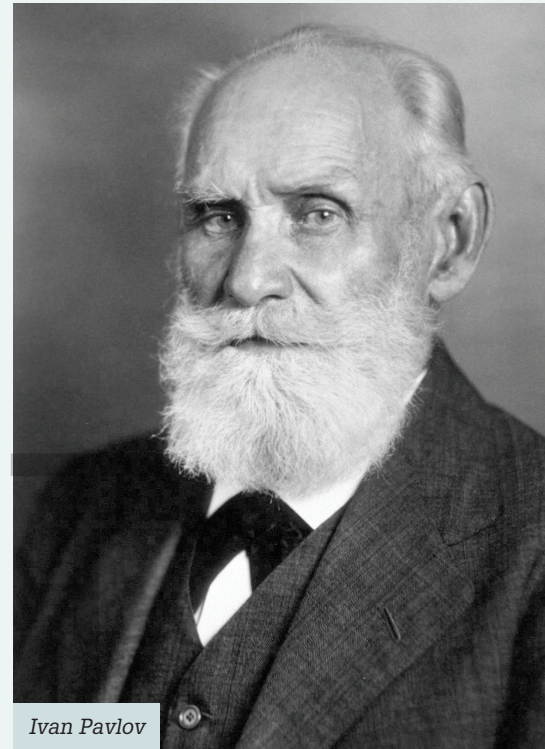
Modern thinkers such as Robert Kane and Peter Vardy have supported soft determinism. They argue that true freedom may never be achieved because of the

quickfire

- 4.7 Explain how conditioning determines your actions.

Key quote

Man has no will, intention, self-determinism or personal responsibility. **(Skinner)**



Ivan Pavlov

Specification content

Soft determinism: Thomas Hobbes (internal and external causes).

Key terms

Classical soft determinism:

a theory that moral agents have an element of freedom despite their moral choices being completely determined by outside factors

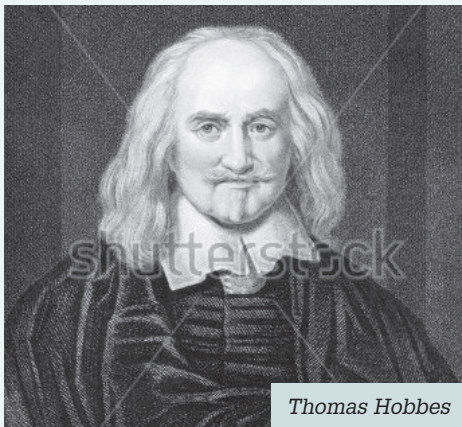
External cause: when a moral agent's will is stopped from carrying out its predetermined choice

Internal cause: internalised moral choice (or the moral agent's will to do something) that is completely determined

Key quotes

Man is free when he chooses what he wants, but he cannot will what he wants. (**Schopenhauer**)

When first a man has an appetite or will to something, to which immediately before he had no appetite nor will, the cause of his will is not the will itself, but something else not in his own disposing. So that whereas it is out of controversy that of voluntary actions the will is the necessary cause, and by this which is said the will is also caused by other things whereof it disposes not, it follows that voluntary actions have all of them necessary causes and therefore are necessitated. (**Hobbes**)



Thomas Hobbes

quickfire

- 4.8 Explain the difference between an internal and external cause.

complexity of genetic and environmental influences on us; however, this does not mean that freedom is not possible at all.

The soft determinist theories of Thomas Hobbes and A. J. Ayer are known as **classical soft determinism**. Classical soft determinism is the theory that part of a moral agent's life is determined and part free willed.

Thomas Hobbes (internal and external causes)

Philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) attempted to justify classical soft determinism in the face of criticism that classical soft determinism was just the same as hard determinism. This is because both claim all moral choices made by moral agents are completely predetermined. However, Hobbes explained the difference between classical soft determinism and hard determinism by considering two types of causes: internal and external.

An **internal cause** is the choice moral agents make for themselves (their will). However, both hard determinist and soft determinist supporters accept that these internal choices are 100% determined by causation (philosophical determinism), in Hobbes time, and later by conditioning (psychological determinism) and genetics (scientific determinism).

An **external cause** is when someone forces a moral agent to do something against their predetermined will, e.g. when a student pushes another student over as they try to move between classrooms.

Hobbes explains the difference between hard determinism and classical soft determinism by considering the above two types of cause:

Classical soft determinism

In the case of soft determinism, a moral agent is determined by internal causes but is free from external causes. For example, due to a predetermined internal cause, such as the genetic reaction to heat, the moral agent had no choice but to want to take off their blazer in a warm classroom. However, because the moral agent was able to take off their blazer without hindrance they were free from any external causes, i.e. a teacher does not stop the moral agent from removing their blazer. Therefore, this action was soft determined in nature, i.e. a determined internal cause but free from an external cause.

Hard determinism

In the case of hard determinism, a moral agent is determined by both internal and external causes and therefore they have no freedom at all. For example, due to an internal cause (such as the genetic reaction to heat) a moral agent was predetermined to want to take off their blazer. However, they were hindered from doing so by an external cause, i.e. a teacher refused to give them permission to remove their blazer. Therefore, this action was hard determined in nature, i.e. a determined internal cause but free from an external cause.

Therefore, Hobbes has clearly illustrated the difference between classical soft determinism and hard determinism. A soft determined situation involves elements of determinism (a moral agent's will/internal cause is determined) and elements of free will when the moral agent's will is not hindered by an external cause.

A. J. Ayer (caused acts vs forced acts)

A. J. Ayer (1910–1989) was a British philosopher, particularly known for the development of **logical positivism**. Logical positivism was a school of Western philosophy that sought to legitimise philosophical discussion by arguing philosophical language should be based on scientific language.

Like Hobbes before him, Ayer supported classical soft determinism. Ayer turned his logical positivism theories to Hobbes classical soft determinist argument above. Ayer, therefore, furthered Hobbes' theory by empirically illustrating the language difference between soft and hard determinism.

Ayer argued that when a situation is soft determinist, i.e. when a moral agent is only determined by an internal cause but not an external cause, the moral agent will use the phrase 'caused'. For example, the moral agent was 'caused' by an internal cause, such as the genetic reaction to heat, to take off their blazer. However, in the case of a hard determinist situation, when the moral agent is determined by both an internal and an external cause, the moral agent will use the phrase 'forced'. For example, the moral agent was 'forced' to keep their blazer on by the teacher. Therefore, Ayer concludes, from his empirical studies of language, that moral agents make a language distinction between hard determinism, where both external and internal causes are forcibly determining an event, and soft determinism where only an internal cause is causing an event, but there is no external cause. Therefore, clearly illustrating there is a distinction between classical soft determinism and hard determinism.

Ayer summed up the above difference with his famous analogy. Ayer stated that if he walked across a room because someone compelled him, observers would conclude he was not acting freely and that this 'forced' movement was completely determined. However, if he walked across a room without being compelled by another, observers would still assume it had a cause because all actions must be willed by the moral agent, even if our will is determined. However, they would not say he was 'forced' because there was no external force placed upon him because at the moment of walking across the room there was no external force.



A. J. Ayer

Specification content

Soft determinism: A. J. Ayer (caused acts vs forced acts).

Key term

Logical positivism: school of Western philosophy that sought to legitimise philosophical discussion by arguing philosophical language should be based on scientific language

Key quote

It may be said of the agent that he would have acted otherwise if the causes of his action had been different, but they being what they were seems to follow that he was bound to act as he did. (Ayer)

AO1 Activity

Work in pairs. Firstly, divide the two soft determinism arguments (Hobbes and Ayer) between the two of you – one each. Each person summarises their soft determinist to no more than 50 words. Each person then presents their summary to the other person in their pair.

quickfire

- 4.9 Explain how Ayer's analogy illustrates classical soft determinism.

Key skills

Knowledge involves:

Selection of a range of (thorough) accurate and relevant information that is directly related to the specific demands of the question.

This means:

- Selecting relevant material for the question set
- Being focused in explaining and examining the material selected.

Understanding involves:

Explanation that is extensive, demonstrating depth and/or breadth with excellent use of evidence and examples including (where appropriate) thorough and accurate supporting use of sacred texts, sources of wisdom and specialist language.

This means:

- Effective use of examples and supporting evidence to establish the quality of your understanding
- Ownership of your explanation that expresses personal knowledge and understanding and NOT just reproducing a chunk of text from a book that you have rehearsed and memorised.

AO1 Developing skills

It is now important to consider the information that has been covered in this section; however, the information in its raw form is too extensive and so has to be processed in order to meet the requirements of the examination. This can be done by practising more advanced skills associated with AO1. The exercises that run throughout this book will help you to do this and prepare you for the examination. For assessment objective 1 (AO1), which involves demonstrating 'knowledge' and 'understanding' skills, we are going to focus on different ways in which the skills can be demonstrated effectively, and also refer to how the performance of these skills is measured (see generic band descriptors for A2 [WJEC] AO1 or A Level [Eduqas] AO1).

