

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 (*liberum arbitrium*), the loss of human liberty (*libertas*) to our sinful nature, God's grace and atonement of the elect/saints.

Key quote

For Thyself Thou hast made us,
And restless our hearts until
in Thee they find their ease.
(Augustine, *The Confessions*)

Key terms

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

Manicheans: a dualistic religious system who had a basic doctrine of a conflict between light and dark, matter being regarded as dark and evil

Omnipotent being: a being with unlimited power

Pelagian controversy: the debate concerning the means by which people obtain righteousness

Platonists: the philosophy of Plato that asserted that the phenomena of the world are an imperfect and transitory reflection of the eternal reality of the ideal forms

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

St Augustine

Aurelius Augustinus was born in 354CE and lived most of his life in Roman North Africa. Raised as a Christian by his mother, he rejected Christianity regarding it as a religion unworthy of a philosopher. After being a member of the sect of **Manicheans** he then converted to Christianity and from 396CE until his death in 430CE was bishop of a busy seaport, Hippo, now named Annaba, in Algeria. Augustine was instrumental in merging the Greek philosophical tradition with the Judeo-Christian religious and scriptural traditions. His writings were numerous and reflect his thinking on various theological controversies of the time. Over the course of his lifetime, Augustine rethought old positions in the light of new situations and demands. It is therefore often quite difficult to package neatly his views. However, what cannot be doubted is the influence he had on later philosophers such as Aquinas, Descartes and Wittgenstein. Probably his most well-known writing is *The Confessions* (397–401CE) which is a spiritual autobiography containing an account of his conversion.

Influences on Augustine

To understand Augustine, it is helpful to be aware of the various influences on his thinking. The most important influence was the writings of the **Platonists** which provided him with intellectual satisfaction when he examined the Church and its scriptural tradition. It was this that persuaded Augustine to turn to Christianity. He saw authority represented by Christ and reason represented by Plato. At first, he saw Platonic morality and metaphysics as being compatible with Christian teachings. Platonic ideas allowed for a spiritual creator who is the cause of all things and he saw true spiritual enlightenment achievable through union with God. As time went by he was confronted to respond to various controversies and there became points of divergence. In particular, the **Pelagian controversy** reshaped his views on human freedom and predestination. The Pelagian debate engaged him from about 411 until his death in 430.

The Pelagian controversy

The free will theology of Pelagius (354–420CE) worried Augustine because, to him, it seemed to diminish the power of God and make God something less than an **omnipotent being**.

Pelagius' theories proposed that a person could decide freely whether to be morally good or sinful. The implication of this was that the person would then have the moral right to claim salvation from God on their own merit. 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**.

In response to Pelagius' free will theology and on behalf of the Church, Augustine developed the Doctrine of Original Sin and this included his theory of **predestination**.

Doctrine of Original Sin: role of concupiscence

In Augustine's book *City of God*, he portrays an idyllic picture of the Garden of Eden before 'the fall'. 'In Paradise, then, man ... lived in the enjoyment of God, and was good by God's goodness ... no sadness of any kind was there.' So why did Adam and Eve sin? Augustine argued that Adam had already in his heart turned away from God and that is why the Devil successfully tempted him. The disobedience that resulted is known as 'the original sin' – the first instance of disobedience of humanity to God.

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)

According to Augustine, 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 so it affected their original perfect nature. Augustine called this defect in the human character '**concupiscence**', a tendency towards sinning against God. Concupiscence is a Latin term that translates as 'longing' in a sensual way. In practice, concupiscence means that people have earthly desires that may conflict with spiritual desires to know and love God. In Catholic theology, concupiscence is often seen as a desire for lower appetites that runs contrary to a person's God-given **reason**. Concupiscence, in itself, is not a sin but instead it is a deficiency in a person's ability to choose good and resist earthly desires when they are in conflict with God's laws.

This defect of concupiscence, according to Augustine, is passed on from Adam and Eve to every person born into this world. Since all humanity is related to Adam and Eve, then, Augustine argued, all of humanity inherited Adam's sin. Adam's guilt is also the guilt of humanity as a whole. Augustine saw support for this view in 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'.