- **Your task is this:** Below is a summary of **John Locke's hard determinist theory**. It is about 200 words long. This time there are no highlighted points to indicate the key points to learn from this extract. Discuss which five points you think are the most important to highlight and write them down in a list.

John Locke developed a philosophical determinism theory based on universal causation. This is the belief that all human actions and choices have a past cause and therefore all events that happen are determined by an unbreakable chain of past causes. The future must logically be as fixed and unchangeable as the past. William James later summed up this theory as 'the iron block universe'. From this theory Locke coined the phrase: 'free will is just an illusion'. Moral agents who believe they have free will think they do because they can pause and reflect before making a choice; Locke believed that all such thoughts were just the moral agent's ignorance of universal causation. Indeed, Locke argued, most people do not have the intelligence to see that there are no choices at all to be made.

Locke developed the idea of universal causation by creating an analogy to illustrate the theory. His analogy starts with a man who wakes up in a room that, unknown to him, is locked from the outside. He chooses to stay in the room believing he has chosen freely to stay there. In reality, however, he has no option but to stay in the room, it is only his ignorance that the door is locked, that gives him an illusion of freedom.

Now make the five points into your own summary (as in Theme 1 Developing skills) trying to make the summary more personal to your style of writing. This may also involve re-ordering the points if you wish to do so.

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Issues for analysis and evaluation

The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological determinism illustrate that humanity has no free will

This issue is asking us to consider whether one or more of the hard determinist arguments studied successfully illustrates that hard determinism is correct; namely, that humanity has no free will. An answer to this could approach the above issue from several lines of argument.

One line of argument could be the philosophical concept of hard determinism does clearly illustrate humanity has no free will. This could be illustrated from the work of 17th-century philosopher John Locke. Locke developed a philosophical determinism theory based on universal causation. This is the belief that all human actions and choices have a past cause leading to the conclusion that all events that happen are determined by an unbreakable chain of past causes. Therefore, if this view is correct, then the future must logically be as fixed and unchangeable as the past. From this theory Locke coined the phrase: 'free will is just an illusion'. William James supported this theory when he summed up causation as 'the iron block universe'. Therefore, philosophical determinism can be seen to illustrate that humanity has no free will.

However, a counter to this could be that Locke does not, with the above argument, prove the concept of hard determinism and thus humanity has no free will. This is because it could be argued that Locke is actually only stating that libertarianism is just an ignorant illusion; therefore, he is merely speculating that hard determinism must be the only correct alternative.

Moreover, Locke's philosophical argument could be further weakened by the work of respected 20th-century philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre argued that there is no God, therefore humans are condemned to freedom. Sartre supported his argument by claiming a human being's freedom is obvious because of the way moral agents go about trying to deny it. Therefore, moral agents create a self-deception of determinism, called 'bad faith'; however, for Sartre these attempts of moral agents to escape freedom are an absolute sign we have free will. Therefore, philosophical determinism potentially does not illustrate that humanity has no free will.

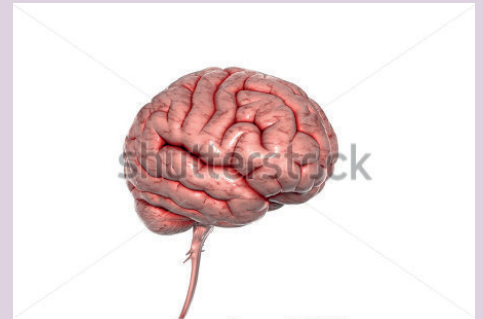
Another line of argument could be that scientific determinism clearly illustrates humanity has no free will. One scientific theory that would support this is human DNA. Scientists claim that DNA illustrates all humans have a fixed scientific formula. Therefore, moral agents are no more than genetic robots; programmed, and thus determined by their DNA. There are many empirical scientific studies to support such a conclusion such as Daniel Dennett's theory of 'genetic fixity'. The theory of genetic fixity basically states that the genes of parents inevitably determine the characteristics of their children. Therefore, a child's characteristics, and thus behaviour, are determined at the moment of conception.

However, a counter-argument to the above could be that science does not illustrate humanity has no free will. This is because recent developments in neuroscience suggest moral agents do have a free will part of the brain. For example, researcher Dr Sirigu carried out a study and found that free will resides in the parietal cortex of the human brain. She argued that this part of the brain contains 'free floating / random DNA' that could point to why humanity has free will.

This section covers AO2 content and skills

Specification content

The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological determinism illustrate that humanity has no free will.



Recent developments in neuroscience suggest moral agents do have a free will part of the brain.

AO2 Activity

As you read through this section try to do the following:

1. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
2. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.
3. Can you evaluate here by drawing a mini conclusion about whether scientific determinism illustrates that humanity has no free will.

This activity will help you to start thinking critically about what you read and help you to evaluate the effectiveness of different arguments and from this develop your own observations, opinions and points of view that will help with any conclusions that you make in your answers to the AO2 questions that arise.



Pavlov discovered that just like a dog can be conditioned, so could human behaviour.

Another line of argument could be that the psychological concept of hard determinism does clearly illustrate humanity has no free will. The psychologist school of thought of behaviourism is support for hard determinism. Behaviourist Ivan Pavlov carried out experiments on dogs and found that they could be conditioned. From this Pavlov postulated that human reactions are the same as the dogs, i.e. all our actions are just conditioned reactions to our environment. This argument was supported by several eminent psychologists including John Watson and B. F. Skinner. For example, Skinner argued that moral agents can be conditioned from a young age by a system of rewards and punishments for certain behaviours.

However, a challenge to the above argument is that psychology does not illustrate humanity is determined. This is because some psychologists would argue free will is still possible. One such scholar is Humanist psychologist Carl Rogers. Rogers accepts children can be conditioned from an early age. However, he argues, moral agents do have the ability to achieve free will through the process of 'self-actualisation'. Self-actualisation involves getting in touch with our real feelings and acting on them. Rogers' theory has gone on to be the foundation of teachings on child psychology.

Another line of argument could be that the soft determinism partly illustrates that humanity has no free will. This is because philosophers, such as Hobbes and Ayer, agree that moral agents do not have the free will to make moral decisions because they are completely determined by external factors like causation (philosophical determinism), conditioning (psychological conditioning) and/or biological traits (scientific conditioning). However, this point could be weakened because both Hobbes and Ayer also illustrate that the moral agent does have some freedom, for example, when they are not hindered from carrying out their determined 'will'.

DRAFT

AO2 Activity

List some conclusions that could be drawn from the AO2 reasoning from the above text; try to aim for at least three different possible conclusions. Consider each of the conclusions and collect brief evidence to support each conclusion from the AO1 and AO2 material for this topic. Select the conclusion that you think is most convincing and explain why it is so. Try to contrast this with the weakest conclusion in the list, justifying your argument with clear reasoning and evidence.

Strengths and weaknesses of hard and/or soft determinism

This issue is asking us to consider whether hard and/or soft determinism are good arguments to illustrate what they are trying to assert, i.e. hard determinism illustrating moral agents have no free will and soft determinism that moral agents only have partial free will. Many of the arguments for the previous discussion can also be used for this discussion and our answer could approach the above issue from several lines of argument.

One line of argument could be that it has strengths because it has philosophical support. This could be illustrated from the work of 17th-century philosopher John Locke. Locke developed a philosophical determinism theory based on universal causation. This is the belief that all human actions and choices have a past cause. Leading to the conclusion that all events that happen are determined by an unbreakable chain of past causes. Therefore, if this view is correct, then the future must logically be as fixed and unchangeable as the past. From this theory Locke coined the phrase: 'free will is just an illusion'. Hard determinism could have strength because it receives further support from William James. James supported the above theory when he summed up causation as 'the iron block universe'. Therefore, philosophical determinism can be seen to illustrate that hard determinism has strengths.

However, a counter to this could be that Locke does not, with the above argument, prove the concept of hard determinism and thus the above theory has weaknesses. This is because it could be argued that Locke is actually only stating that libertarianism is just an ignorant illusion and therefore he is merely speculating that hard determinism must be a correct alternative.

Moreover, Locke's philosophical argument could be further weakened by the work of respected 20th-century philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre argued that there is no God, therefore man is condemned to freedom. Sartre supported his argument by claiming man's freedom is obvious because of the way moral agents go about trying to deny it. Therefore, moral agents create a self-deception of determinism, called 'bad faith'; however, for Sartre these attempts by moral agents to escape freedom are an absolute sign we have free will. Therefore, philosophical determinism has potential weaknesses, thus weakening hard determinism.

Another line of argument that could illustrate hard determinism has strengths is that it has support from scientific determinism. One such scientific argument revolves around human DNA. Scientists claim that DNA illustrates all humans have a fixed scientific formula. Therefore, moral agents are no more than genetic robots; programmed, and thus determined by their DNA. There are many empirical scientific studies to support such a conclusion such as Daniel Dennett's theory of 'genetic fixity'. The theory of genetic fixity basically states that the genes of parents inevitably determine the characteristics of their children. Therefore, a child's characteristics, and thus behaviour, are determined at the moment of conception.

However, a counter-argument to the above could be that science does not illustrate humanity is predetermined, and is therefore a weak argument. This is because recent developments in neuroscience suggest moral agents do have a free will part of the brain. For example, researcher Dr Sirigu carried out a study and found that free will resides in the parietal cortex of the human brain. She argued that this part of the brain contains 'free floating / random DNA' that could point to why humanity has free will.



Psychologist John Watson

Specification content

Strengths and weaknesses of hard and/or soft determinism.



Jean-Paul Sartre



Do all human beings have a fixed, genetic programme determined by their DNA?

AO2 Activity

As you read through this section try to do the following:

1. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
2. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.
3. Can you evaluate here by drawing a mini conclusion about whether hard determinism has strengths.

This activity will help you to start thinking critically about what you read and help you to evaluate the effectiveness of different arguments and from this develop your own observations, opinions and points of view that will help with any conclusions that you make in your answers to the AO2 questions that arise.

Key term

Cumulative effect: the theory that a series of arguments has a stronger effect than a single argument

AO2 Activity

List some conclusions that could be drawn from the AO2 reasoning from the above text; try to aim for at least three different possible conclusions. Consider each of the conclusions and collect brief evidence to support each conclusion from the AO1 and AO2 material for this topic. Select the conclusion that you think is most convincing and explain why it is so. Try to contrast this with the weakest conclusion in the list, justifying your argument with clear reasoning and evidence.

Another line of argument that could illustrate hard determinism has strengths is that it has psychological support. This is because the psychologist school of thought of behaviourism supports hard determinism. Behaviourist Ivan Pavlov carried out experiments on dogs and found that they could be conditioned. From this Pavlov postulated that human reactions are the same as the dogs, i.e. all our actions are just conditioned reactions to our environment. This argument was supported by several eminent psychologists including John Watson and B. F. Skinner.

However, a challenge to the above argument is that psychology does not illustrate humanity is predetermined, and is thus a weak argument. This is because some psychologists would argue free will is still possible. One such psychologist is Carl Rogers. Rogers accepts children can be conditioned. However, moral agents do have the ability to achieve free will; through the process of 'self-actualisation'. Self-actualisation involves getting in touch with our real feelings and acting on them. Rogers' theory has gone on to be the foundation of teachings on child psychology.

Another line of argument that hard determinism has strengths is the **cumulative effect** of philosophical determinism, scientific determinism and psychological determinism. On their own, maybe none of the above types of determinism illustrate hard determinism. However, if you add up their cumulative effect then it could be argued hard determinism must be correct, making it a strong argument.

However, a counter to the above is the problem with all cumulative arguments, i.e. they are only as strong as the parts that make them up. Adding together three weak arguments does not necessarily make a strong argument. Therefore, adding the cumulative determinism of philosophical determinism, scientific determinism and psychological determinism (especially considering their weaknesses) does not necessarily mean hard determinism has been proven.

Another line of argument could be that soft determinism has strengths. Soft determinism can be seen as a strong argument because Hobbes assertion, that moral agents are determined by internal causes but are free from external causes, is supported by the language used by moral agents. Ayer, who argued this point, empirically studied that when a moral situation is soft determinist the moral agent will use the phrase 'caused'. For example, the moral agent was 'caused' by an internal cause, such as the genetic reaction to heat, to take off their blazer. However, in the case of a hard determinist situation, when the moral agent is determined by both an internal and an external cause, the moral agent will use the phrase 'forced'. For example, the moral agent was 'forced' to keep their blazer on by the teacher. Therefore, Ayer is clearly illustrating that soft determinism is a strong theory because it is illustrated by moral agents in everyday language. Moreover, Ayer, as a logical positivist, supported the above theory with scientific investigation. Therefore, the above theory is empirically illustrated.

However, soft determinism theory can be seen as a weak theory because the distinction between soft determinism and hard determinism is just technical rather than practical. This is because, like hard determinism, soft determinism accepts that an agent's moral choices are completely determined by external factors. Therefore, both hard and soft determinism theories accept that a moral agent's will is a hundred per cent determined by external factors, like philosophical, scientific and/or psychological determinism. Although soft determinism theory then tries to illustrate that some freedom is afforded when a moral agent's predetermined will is not interfered with, it is still accepting the fundamental principle that the moral agent has no independent will of their own; which is just the same as hard determinism.

AO2 Developing skills

It is now important to consider the information that has been covered in this section; however, the information in its raw form is too extensive and so has to be processed in order to meet the requirements of the examination. This can be achieved by practising more advanced skills associated with AO2. For assessment objective 2 (AO2), which involves 'critical analysis' and 'evaluation' skills, we are going to focus on different ways in which the skills can be demonstrated effectively, and also refer to how the performance of these skills is measured (see generic band descriptors for A2 [WJEC] AO2 or A Level [Eduqas] AO2).

- **Your next task is this:** Below is an evaluation concerning **soft determinism**. It is about 160 words long. After the paragraph, there is an intermediate conclusion highlighted for you in yellow. As a group try to identify where you could add more intermediate conclusions to the rest of the passage. Have a go at doing this.

Another line of argument could be that soft determinism has strengths. Soft determinism can be seen as a strong argument because Hobbes assertion, that moral agents are determined by internal causes but are free from external causes, is supported by the language used by moral agents. Ayer, who argued this point, empirically studied that when a moral situation is soft determinist the moral agent will use the phrase 'caused'. For example, the moral agent was 'caused' by an internal cause, such as the genetic reaction to heat, to take off their blazer. However, in the case of a hard determinist situation, when the moral agent is determined by both an internal and an external cause, the moral agent will use the phrase 'forced'. For example, the moral agent was 'forced' to keep their blazer on by the teacher. **Therefore, Ayer is clearly illustrating that soft determinism is a strong theory because it is illustrated by moral agents in everyday language.**

When you have done this, you will see clearly that in AO2 it is helpful to include a brief summary of the arguments presented as you go through an answer and not just leave it until the end to draw a final conclusion. This way you are demonstrating that you are sustaining evaluation throughout an answer and not just repeating information learned.

Key skills

Analysis involves:

Identifying issues raised by the materials in the AO1, together with those identified in the AO2 section, and presents sustained and clear views, either of scholars or from a personal perspective ready for evaluation.

This means:

- That your answers are able to identify key areas of debate in relation to a particular issue
- That you can identify, and comment upon, the different lines of argument presented by others
- That your response comments on the overall effectiveness of each of these areas or arguments.

Evaluation involves:

Considering the various implications of the issues raised based upon the evidence gleaned from analysis and provides an extensive detailed argument with a clear conclusion.

This means:

- That your answer weighs up the consequences of accepting or rejecting the various and different lines of argument analysed
- That your answer arrives at a conclusion through a clear process of reasoning.

This section covers A01
content and skills

Specification content

The implications of determinism (hard and soft) on moral responsibility: the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value.

Key quotes

Life calls the tune, we dance.
(Galsworthy)

Man has no will, intention, self-determinism or personal responsibility. (Skinner)

quickfire

4.10 Explain why a moral agent is not responsible for their moral actions if they are hard determined.

C: The implications of predestination/determinism

Implications of hard determinism on moral responsibility: the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value

The implications of hard determinism for moral responsibility are relatively stark. This is because hard determinists believe a moral agent's life is a hundred per cent determined by one or more factors; such as God's omnipotent power of predestination, psychological behaviourism, biological determinism and/or universal causation. Therefore, if hard determinism holds true, that moral agents have absolutely no free will, then the only conclusion that can be drawn is that moral agents have no control over their moral attitudes. Therefore, all human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value have absolutely no worth. They would be futile, baseless concepts.

The above conclusion is clearly supported by some of the contributors to the predestination / hard determinist theory examined earlier. For example, Augustine stated in his predestination theory that moral agents are 'so hopelessly corrupted that we are absolutely incapable of doing anything good by our own forces; free choice, if it means a choice between good and evil, has been utterly wasted by sin; our will, insofar as it is ours, and not God's, can merely do evil and desire evil'. What Augustine is saying is that if a moral agent has a choice between choosing X or Y, and where X is the morally good choice and where Y is the morally evil choice, the moral agent will inevitably choose Y. The moral agent's values of right and wrong have been completely overridden by the desire to do evil. Therefore, there is absolutely no worthiness of human ideas on right and wrong because humanity cannot choose between the two concepts; the moral agent will inevitably choose wrong.