Key quotes

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



St Augustine

Specification content

Doctrine of Original Sin: role of concupiscence, humanity as 'a lump of sin' (massa peccati)

Key terms

Concupiscence: strong desire for earthly pleasures

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 people, i.e. to salvation or to damnation. Predestination is a form of religious hard determinism

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

The fall: the descent from perfection to sin recounted in Genesis 3

quickfire

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



Adam and Eve committing original sin

quickfire

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

Key term

Liberium arbitrium: Latin phrase meaning a person 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

Specification content

Doctrine of Original Sin: an essentially 'free' human nature (liberium arbitrium), the loss of human liberty (libertas) to our sinful nature

quickfire

4.3 Why do people 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.

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)

Augustine further argued that as all human beings are born from sexual intercourse, which is itself a result of concupiscence, then all humanity inherits concupiscence. The exception to this, is Jesus Christ who was not born from sexual intercourse and therefore was born sin free.

Doctrine of Original Sin: humanity as 'a lump of sin' (massa peccati)

As a result of 'the fall', all humanity is born '**massa peccati**'. Massa peccati is a Latin term meaning a 'lump of sin' or 'mass of sin'. Augustine explained massa peccati by stating that 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 choose freely is infected by sin and incapable of raising itself from spiritual death.

Doctrine of Original Sin: liberium arbitrium and libertas

Augustine still argued that a person has a will and that the will is capable of making choices. For Augustine, free will in human beings is about our capacity to act and choose freely according to our own lights as individual agents. He had no doubt that he was the author of his decision and action and that he himself formed the intention in his action.

Augustine argued that fallen human beings have an essential human nature that is **liberium arbitrium** (a Latin phrase meaning a person has the power of making choices that are free from predestination). In other words, they have a free will, but concupiscence acts as secondary human nature which overrides a person's essential human nature of liberium arbitrium. As humanity's free will 'has been utterly wasted by sin', people have lost their **libertas** (Latin phrase meaning liberty). That means that because of the original sin, human beings are unable to refrain from sinning.

Baptism was seen to address original sin, but it left untouched concupiscence, the inclination toward sin that original sin had introduced. Therefore, although still able to choose what they desire, their desires are affected by sin. Augustine believed that before conversion, the body obeyed the soul's lustful cravings more readily than the soul heeded its own moral scruples.

Key quotes

When I willed or did not will something, I was wholly certain that it was not someone other than I who willed or did not will it. (Augustine)

I it was who willed, I it was who was unwilling... I neither willed entirely, nor was I entirely unwilling. Therefore I was at war with myself. (Augustine referring to the time before his conversion)

God's grace and atonement for the elect/saints

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 some people are set free from their secondary nature of concupiscence, enabling them to respond rightly to God. No person can do anything to deserve it. Only God knows why certain people are chosen and not others. Therefore, the choice which God makes to extend grace to human beings 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**'. Augustine regarded these 'reprobates' as responsible for their sins and so are simply receiving God's just wrath for their disobedience.

For instance, in City of God Book V chapter 10:

'Our wills are ours and it is our will that affects all that we do by willing and which could not have happened if we had not willed ... the fact that God foreknew that a man would sin does not make a man sin; on the contrary, it cannot be doubted that it is the man himself who sins ... a man does not sin unless he wills to sin; ...'

John Hick in *Evil and the God of Love* suggests that in a few passages Augustine implies that God creates some with the express intention of damning them and others with the opposite intention of saving them:

Hick himself concludes that on balance it seems that Augustine believed 'that people fall freely and culpably and that out of the fallen race God saves some, leaving others to perish; although God knows from the beginning which he intends to save and which to abandon'.

Augustine seems only too aware of the problematic nature of his doctrine but sees the resolution in divine knowledge.

He thought that the fallen human intellect was incapable of understanding the workings of divine salvation. To human beings it remained a mystery because Augustine thought that grace itself only leads to partial restoration of the intellect.



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

Specification content

Doctrine of Original Sin: God's grace and atonement for the elect/saints

Key quotes

...God leads some in mercy and repentance and others in just judgement does not lead. (Augustine)

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

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 people, untouched by God's grace, left to be consumed by the defect of concupiscence

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

quickfire

4.4 How do people become 'elect'?

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.



John Calvin



Calvin's book *Institutes of the Christian Religion*

Key term

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

John Calvin's Doctrine of Election: the absolute power of God, the corrupted nature of human beings

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

In Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* he stated that scripture functions as a set of 'spectacles' that bring general revelation back into proper focus. Calvin thus dismisses all efforts at going beyond the scriptures (and a great deal of classical metaphysics), as pure speculation, both wrong and sinful. This central driving force of scripture rather than philosophy is Calvin's reasoning in his doctrine of election.

Key quotes

Belief in predestination is not an article of faith in its own right but is the final outcome of scripturally informed reflection on the effects of grace upon individuals in the light of the enigmas of experience. (McGrath)

According to Calvin, scripture makes clear that some people respond to the gospel whilst others do not. Calvin was also convinced that sin had corrupted both the will and the intellect. He regarded humanity as totally depraved owing to 'the fall' of Adam and Eve. Totally depraved here does not mean completely depraved or as depraved as you could possibly be. It means tainted or depraved in all areas of the heart, mind and will. Humanity was unable to respond in faithful obedience to the invitation of God through Jesus. In other words, people cannot choose for themselves to repent and believe.

Neither did 'total depravity' mean that Calvin believed that all humanity was predestined to damnation. He believed that some people would receive salvation from God. Calvin's theory is based on the idea that God alone determines who will be saved.

Key quotes

God preordained, for his own glory and the display of His attributes of mercy and justice, a part of the human race, without any merit of their own, to eternal salvation, and another part, in just punishment of their sin, to eternal damnation. (Calvin)

... a man will be justified by faith when, excluded from righteousness of works, he by faith lays hold of the righteousness of Christ, and clothed in it, appears in the sight of God not as a sinner, but as righteous ... (Calvin)

You see how every thing is denied to free will, for the very purpose of leaving no room for merit. And yet, as the beneficence and liberality of God are manifold and inexhaustible, the grace which he bestows upon us, inasmuch as he makes it our own, he recompenses as if the virtuous acts were our own. (Calvin)

Christ is indeed presented to all, but God opens the eyes of the elect alone, and enables them by faith to seek after him. (Calvin)

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.

As has been noted, Calvin anchored his theory on his belief that scripture was the sole infallible rule of faith (**sola scriptura**). 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, it is the gift of God.'

1 Peter 2:8

'They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for.'

Romans 8:29

'And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified ...'

Calvin concluded that 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'.

The elect and the reprobates, unconditional election

Calvin further developed his theory by stating that God made among people two predestined groups: the elect and the reprobates. This view on predestination was later 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 person 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 person has done nothing to deserve this act of mercy; it is a divine mystery why some are chosen and others not. Calvin argued that nobody could know for sure which group they belonged 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.

The first and most important indicator of election is what Calvin called 'the calling of God'. What Calvin meant by this is that the person 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 sinned they could not resist the calling on their lives to seek forgiveness. It was because of Jesus' atonement that the elect were forgiven and at death received salvation.

The reprobates

The reprobates also appear to be chosen by God. Calvin believed that the reprobates were more likely to show traits of why they will remain unsaved after death. For Calvin, such traits included laziness and drunkenness. 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 do some acts of moral goodness but, according to Calvin, will ultimately fall prey to sin. However, the reprobates will be

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

Specification content

John Calvin: Doctrine of Election: the elect and the reprobates, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the elect.

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. (**Jesus in Mark 4:11**)

Specification content

John Calvin: Doctrine of Election: limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the elect.

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. He thought that the mystery of which predestined group you belonged to would inspire wonder and reverence in believers and argues that this is one of God's purposes in predestination.

Key quote

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. (**Spurgeon**)

Limited atonement

Therefore, according to Calvin, God made a predestined choice for all peoples, before they were even born. Certain people 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 person cannot do anything during their lifetime to change it.

Calvin saw the main purpose of predestination as the means for God to be glorified. Hence, McGrath argues that for Calvin, predestination was never a central premise but more an ancillary doctrine. For later followers of Calvin this doctrine became more developed and more central. One consequence that resulted was the doctrine of limited atonement.