William James was referring to a similar theme, as above, when he wrote about universal causation: 'Any other future set of outcomes than the one fixed from eternity is impossible'. However, there is a subtle difference between what he is saying here and what Augustine believed above. This is because if a moral agent has a choice between X or Y, and where X is the morally good choice and where Y is the morally evil choice, the agent will have no choice but to select either X or Y depending upon a complex series of prior causes. Therefore, unlike Augustine's theory, James is stating that the moral agent may be led to choose X, the morally good choice rather than Y. However, the conclusion is still the same as above because the moral agent had no choice but to select X and therefore any sense of moral value the agent may have had was completely overridden by determining forces. Therefore, rendering any ideas the moral agent may have had on rightness or wrongness is futile.

The above conclusion that human ideas on rightness, wrongness and moral value are valueless has many other supporters. For example, early enlightenment philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) argued that 'there is no absolute or free will, the mind is determined to wish this or that by a cause'. Spinoza is arguing that an agent's moral choices are merely the inevitable result of a chain of infinite regress. Moreover, American philosopher John Hospers (1918–2011) also argued that moral values are worthless because there is always some cause that compels us to do what we do. He simply says that moral choice 'is all a matter of luck'. What Hospers means here is that any moral choice an agent makes is not down to any value they may hold but just a matter of luck on how they were caused to choose

by a set of determining factors in any particular moral situation. Perhaps the best summoning up that a moral agent's sense of moral value is a baseless concept comes from behaviourist psychologist B. F. Skinner when he stated: 'Man has no will, intention, self-determinism or personal responsibility'.

The value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts

The above theory that human moral value is a futile concept has several implications. One such implication is to question the value of blaming moral agents for immoral acts. It would seem unfair to punish people for committing immoral acts because it is beyond a moral agent's control. If they had no choice but to carry out a particular immoral act it would be as nonsensical to blame them as it would be to blame a train for going along the fixed rails in front of it.

The above idea was used by Clarence Darrow, an American lawyer, who famously had the job of defending the 1924 Leopold and Loeb murder case. Leopold and Loeb, two intelligent university students from affluent backgrounds, had been charged with the murder of a fourteen-year-old boy from a much less affluent background. It quickly became apparent that the two boys had murdered the other boy; however, Darrow used the theory of hard determinism in his defence argument in order to try and save Leopold and Loeb from capital punishment. Darrow argued that the boys had diminished responsibility because they were merely products of their affluent upbringing. Therefore, they had been predetermined to have a superiority complex over poorer individuals. Thus they could not possibly be blamed for something they were always going to be and ultimately for what they were always going to do. As Darrow stated in the trial: 'Punishment as punishment is not admissible unless the offender has the free will to select this course'. Darrow's line of deterministic argument was successful because the boys' sentences were reduced to life imprisonment as opposed to the death penalty.

The defence lawyer at the murder case of James Bulger, in 1993, used a similar line of defence. He argued that the two defendants had been predetermined to carry out the murder because they had been allowed to play violent video games and watch violent films from a young age; therefore, they were predestined just to repeat the behaviour they had seen.

Moreover, in 2005, in Hall County, Georgia, Stephen Mobley tried to avoid execution by claiming that his murder of a Domino's Pizza store manager was the result of a mutation in a specific gene i.e. the Monoamine Oxidase A gene (MAOA). In the end, the judge turned down the appeal, saying that the law was not ready to accept such evidence. However, the basic idea that the MAOA gene is a determining cause of violence has now become widely accepted, and it is now commonly called the 'warrior gene'.

Overall, it is becoming clear that the value of blaming moral agents for immoral acts is limited by hard determinism. This is not just in an academic sense but as can be seen from the above cases there is a gradual recognition in a practical legal sense that certain immoral acts are limited in blameworthiness by hard determinism.



Clarence Darrow legally demonstrated the reality of hard determinism in a court of law.

Specification content

The implications of determinism (hard and soft) on moral responsibility: the value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts.

quickfire

- 4.11** Name two philosophers who support the idea that hard determinism renders moral responsibility a pointless concept.

Key quote

Punishment as punishment is not admissible unless the offender has the free will to select this course.

(Darrow)

quickfire

- 4.12** Explain two legal cases that have used hard determinism as a defence.

Specification content

The implications of determinism (hard and soft) on moral responsibility: the usefulness of normative ethics.

Key terms

Decalogue: a term for the Ten Commandments

Normative ethics: the study of how moral agents ought to morally act

The usefulness of normative ethics

Another implication that human moral value is a futile concept, due to the theory of hard determinism, is to question the usefulness of **normative ethics**. The aim of all normative ethics is to act as a moral guide, helping the moral agent to manoeuvre down the path of morality and away from immorality. However, if a moral agent is absolutely predetermined by one or more determining factors then normative ethics becomes redundant. This can be illustrated by considering two contrasting normative ethics: the religion-based deontological Divine Command Theory and the atheist-based teleological Act Utilitarianism.

Firstly, Divine Command Theory is an ethic that states that an action's status as morally good or bad is completely based on the will of God. For example, in Christianity, God's moral commands can be found in the Bible. One set of moral commands is the **Decalogue**, which can be found in Exodus 20. One of these ten commandments God commanded is 'You shall not murder'. Therefore, humanity knows that murder is morally wrong because God has commanded this.

However, Divine Command Theory presupposes that moral agents have a free will choice to follow God commands or not. Therefore, it acts as a guide to encourage moral agents to follow God's commands in any moral situation. This is perhaps illustrated when some Christians wear a band around their wrists with the initials 'WWJD', meaning 'What would Jesus do?', to remind them to always follow God's commands, as Jesus did, in any moral dilemma. However, if moral agents have no free will because of determinism, for example, as Augustine puts it 'our will can merely do evil and desire evil', then the normative Divine Command Theory becomes utterly pointless.

Secondly, Act Utilitarianism is an atheist-based ethic created by Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832). He wanted to create a normative ethic that reflected the moral needs of people in society, which he believed was based on pleasure, which he defined as an action that 'augments or diminishes happiness'. As Bentham stated: 'Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure'.

From this idea, he created Act Utilitarianism, which revolves around what he called, the 'principle of utility': an action should only be carried out if the consequences of that action bring about the maximum happiness for the interested party, or parties, affected by the action. As Bentham stated: 'By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of an action on whether an action augments or diminishes happiness'. However, Bentham is presupposing that moral agents have the free will to select the course of action which will maximise pleasure and bring about the greatest happiness. If they do not, as hard determinists would advocate, then Act Utilitarianism is meaningless.

Therefore, if hard determinism is correct, that all human decisions are caused by a set of determining factors, then all normative ethics, such as Divine Command Theory and Act Utilitarianism, are of no use at all.

AO1 Activity

Work in groups of three. Firstly, divide the three implications of hard determinism between you:

1. The worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value
2. The value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts
3. The usefulness of normative ethics.

Each person then summarises their implication in no more than 75 words. Each person then presents their summary to the other two people in their group.

Implications of soft determinism on moral responsibility

Classical soft determinism, as stated by Hobbes and Ayer, basically states that the moral agent has free will if their predetermined will is not hindered. However, the important point here is that classical soft determinism still accepts, as does the theory of hard determinism, that a moral agent's will is a hundred per cent caused by determining factors. Therefore, the conclusions drawn above about hard determinism also stand for classical soft determinism:

- There is no worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value
- There is no value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts
- Normative ethics as a moral guide are of no use whatsoever.

The only way this would change is with a soft determinist theory that argued that a moral agent's will is not completely predetermined. One such soft determinist theory, supported by Peter Vardy (1945), gives a greater role for free will. This is because it argues that some of our determining factors can be overcome. Firstly, using their intellect, moral agents need to identify how they are being determined by the determining factor, such as conditioning, genetics, etc. Secondly, the moral agent, with effort, can attempt to overcome some of these determining effects. For example, using their intelligence, moral agents may recognise that they have been 'conditioned' to be impatient. Having recognised this, with effort, moral agents can sometimes stop themselves from being impatient. This allows moral agents to gain some freedom. However, moral agents can never become totally free from determining factors. Moral agents can never totally recognise and control all their determining factors.

If the above is true then it can be argued that human ideas of rightness and wrongness do sometimes have some value. The implications of this are that moral agents can be blamed for some of their immoral acts and that normative ethics are sometimes useful as moral guides. However, the problem is that a line still has to be drawn between that which is determined and that which is open to choice. Soft determinists would have to agree on precisely what is and what is not a determining factor. The complexities of predestination, causality, genetics and behaviourism make such a line difficult to draw.

Implications of predestination on religious belief

Background

The concept of predestination has many important theological implications for religious belief. Predestination, as traditionally presented by theologians like Augustine and Calvin, states that all moral agents are predestined because they are totally corrupted by sin because of 'the fall' of Adam and Eve. Therefore, sin entered the world as a result of humanity's weakness, or as Augustine called it concupiscence, i.e. humanity's longing for sensual experiences. One result of 'the fall' was that all moral agents are ultimately predestined to sin. More specifically, according to Augustine, all moral agents are born 'massa peccati'; a Latin term meaning a lump of sin. The result of which is that moral agents, as Augustine stated, 'can merely do evil and desire evil'. However, some moral agents will receive salvation from God. These moral agents will be born as 'elects', with the rest of humanity left as 'reprobates'. According to Calvin, God therefore has actively chosen people into two predestined groups which will have eternal consequences: damnation for the reprobates and salvation for the elect. The elect are chosen by God to have their sins forgiven through the atonement of Christ. However, the

Specification content

The implications of predestination on religious belief: the link between God and evil, the implications for God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence, the use of prayer and the existence of miracles.

Specification content

The implications of determinism (hard and soft) on moral responsibility: the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value, the value in blaming moral agents for immoral acts, the usefulness of normative ethics.

moral agent has done nothing to deserve this good fortune; it is a divine mystery why some are chosen and others not. The reprobates also appear to be randomly chosen by God. However, they are predestined not to ask forgiveness for their sins and will be damned for eternity. There are many implications of the above predestination theories for religious belief. Some of which are addressed below.

The implications for God's omnipotence

Monotheistic religions, such as Islam, Judaism and Christianity, generally attribute the quality of omnipotence to their deity. Omnipotence is the quality of having unlimited power. The concept of predestination can be seen as a strong illustration of God's omnipotent nature. This is because only an omnipotent deity could have, and execute, an eternal predestination plan for all of humanity.

The above point was supported by the writings of Augustine. Augustine reacted angrily to the teachings of the Celtic monk Pelagius because his free will theology, according to Augustine, seemed to diminish the omnipotent nature of God. This is because Pelagius' theories made it possible, according to Augustine, for a mere moral agent to decide freely whether to be morally good or sinful. The implication of this was that the moral agent would then be able to tell an omnipotent deity whether to give them salvation. That, argued Augustine, was an intolerable denial of God's omnipotence, an insult to His divine majesty. This point is further supported by theologian Johnathon Edwards, who argued that the concept of free will was incompatible with individual dependence on an omnipotent God. This is because if a moral agent could choose their own response to God, morality and salvation would become partly dependent upon the moral agent, therefore reducing God's omnipotent nature. Calvinists took the above theory one step further when at the Synod of Dort (1619) they argued for the theory of **unconditional election**, i.e. God alone predestined the elect. Therefore, election is not based upon any merit/good works the moral agent has undertaken. Moreover, Calvinists argued, it is not even based upon God's omniscient nature to know which moral agents would accept the offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God has chosen the elect, based solely upon His omnipotent will. He did this before the earth was even created. Therefore, all the above points strongly support the idea that predestination theory enhances the concept of God's omnipotence.

The above conclusion seems to be further illustrated when considering holy texts. For example, in the Qur'an it states in 76:30 'But you cannot will, unless Allah wills'. Therefore, moral agents can do nothing without God, man is totally reliant upon God's omnipotent will. Even if hard determinist arguments are considered instead of predestination arguments, they can still point to God's omnipotence. The idea that moral agents are determined by universal causation could point to an omnipotent God starting off all causes with a predestined plan for all humanity. This was a point explained in classical cosmological arguments, by the likes of theologian St Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274). Moreover, even scientific ideas of biological determinism or psychological theories on behaviourism could just point to how an omnipotent God predestines moral agents.

Key quote

But you cannot will, unless Allah wills. (Qur'an 76:30)

The implications for God's omnibenevolence

Monotheistic religions also generally attribute the quality of omnibenevolence to their deity. Omnibenevolence is the quality of being all-loving, sometimes stated as all-good. The concept of predestination can be seen as an illustration of God's omnibenevolent nature. This is because, as Augustine points out, God would be just in leaving all humanity to descend to damnation because of the fall of Adam

Key term

Unconditional election: the theory that God alone predestines the elect

quickfire

- 4.13** Briefly explain why predestination enhances the idea that God is omnipotent.

and Eve. This is because all humanity is related to Adam and Eve; as Augustine stated we were all 'seminally present in the loins of Adam'. Therefore, Augustine argued that all of humanity inherited Adam's sin, therefore, Adam's guilt is justly that of humanity. However, through God's grace He shows His all-loving nature, for humanity, by saving some people, which Augustine called the elect. God did this by sending His son Jesus to die on the cross, so that the elect could receive atonement for their sins and be saved. Therefore, God's omnibenevolence is illustrated by predestination.

However, the above conclusion is by no means universally accepted as an illustration of God's omnibenevolent nature. This is because, as both Augustine and Calvin argue, God only appears to predestine some moral agents to be elect and thus be forgiven of their sins. Therefore, only some moral agents will ascend to heaven post-mortem. The rest, the reprobates as Calvin called them, will not be saved by God and will inevitably descend to hell post-mortem. For some this has grave implications for God omnibenevolent nature. This is because God is punishing and rewarding certain moral agents on behaviour only He had control over. Based on the above point Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) stated that God must be 'a monster'. This is because, as Russell stated: 'A God that punishes or rewards on the basis of God's own eternal decisions in unfair and immoral'.

Moreover, God's omnibenevolent nature can also be questioned because if moral agents' lives are predestined and/or hard determined, by God, then He must also create and control all moral evil. For example, how could God be omnibenevolent when He predestined such evil events as the holocaust? This was a point taken up by the theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609). Arminius was inspired to write his free will theory because he felt the need to defend God's omnibenevolent nature against predestination so that: 'God might not be considered the author of all sin'.

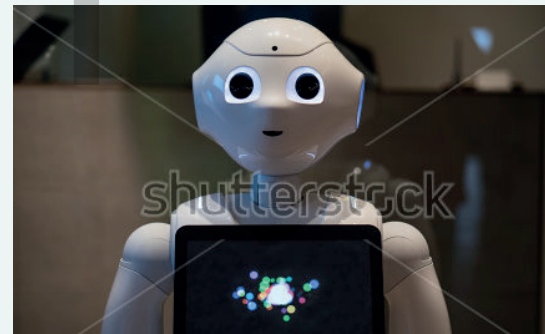
Furthermore, God's omnibenevolent nature can be questioned if moral agents' lives are predestined by God, because moral agents would have no free will. Therefore, moral agents would be like automated robots just carrying out their God-given pre-programmed life, with no willpower to change anything. An analogy would be it is like a young person playing with their teddy bear: sometimes they would be caring, other times they might be careless with it, but the teddy bear cannot choose not to be played with. God would appear to be doing the same with humanity; and many would argue this is not the behaviour of an omnibenevolent being. Again, Arminius agreed with this in his free will theory because he wished to illustrate that: 'man is not an automation in the hands of God'. Therefore, there is a strong case that predestination theory could lead to the conclusion that God is not omnibenevolent.

The use of prayer

A further implication of predestination theory, for religious belief, is the value of the use of prayer. If a moral agent's life is predestined by God directly, or through hard determinism, then this brings into question the meaningfulness of prayer. The term prayer comes from the Latin term 'precaris' which means to ask earnestly or beg. However, if God does predestine humanity there seems little point in earnestly asking a deity for anything. This is because predestination, particularly if it is through hard determinist means, like universal causation or biological determinism, means that God has already predetermined all events; therefore, earnestly asking God for anything through prayer is pointless. For example, a moral agent may pray that they successfully get a place at a university they have applied for. However, if the theory of predestination is right then it would be a waste of the moral agent's time to pray. This is because it has already been predetermined whether the moral agent will get that place.

quickfire

- 4.14** Briefly explain two reasons why predestination may suggest God is not omnibenevolent.



Are moral agents just like automated robots carrying out their God-given pre-programmed life, with no willpower to change anything?

Key quote

A God that punishes or rewards on the basis of God's own eternal decisions in unfair and immoral.
(Russell)

quickfire

- 4.15** Briefly explain why prayer maybe a pointless activity if God predestines all events.

The above point is supported by the Calvinist theory of unconditional election, i.e. that it is God alone that chose the elect, based solely upon his own will, before the Earth was even created. Therefore, any attempt to pray, to the divine, to earnestly ask to become an elect is a complete waste of effort. However, related to the above, it could be argued that perhaps prayer does have a use but only for the predestined elect. This is because prayer can be used to build a rapport with a God, including seeking forgiveness for sin. This is supported by Calvin when he stated that the 'elect' could still be sinful but God predestines them to have faith in the saving atonement of Jesus Christ. Therefore, when the predestinated elect sin they cannot resist the calling on their lives to seek forgiveness, which could be through prayer. Therefore, for the predestined elect, prayer may be of some use.