Jesus said in John 10:15 that he laid his life down for the sheep. Furthermore, in John 10:26 Jesus said that people did not believe because they are not his sheep. This implies that if Jesus lays his life down for the sheep and there are people who were not his sheep, then he did not lay his life down for those who are not his sheep. Hence Christ's redeeming work was intended to save the elect only.

Key quote

First and last for Calvin, God is not a celestial tyrant but a loving parent who cannot forget her nursing child, and a father who gives good things to his children. (**Lindberg**)

Irresistible grace and perseverance of the elect

Later Calvinists also argued that since God has drawn the elect to faith in Christ by regenerating their hearts and convincing them of their sins, then it follows that they will be kept by the same power to the end and so enter heaven. They are eternally saved and kept in faith by the power of God and so persevere to the end. But what of those who profess to be believers but then later fall away? The doctrine maintains that it only applies to those who have a genuine faith in Christ. Those who appear to profess and then fall away are deemed not to have had genuine faith and are therefore not part of the elect.

The change of heart that the Holy Spirit makes in regeneration, as well as the indwelling presence of the Spirit in the believer, ensures that the believer will continue to love Christ. It does not suggest they will be perfect in this life. However, it teaches that believers do not strive to keep God's commands to gain salvation or maintain salvation but rather out of love and gratitude to God.

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' (1618–19CE). 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 person's personality including thought, emotions and will. This does not mean that the person will necessarily be intensely sinful, but that sin has extended to their entire being.

Unconditional Election

This point states that God alone chose the elect. Election is not based upon any merit/good works the person has undertaken. Moreover, it is not based upon God's omniscient nature to know which people 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.

Key quote

All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. (John 6:37)

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.

Key quotes

This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation ...

(1 Peter 1:4–5)

They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us. (1 John 2:19)

Although men are not totally corrupt in the sense that they are incapable of doing any good at all – it would be absurd to say that – the truth is that the best of men and their best accomplishments are tainted or poisoned at the core by their pride or egotism or self-centredness, however far they may look from outside. (Vidler)



The Synod of Dort

Key terms

Arminianism: the doctrinal teachings of Jacobus Arminius and his followers who argued for free will and that Christ died for everyone rather than just the elect

Synod: an assembly of church clergy of a particular church, usually convened to decide an issue of doctrine, administration or application

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:** Look back at page XXX to the list off the **five points in which Calvinists expressed Calvin's Doctrine of Election at the Synod of Dort in 1619**. It is 300 words long. Discuss what you think are the two main points from **each** of the five doctrines, explaining why you have selected those points.

Now write 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.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

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- 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:** Look back at page XXX to the list off the **five points in which Calvinists expressed Calvin's Doctrine of Election at the Synod of Dort in 1619**. It is 300 words long. Discuss what you think are the two main points from **each** of the five doctrines, explaining why you have selected those points.

Now write 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.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

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 religious texts suggest. This point could be explored from several different religious traditions or could just concentrate on one tradition. Potential religious texts that seem to support 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 religious texts that suggest human beings have free will. Again, this point could be explored from several different religious traditions or could just concentrate on one tradition. Potential religious texts that seem to support free will 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 Luke 13:34 it states: '...how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.'
- Qur'an: In 90:10 (translation by the Islamic Foundation UK) it states: 'And did We not show him the two highroads (of good and evil)?'

Another line of argument to support the view that religious believers should accept predestination is to consider the theological arguments for predestination that have taken place through history, e.g. Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin and/or Calvin's Doctrine of Election.

These areas of support for predestination could also include the various conclusions reached by Church authorities, synods and councils. For example, one potential support for Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin is to look at the outcome of the **Council of Carthage** in 418CE. In the 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries 'Councils of Carthage' were assembled by the Catholic Church to discuss theological matters of great importance. In 418CE one such Council of Carthage fully approved Augustine's predestination Doctrine of Original Sin and denounced the contrary view as presented by Pelagius.

A further example that could be used is the Synod of Dort in 1619. The Synod of Dort sought to settle a divisive controversy between the predestination arguments of Calvinism and the free will arguments of Arminianism. The Synod



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

AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

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.