The existence of miracles

The term miracle originally comes from the Latin 'miraculum' meaning 'wonder'. However, the term miracle tends to have a more specific meaning, expressed by David Hume (1711–1776) as 'an event that appears to break the laws of nature and so is held as an act of God'.

The concept of predestination

does not directly imply that miracles do not occur. It is quite conceivable that a predestining omnipotent and omniscient God could quite easily have pre-planned all miracles. This is illustrated by Aquinas' theory on miracles when



The idea of determinism raises problems for the concept of prayer.

he distinguished between a deity carrying out miracles directly, which he called a primary cause miracle, and indirectly, which he called a secondary cause miracle. A primary cause miracle is where God acts directly in the world to bring about a miracle which could have been predestined by an omnipotent deity before the creation of the universe. A secondary cause miracle is where God works a miracle through a human agent; however again this could quite easily be a predestined event pre-planned by an omniscient and omnipotent God; such as when God gave Moses the power to part the Red Sea.

The above idea is also supported by C.S. Lewis (1898–1963). Lewis argues that God is an interactive God that, even today, continues to introduce new laws of nature. As

Lewis states 'nature behaves in accordance to fixed laws, and that a miracle is God introducing a new law' Therefore, a miracle is no more than God interacting with this world by introducing new laws of nature. Lewis argues God only does these 'miracles' to remind us of His omnipotent, and thus His predestining, nature as the creator and controller of all laws of nature.

However, predestination theory does potentially rule out miracles as an answer to spontaneous prayer; such as, in Joshua 10:13 in the Judeo-Christian Bible. This is where God made the sun and moon stand still so that Joshua could have enough light to defeat the enemies of Israel. The reason why such miracles can be



Moses parting the Red Sea

doubted, if predestination does occur, is because such miracles were as the result of spontaneous prayer of an individual. But if an omnipotent God has already predestined all outcomes then spontaneous miracles by God are impossible. For example, if a moral agent were to pray for a miracle to cure their illness. However, because God has already predestined, potentially through biological determinism, that the moral agent would have an illness at that point; then the miracle for a cure will not be forthcoming.

The link between God and evil

The last implication of predestination, for religious belief, is the link between God and evil. However, this point has already been partly addressed by the theory above. This is because one implication of God predestining power could be that God must also have created all moral evil. For example, a predestining God could be held responsible for such evil events as the holocaust. As has already been explained this was a point taken up by theologian Jacobus Arminius. Arminius was inspired to write his free will theory because he felt the need to defend God against the accusation He is the creator of all evil; as Arminius states: 'God might not be considered the author of all sin'.

However, Calvin's predestination theory does not necessarily support the above conclusion. This is because Calvin argues that God is not predestining a moral agent to be evil but instead just predestining a moral agent's propensity to ask for forgiveness. For example, Calvin stated that the 'elect' could still be sinful but God predestines them to have faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, when they sin they cannot resist the calling on their lives to seek forgiveness. Therefore, because of Jesus' atonement the 'elect' remain sinless because their sin has been passed to Jesus. Therefore, Calvin's theory could suggest that evil is humanity's fault and all God does is predestine what a moral agent does with that sin.

AO1 Activity

Work in groups of five. Firstly, divide the five implications of predestination between you:

1. The implications of predestination on God's omnipotence.
2. The implications of predestination on God's omnibenevolence.
3. The implications of predestination on the use of prayer
4. The implications of predestination on the existence of miracles
5. The implications of predestination on evil.

Each person then summarises their implication in no more than 50 words. Each person then presents their summary to the other four people in their group.

quickfire

4.16 Briefly explain why miracles may occur if God predestines all events.

Key quote

God might not be considered the author of all sin. (**Arminius**)

Key skills

Knowledge involves:

Selection of a range of (thorough) accurate and relevant information that is directly related to the specific demands of the question.

This means:

- Selecting relevant material for the question set
- Being focused in explaining and examining the material selected.

Understanding involves:

Explanation that is extensive, demonstrating depth and/or breadth with excellent use of evidence and examples including (where appropriate) thorough and accurate supporting use of sacred texts, sources of wisdom and specialist language.

This means:

- Effective use of examples and supporting evidence to establish the quality of your understanding
- Ownership of your explanation that expresses personal knowledge and understanding and NOT just reproducing a chunk of text from a book that you have rehearsed and memorised.

AO1 Developing skills

It is now important to consider the information that has been covered in this section; however, the information in its raw form is too extensive and so has to be processed in order to meet the requirements of the examination. This can be done by practising more advanced skills associated with AO1. The exercises that run throughout this book will help you to do this and prepare you for the examination. For assessment objective 1 (AO1), which involves demonstrating 'knowledge' and 'understanding' skills, we are going to focus on different ways in which the skills can be demonstrated effectively, and also refer to how the performance of these skills is measured (see generic band descriptors for A2 [WJEC] AO1 or A Level [Eduqas] AO1).

- **Your final task for this theme is:** Below is a summary of **how Darrow used the ethical theory of hard determinism**. It is 150 words long. This time there are no highlighted points to indicate the key points to learn from this extract. Discuss which five points you think are the most important to highlight and write them down in a list.

The idea of hard determinism was used by Clarence Darrow, an American lawyer, who famously had the job of defending the 1924 Leopold and Loeb murder case. Leopold and Loeb, two intelligent university students from affluent backgrounds, had been charged with the murder of a fourteen-year-old boy from a much less affluent background. It quickly became apparent that the two boys had murdered the other boy; however, Darrow used the theory of hard determinism in his defence argument in order to try and save Leopold and Loeb from capital punishment. Darrow argued that the boys had diminished responsibility because they were merely products of their affluent upbringing. Therefore, they had been predetermined to have a superiority complex over poorer individuals. Thus, they could not possibly be blamed for something they were always going to be and ultimately for what they were always going to do. As Darrow stated in the trial: 'Punishment as punishment is not admissible unless the offender has the free will to select this course'. Darrow's line of deterministic argument was successful because the boys' sentences were reduced to life imprisonment as opposed to the death penalty.

Now make the five points into your own summary (as in Theme 1 Developing skills) trying to make the summary more personal to your style of writing. This may also involve re-ordering the points if you wish to do so. In addition to this, try to add some quotations and references to develop your summary (as in Theme 2 Developing skills).

The result will be a fairly lengthy answer and so you could then check it against the band descriptors for A2 (WJEC) or A Level (Eduqas) and in particular have a look at the demands described in the higher band descriptors towards which you should be aspiring. Ask yourself:

- Does my work demonstrate thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief?
- Is my work coherent (consistent or make logical sense), clear and well organised?
- Will my work, when developed, be an extensive and relevant response which is specific to the focus of the task?
- Does my work have extensive depth and/or suitable breadth and have excellent use of evidence and examples?
- If appropriate to the task, does my response have thorough and accurate reference to sacred texts and sources of wisdom?
- Are there any insightful connections to be made with other elements of my course?
- Will my answer, when developed and extended to match what is expected in an examination answer, have an extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought?
- When used, is specialist language and vocabulary both thorough and accurate?

Issues for analysis and evaluation

Whether moral responsibility is an illusion

This issue is asking us to consider whether moral agents should accept responsibility for their actions and/or should they be blamed or praised for their actions. Once again, it is possible to approach the above issue from several lines of argument.

One line of argument is that if moral agents are predestined and/or hard determined then moral responsibility is an illusion. This is because the theory of hard determinism states that an agent's life is a completely determined by one or more factors; such as God's omnipotent predestination power, psychological behaviourism, biological determinism, universal causation, etc. Therefore, if hard determinism holds true that moral agents have absolutely no free will, then the only conclusion that can be drawn is that moral agents have no control over their moral attitudes. This is because a moral agent cannot freely choose the moral path they take. Therefore, all human ideas of moral responsibility are just an illusion. This point could be supported from a variety of perspectives.

For a start, Augustine stated in his predestination theory that moral agents are 'so hopelessly corrupted that we are absolutely incapable of doing anything good by our own forces; free choice, if it means a choice between good and evil, has been utterly wasted by sin; our will, insofar as it is ours, and not God's, can merely do evil and desire evil'. What Augustine is saying is that if a moral agent has a choice between choosing X or Y, and where X is the morally good choice and where Y is the morally evil choice, the moral agent will inevitably choose Y. The moral agent's values of right and wrong have been completely overridden by the desire to do evil. Therefore, human ideas of rightness and wrongness are pointless concepts because humanity cannot choose between the two; the moral agent will inevitably choose the latter. Therefore, moral responsibility is clearly an illusion.