Bertrand Russell

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 Smith 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

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.

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 strengths and weaknesses of the different arguments need to be evaluated.

An opposing line of argument is to illustrate the fact that a significant number of religious believers clearly do not accept the teaching on predestination. 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.

A different line of argument that supports the view that religious believers should accept predestination is that it is consistent with the traditional understanding of God, in terms of God's attributes. **Monotheistic religions**, like Islam, Judaism and Christianity, generally attribute the quality of omnipotence to their deity. The concept of predestination seems to support the concept of God's omnipotent nature. This is because only an omnipotent God could have had an eternal predestination plan for all of humanity that he was able to execute. In contrast, free will seems to diminish the omnipotent nature of God, since a person would then be able to tell an omnipotent God whether to give them salvation.

However, the fact that God can do something, doesn't mean that he does do it. There is no necessity just because God is able to do something. Others may argue that God can use his omnipotence to give freewill. This does not diminish God's omnipotence as he has chosen to give freewill.

The above line of argument could be countered by challenging whether predestination is in fact consistent with the traditional understanding of God's attributes.

Monotheistic religions attribute the quality of **omnibenevolence** to their deity. Omnibenevolence is the quality of being all-loving, sometimes stated as being all-good. However, the concept of free will, not predestination, seems to support God's omnibenevolent nature. The free will theory opens up the possibility that all people can achieve salvation by freely following God's eternal moral laws. This seems a better illustration of God's omnibenevolence than the doctrine of predestination. The predestination theory, as stated by both Augustine and Calvin, shows that God only appears to predestine some people, therefore, only some people will achieve salvation. The rest, the reprobates, will not be saved by God and will inevitably not be forgiven. This can be seen to have grave implications for God's omnibenevolent nature, since God is punishing and rewarding certain people on behaviour that only he had control over. As Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) stated 'A God that punishes or rewards on the basis of God's own eternal decisions in unfair and immoral'.



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

Study tip

It is vital for AO2 that you actually discuss arguments and not just explain what

The extent to which God predestines humanity

This issue focuses on whether God predestines every aspect of a person's life.

One line of argument is that the extent of God's predestination of humanity, according to religious texts, is total. This point could be explored from several different religious traditions or a candidate could just concentrate on one tradition. Potential religious 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 Acts 17:26 it states 'From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands'.
- Bible New Testament: In Ephesians 1:11 it states 'In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purposes of his will...'
- 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 religious texts suggest that the extent of God's predestination for humanity is total – could be countered in two ways:

Firstly, do the above texts actually teach 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 person's lifespan not that God is controlling it. Even if God is determining a person's lifespan this is still not necessarily suggesting that God is controlling what a person does in this predetermined lifespan.

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

- Judeo-Christian Bible: In Isaiah 55:6 it states: 'Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.'
- Bible New Testament: In Romans 13:2 Paul writes 'Whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgement on themselves.'
- Bible New Testament: In 2 Corinthians 9:7 Paul writes 'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion...'
- Qur'an: In 90:10 (translation by the Islamic Foundation UK) it states: 'And did We not show him the two highroads (of 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 human beings is total. One could exemplify by referring to the Synod of Dort.

This accepted all five of the Calvinist points, namely: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the elect, so agreeing with the assertion that the extent of God's predestination for humanity is total.

Specification content

The extent to which God predestines humanity.

Key term

Omniscience: the state of knowing everything

AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

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.



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

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 may challenge the view of total predestination and argue that Augustine only believed in the predestination of the elect. For example, in Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin he concedes that humanity is born with free will.

He argued that people have an 'essential human nature' that give a person power to make choices that are free. Augustine then argues that

concupiscence acts as a secondary nature which overrides a this essential human nature. Therefore, it could be argued that Augustine is actually putting forward a version of **soft determinism** as an argument. This is because humanity has two natures, one of which is free willed. Therefore, if this is correct, then perhaps he accepted that 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.

Clearly, the case for free will could be argued for and so denying any idea of predestination. The case against any idea of predestination might include the free will theories of Pelagius and Arminius. Again, appeals might be made religious traditions that reject predestination. 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 ...'