In support, William James was referring to a similar theme, as above, when he wrote about universal causation: 'Any other future set of outcomes than the one fixed from eternity is impossible'. However, there is a subtle difference between what he is saying here and what Augustine believed above. This is because if a moral agent has a choice between X or Y, and where X is the morally good choice and where Y is the morally evil choice, the agent will have no choice but to select either X or Y depending upon a complex series of prior causes. Therefore, unlike Augustine's theory, James is stating that the moral agent may be led to choose X, the morally good choice rather than Y. However, the conclusion is still the same as above because the moral agent had no choice but to select X and therefore any sense of moral value the moral agent may have had was completely overridden by determining forces. Therefore, this renders any ideas the moral agent may have had on rightness or wrongness futile. Therefore, moral responsibility is clearly an illusion.

Again, Enlightenment philosopher Spinoza argued that 'there is no absolute or free will, the mind is determined to wish this or that by a cause'. Spinoza is arguing that an agent's moral choices are merely the inevitable result of a chain of infinite regress.

Finally, American philosopher John Hospers (1918–2011) argues that moral values are worthless because there is always some cause that compels us to do what we do. He simply says that moral choice 'is all a matter of luck'. Basically, any moral choice an agent makes is not down to any value they may hold but just a matter of luck on how they were caused to choose by a set of determining factors in any particular moral situation. Perhaps the best summing up that a moral agent's sense of moral responsibility is an illusion comes from psychologist B. F. Skinner when

This section covers AO2 content and skills

Specification content

Whether moral responsibility is an illusion.

Key quotes

Man has no will, intention, self-determinism or personal responsibility. (Skinner)

... man must rely upon his own fallible will and moral insight. He cannot escape choosing. (Sartre)

AO2 Activity

As you read through this section try to do the following:

1. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
2. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.
3. Can you evaluate here by drawing a mini conclusion about the extent moral agents have moral responsibility.

This activity will help you to start thinking critically about what you read and help you to evaluate the effectiveness of different arguments and from this develop your own observations, opinions and points of view that will help with any conclusions that you make in your answers to the AO2 questions that arise.

he stated: 'Man has no will, intention, self-determinism or personal responsibility'. Therefore, all the above clearly support the idea that moral responsibility is clearly an illusion.

However, the above line of argument can be countered and thus it can be argued that moral responsibility is not an illusion. Libertarians believe an agent's moral life is completely free from deterministic factors. Therefore, if libertarianism holds true, that moral agents have absolute free will, then the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the moral agent has moral responsibility. This is because a moral agent can freely choose his or her own moral path. Therefore, moral responsibility is not an illusion. The above point can be supported in several ways.

For instance, Pelagius stated in his religious free will doctrine: 'Our most excellent creator (God) wished us to be able to do either (be good or bad)'. What Pelagius is saying is that God has given humanity the free will to do good works or to sin. This is a point Pelagius argued when he stated: 'this very capacity to do evil is also good – good, I say, because it makes the good part better by making it voluntary and independent'. Therefore, Pelagius is clearly arguing that human ideas of moral responsibility are not an illusion.

In support, Jacobus Arminius made a similar point when he stated: 'God has limited his control in correspondence with man's freedom'. What Arminius is arguing is that God does not force His 'will', via the Holy Spirit, onto moral agents. This is because the vital part of morality, for God, is that the moral agent makes a free-willed choice to decide not to sin and instead follow the path of righteousness. Therefore, Arminius is clearly arguing that human ideas of moral responsibility are not an illusion. However, it could be argued that Arminius' argument is watering down the worth of human moral responsibility because the Holy Spirit acts as the moral agent's moral guide, it does not come from their own 'will'.

Again, the worth of human responsibility is also emphasised by the libertarian philosopher Sartre. Sartre believed humankind is condemned to freedom, as he stated: '... man must rely upon his own fallible will and moral insight. He cannot escape choosing'. Therefore, human ideas of moral responsibility are vital because in essence, according to Sartre, it is all humanity has. Moral agents cannot blame their values on anything other than their own free will; otherwise this would be just an example of 'bad faith'. As Sartre stated: 'man is not free not to be free'; moral value is purely the result of the moral agent's own 'willed' moral choice. Therefore, Sartre is clearly arguing that human ideas of moral responsibility are not an illusion. This is supported further by humanist psychologists like Carl Rogers. Rogers makes it clear that all moral agents can self-actualise and therefore achieve their full potential, including developing their own free-willed ideas on moral responsibility. Therefore, further supporting the idea that moral responsibility is not an illusion.

Another line of argument to support that moral responsibility is an illusion can be a consideration of how the law courts deal with the concept of determination. For example, American lawyer Clarence Darrow defended two intelligent university students, from affluent backgrounds, who had been charged with the murder of a boy from a much less affluent background. It quickly became apparent that the two boys had murdered the other boy. However, Darrow used the theory of hard determinism in his defence arguments in order to try and save the defendants from capital punishment. Darrow argued that the boys had diminished responsibility because they were merely determined products of their affluent upbringing. Therefore, they had been predetermined to have a superiority complex over poorer individuals. Thus, they could not possibly be blamed for something they were always going to be and ultimately for what they were always going to do, i.e. they had no moral responsibility. As Darrow stated in the trial: 'Punishment as punishment is not admissible unless the offender has the free will to select this course'. Darrow's line of deterministic argument was successful because the boys' sentences were reduced to life imprisonment as opposed to the death penalty. The defence lawyer at the murder of case of James Bulger, in 1993, used a similar line of defence. He argued that the two defendants had been predetermined to carry out the murder because they had been allowed to play violent video games and watch violent films from a young age; therefore, they were just repeating what they had seen. Therefore, it can be argued that moral responsibility is just an illusion because moral agents just repeat behaviour they are taught from a young age.

However, the above point can be countered because the idea that moral agents have free will, and therefore that moral agents have moral responsibility, is enshrined in the UK legal system. The criminal courts accept what is known as '**rational choice theory**', unless there is a very specific reason not to, for example certified mental illness. Rational choice theory is the belief that moral agents are reasoning agents who freely weigh up means and ends, costs and benefits, and therefore make freely willed rational choices when committing an illegal act. Therefore, a court is right to punish such moral agents when found guilty of an illegal act.

For example, after the 2011 riots in several British cities, in response to the death of Mark Duggan, 1566 people were punished by the British justice system. This is because it was accepted by the courts that each of these individuals acted rationally through their own free will. This can be seen from the comments made by Lord Judge, the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, when he was considering appeals against the lengthy jail sentences for some of the moral agents involved in the riots: 'Those who deliberately participate in disturbances of this magnitude ... are committing aggravated crimes', i.e. the moral agents were committing crimes that they were fully aware were wrong. Lord Judge dismissed all the appeals. Therefore, this point clearly supports the idea that moral responsibility is not an illusion.

Key quote

Punishment as punishment is not admissible unless the offender has the free will to select this course.

(Darrow)

Key term

Rational choice theory: the legal theory that moral agents are reasoning agents who freely weigh up means and ends, costs and benefits, and therefore make freely willed rational choices when committing an illegal act



2011 British riots

AO2 Activity

List some conclusions that could be drawn from the AO2 reasoning from the above text; try to aim for at least three different possible conclusions. Consider each of the conclusions and collect brief evidence to support each conclusion from the AO1 and AO2 material for this topic. Select the conclusion that you think is most convincing and explain why it is so. Try to contrast this with the weakest conclusion in the list, justifying your argument with clear reasoning and evidence.

Specification content

The extent to which predestination influences our understanding of God.

Key quote

But you cannot will, unless Allah wills. (Quran 76:30)

AO2 Activity

As you read through this section try to do the following:

1. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
2. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.
3. Can you evaluate here by drawing a mini conclusion about whether predestination does influence our understanding of God's omnipotent nature.

This activity will help you to start thinking critically about what you read and help you to evaluate the effectiveness of different arguments and from this develop your own observations, opinions and points of view that will help with any conclusions that you make in your answers to the AO2 questions that arise.

The extent to which predestination influences our understanding of God

Issues for analysis and evaluation will be drawn from any aspect of the content above, such as:

This issue here is considering the extent predestination affects our understanding of some key qualities of God. Again we could approach the above issue from several lines of argument.

One line of argument that predestination influences our understanding of God is that predestination suggests that God is omnipotent. Monotheistic religions, like Islam, Judaism and Christianity, generally attribute the quality of omnipotence to their deity. Omnipotence is the quality of having unlimited power. The concept of predestination can be seen as a strong illustration of God's omnipotent nature. This is because only an omnipotent deity could have, and execute, an eternal predestination plan for all of humanity. The above point was supported by the writings of Augustine. Augustine reacted angrily to the teachings of the Celtic monk Pelagius because his free will theology, according to Augustine, seemed to diminish the omnipotent nature of God. This is because Pelagius' theories made it possible, according to Augustine, for a mere moral agent to decide freely whether to be morally good or sinful. The implication of this was that the moral agent would then be able to tell an omnipotent deity whether to give them salvation. That, argued Augustine, was an intolerable denial of God's omnipotence, an insult to His divine majesty.

This point is further supported by theologian Johnathon Edwards who argued that the concept of free will was incompatible with individual dependence on God. This is because if a moral agent could choose their own response to God, morality salvation would become partly dependent upon the moral agent; therefore, reducing God's omnipotent nature. Calvinists took the above theory one step further when, at the Synod of Dort, they argued the theory of unconditional election, i.e. God alone predestined the elect. Therefore, election is not based upon any merit/good works the moral agent has undertaken. Moreover, it is not even based upon God's omniscient nature to know which moral agents would accept the offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God has chosen the elect, based solely upon his omnipotent will. He did this before the Earth was even created. Therefore, predestination theory would seem to support the concept of God's omnipotence. This seems to be further illustrated when considering holy texts. For example, in the Qur'an it states in 76:30 'But you cannot will, unless Allah wills'. The implication of this verse is that moral agents can do nothing without God, man is totally reliant upon God's omnipotent will. Therefore, predestination clearly influences our understanding of God, i.e. that He is omnipotent.

However, this point could be countered because it could be argued that it is actually the theory of free will that illustrates God's omnipotent nature. For example, Arminius argued that within all humanity God has placed his guiding Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit encourages, but does not force, moral agents to do good works. It could be argued that only an omnipotent God could have the power to do this within the whole of humanity. Therefore, it is not the concept of predestination that influences our understanding of God's omnipotence, it is free will.

Another line of argument that predestination influences our understanding of God is that predestination suggests that God is omnibenevolent. Monotheistic religions generally attribute the quality of omnibenevolence to their deity. Omnibenevolence is the quality of being all-loving, sometimes stated as all-good. The concept of predestination can be seen as an illustration of God's omnibenevolent nature. This is because, as Augustine points out, God would be just in leaving all humanity to descend to damnation because of the fall of Adam and Eve if He did not

predestine moral agents. This is because all humanity is related to Adam and Eve; as Augustine stated we were all 'seminally present in the loins of Adam'. Therefore, Augustine argued that all of humanity inherited Adam's sin, therefore, Adam's guilt is humanity's. However, through His grace God shows his loving nature, for humanity, by saving some people; these people Augustine called the elect. God did this by sending His son Jesus to die on the cross, so that the elect can receive atonement for their sins and be saved. Therefore, predestination potentially influences our understanding of God's omnibenevolence.

However, the above point is by no means universally accepted as an illustration of God's omnibenevolent nature. This is because, as both Augustine and Calvin argue, God only appears to predestine some moral agents to be elect and thus be forgiven of their sins. Therefore, only some moral agents will ascend to heaven post-mortem. The rest, the reprobates as Calvin called them, will not be saved by God and will inevitably descend to hell post-mortem. For some this has grave implications for God's omnibenevolent nature. This is because God is punishing and rewarding certain moral agents on behaviour only He had control over. Based on the above point Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) stated that God must be 'a monster'. This is because, as Russell stated: 'A God that punishes or rewards on the basis of God's own eternal decisions in unfair and immoral'. Therefore, predestination potentially does still influence our understanding of God's omnibenevolence; however, the opposite conclusion needs to be drawn, i.e. predestination illustrates God is not omnibenevolent.

Moreover, God's omnibenevolent nature can also be questioned because if moral agents' lives are predestined, by God, then He must also create and control all moral evil. For example, how could God be omnibenevolent when He predestined such evil events as the holocaust? This is a point taken up by Arminius. Arminius was inspired to write his free will theory because he felt the need to defend God's omnibenevolent nature against predestination so that: 'God might not be considered the author of all sin'.

Furthermore, God's omnibenevolent nature can be questioned if moral agents' lives are predestined by God, because moral agents would have no free will. Therefore, moral agents would be like automated robots just carrying out their God-given pre-programmed life; with no willpower to change anything. An analogy would be it is like a young person playing with their teddy bear: sometimes they would be caring, other times they might be careless with it, but the teddy bear cannot choose not to be played with. God would appear to be doing the same with humanity; and many would argue this is not the behaviour of an omnibenevolent being. Again, Arminius agreed with in his free will theory because he wished to illustrate that: 'man is not an automation in the hands of God'. Therefore, all the above arguments potentially illustrate that predestination does have a significant effect on the understanding of God, particularly whether or not God can be considered as omnibenevolent.

Another line of argument that predestination influences our understanding of God is that predestination suggests that God intervenes in human affairs with miracles. The term miracle originally comes from the Latin 'miraculum' meaning 'wonder'. However, the term miracle tends to have a more specific meaning, expressed by David Hume (1711–1776) as 'an event that appears to break the laws of nature and so is held as an act of God'. It is quite conceivable that a predestining omnipotent God could quite easily have predestined all miracles. This idea is supported by C.S. Lewis (1898–1963). Lewis argues that God is an interactive God that, even today, continues to introduce new laws of nature, which he defined as a miracle. As Lewis states 'nature behaves in accordance to fixed laws, and that a miracle is God



Does determinism make God no better than a child playing with its teddy bear?

Key quote

A God that punishes or rewards on the basis of God's own eternal decisions is unfair and immoral.
(Russell)

introducing a new law...'. Therefore, a miracle is no more than God interacting with this world by introducing new laws of nature. Lewis argues God only does these 'miracles' to remind us of His omnipotence, and thus His predestining nature as the creator and controller of all laws of nature. Therefore, predestination influences our understanding of God as a God who carries out miracles.

However, to counter the above, predestination theory does potentially rule out miracles as an answer to spontaneous prayer; such as, in Joshua 10:13 in the Judeo-Christian Bible. This is where God miraculously made the sun and moon stand still so that Joshua could have enough light to defeat the enemies of Israel. The reason why such miracles can be doubted, if predestination does occur, is because such miracles were as the result of spontaneous prayer of an individual. But if an omnipotent God has already predestined all outcomes then spontaneous miracles by God are impossible. For example, if a moral agent were to pray for a miracle to cure their illness. However, because God has already pre-destined, potentially through biological determinism, that the moral agent would have an illness at that point; then the miracle for a cure will not be forthcoming. Therefore, predestination potentially influences our understanding of God as a God who cannot carry out miracles.

DRAFT

AO2 Activity

List some conclusions that could be drawn from the AO2 reasoning from the above text; try to aim for at least three different possible conclusions. Consider each of the conclusions and collect brief evidence to support each conclusion from the AO1 and AO2 material for this topic. Select the conclusion that you think is most convincing and explain why it is so. Try to contrast this with the weakest conclusion in the list, justifying your argument with clear reasoning and evidence.

AO2 Developing skills

It is now important to consider the information that has been covered in this section; however, the information in its raw form is too extensive and so has to be processed in order to meet the requirements of the examination. This can be achieved by practising more advanced skills associated with AO2. For assessment objective 2 (AO2), which involves 'critical analysis' and 'evaluation' skills, we are going to focus on different ways in which the skills can be demonstrated effectively, and also refer to how the performance of these skills is measured (see generic band descriptors for A2 [WJEC] AO2 or A Level [Eduqas] AO2).

- **Your final task for this theme is:** Below are listed three basic conclusions drawn from an evaluation of **whether moral responsibility is an illusion**. Your task is to develop each of these conclusions by identifying briefly the strengths (referring briefly to some reasons underlying it) but also an awareness of challenges made to it (these may be weaknesses depending upon your view).

1. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that moral agents have no control over their moral attitudes because a moral agent cannot freely choose the moral path they take. Therefore, all human ideas of moral responsibility are just an illusion.
2. Augustine argued that we are absolutely incapable of doing anything good by our own forces; therefore, human ideas of rightness and wrongness are pointless concepts because humanity cannot choose between good and evil and so moral responsibility is clearly an illusion.
3. William James concluded that 'any other future set of outcomes than the one fixed from eternity is impossible'. If this is the case and the moral agent was completely overridden by determining forces then moral responsibility is clearly an illusion.

The result should be three very competent paragraphs that could form a final conclusion of any evaluation.

When you have completed the task, refer to the band descriptors for A2 (WJEC) or A Level (Eduqas) and in particular have a look at the demands described in the higher band descriptors towards which you should be aspiring. Ask yourself:

- Is my answer a confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue?
- Is my answer a response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set.

Key skills

Analysis involves:

Identifying issues raised by the materials in the AO1, together with those identified in the AO2 section, and presents sustained and clear views, either of scholars or from a personal perspective ready for evaluation.

This means:

- That your answers are able to identify key areas of debate in relation to a particular issue
- That you can identify, and comment upon, the different lines of argument presented by others
- That your response comments on the overall effectiveness of each of these areas or arguments.

Evaluation involves:

Considering the various implications of the issues raised based upon the evidence gleaned from analysis and provides an extensive detailed argument with a clear conclusion.

This means:

- That your answer weighs up the consequences of accepting or rejecting the various and different lines of argument analysed
- That your answer arrives at a conclusion through a clear process of reasoning.