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



Sterling McMurrin



Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City

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 total. 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?

T4 Determinism and free will

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.

WJEC / Eduqas Religious Studies for A Level Year 2 and A2 Religion and Ethics

This section covers AO1 content and skills

Specification content

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

Key quotes

Hard determinists say that our actions are caused in a way that makes us not as free as we might have thought, so that responsibility, if it implies free will, is an illusion. (Lacey)

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)

We ought then to regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its antecedent state and the cause of the state that is to follow. An intelligence knowing, at a given instant of time, all things of which the universe consists, would be able to comprehend the actions of the largest bodies of the world and those of the lightest atoms in one single formula, provided his intellect were sufficiently powerful... nothing would be uncertain... (Laplace)

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

Determinism is very different from fatalism. Fatalism is the theory that all events are destined to occur no matter what we choose. Whereas determinism looks to natural laws and cause-effect relations, fatalism looks to the wills of gods, divine foreknowledge or mystic forces to guarantee those events will happen.

The idea of determinism is firmly grounded in the principle of causality. The world around us appears to be a 'closed' phenomenon. We can observe causality and the interaction of phenomena, and it appears that every event is necessitated by antecedent events and conditions together with the laws of nature. We therefore look for an explanation for everything, including the way in which we choose to act. Any decision made has a cause. If this is the case then hard determinism, a term coined by William James, takes the no-nonsense line that everything that occurs in the universe has a sufficient explanation through causes and conditions. This is what we call the law of cause and effect. Our actions, the ones we actually do, are the only ones that we can do. Therefore, human beings are not free to act; free will is no more than an illusion. 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.

Human beings have preconditioned, programmed choices over which they have no control. Therefore, there is no need to praise good deeds, for example, because the person who did them had no alternative. Neither can a person be blamed for a bad deed.

Philosophical determinism (John Locke – free will is an illusion)

John Locke (1632–1704) was an English philosopher who is widely regarded as one of the leading enlightenment thinkers. He 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. The future could result only from the past or present and no future is possible other than that dictated by the past and present.

Locke coined the phrase: 'free will is just an illusion'. This is because people 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 person'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.

In his book *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Locke developed views on the nature of freedom of action and freedom of will. He distinguished between voluntary and involuntary actions. For action A to be voluntary, it must be caused by a volition to do A. For an action to be involuntary, it must be an action performed without a volition (this includes actions preceded by the right kind of volition but not caused by the volition).

Key quotes

The law of causation, according to which later events can theoretically be predicted by means of earlier events, has often been held to be *a priori*, a necessity of thought, a category without which science would not be possible. (Russell)

The loss of particles and information down black holes meant that the particles that came out were random. One could calculate probabilities, but one could not make any definite predictions. Thus, the future of the universe is not completely determined by the laws of science and its present state, as Laplace thought. God still has a few tricks up his sleeve. (Stephen Hawking)

John Locke – man in bedroom illustration

Locke's account of his illustration of the man in the bedroom is in Book II chapter XXI of *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*:

'Again: suppose a man be carried, whilst fast asleep, into a room where is a person he longs to see and speak with; and be there locked fast in, beyond his power to get out: he awakes, and is glad to find himself in so desirable company, which he stays willingly in, i.e. prefers his stay to going away. I ask, is not this stay voluntary? I think nobody will doubt it: and yet, being locked fast in, it is evident he is not at liberty not to stay, he has not freedom to be gone. So that liberty is not an idea belonging to volition, or preferring; but to the person having the power of doing, or forbearing to do, according as the mind shall choose or direct. Our idea of liberty reaches as far as that power, and no farther. For wherever restraint comes to check that power, or compulsion takes away that indifferency of ability to bear acting, there liberty, and our notion of it, presently ceases.'

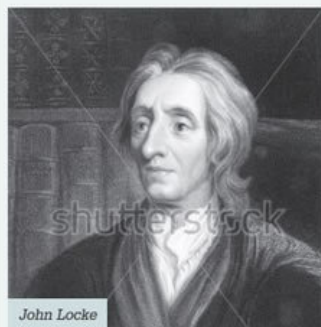
Locke is arguing that in reality, the man has no option but to stay in the room. It is only his ignorance of the fact that the door is locked, that gives him an illusion of freedom. Just as the man is ignorant of the fact the door is locked and thus has no choice but to stay in the room, so people have 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**. Darwin had illustrated that human beings developed from the evolutionary process, therefore they must also have a genetic formula. The implications of the above are that human action is not free but is determined by their genetic formula.

The above theory was developed considerably 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.

It can be said that people 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 irregularities in human beings, e.g. a person born with Down's syndrome. However, some scientists, generally referred to as 'biological



John Locke

Key quotes

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

Men believe themselves to be free, simply because they are conscious of their actions and unconscious of the causes. (Spinoza)

quickfire

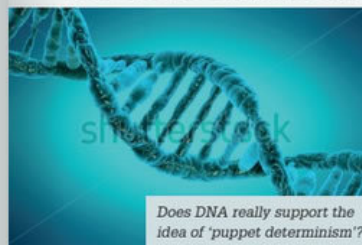
- 4.5 Explain why the analogy of the bedroom illustrates determinism.

Specification content

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

Key term

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



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

Key quote

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

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

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

quickfire

- 4.6 Explain how your DNA determines your actions.

Specification content

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

determinists', argue this should be extended further, by stating that human behaviour is also determined by our genes. Therefore, a person's behaviour is no more than his or her genetic makeup, and any effort to change these behavioural patterns is useless. Biological determinist Daniel Dennett (b1942) 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 caused by one particular gene, multiple genes can cause addiction. For example, a particular gene can make one person feel sick in response to a particular stimulus (such as a drug) but cause another person to feel happy to the same stimuli, making it harder for the second person to give up the stimulus; thus, increasing his or her risk of addiction. Another particular gene may make one person have an adrenaline rush in a response to a perceived risk but another person may simply feel fear. In this case the former person is at greater risk of addiction, etc. Therefore, whether a person is an addict could purely be determined by his or her genes.

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 person 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 the extremes, people 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 people 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'. This implies that a person's programmed life is decided at conception.

An illustration of how a person'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'.

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** (also known as reflex conditioning). Ivan Pavlov (1849–1936), a Russian psychologist, is most famously connected with classical conditioning. His work on classical conditioning is associated with the work he did with dogs. This experimentation is often referred to as 'Pavlov's Dogs'.

It 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. A bell was rung every

time food was ready for the dogs to eat. This was called a neutral stimulus. 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. Eventually, a rat was presented 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.

Following 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 person'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 between puddles and sadness/crying. Therefore, in later life as the person 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 person is just subconsciously repeating taught conditioned behaviour.

Behaviourist psychologist B. F. Skinner (1904–1990) supported this theory. Skinner proposed a further development of classical conditioning, called operant conditioning. Here a person is conditioned to always repeat behaviour that is rewarded, but not repeat behaviour that is punished.

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). The theory argues that people are determined but nonetheless still free. This is because of the understanding of 'free'. To a soft determinist, being free is about being able to do what one wants to do, without external coercion or interference from anyone else. It accepts that human actions have causes (background, genetics, education, etc.) but they are free if actions are caused by our choices rather than external forces. Soft determinists are sometimes called compatibilists as they see free will and determinism working together.

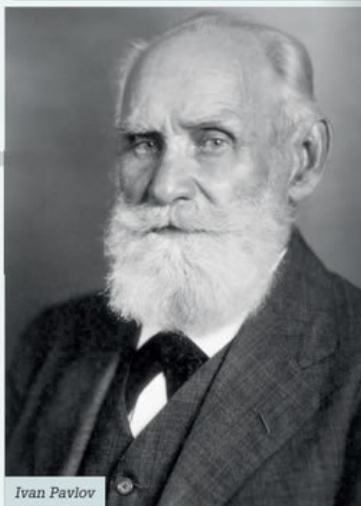
Indeed, freedom requires determinism in order to make sense of things, otherwise everything would be random with no explanation. Freedom involves the empowerment to act and thus control the desired effect. A. J. Ayer states this

Key quote

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

quickfire

- 4.7 Explain how conditioning determines your actions.



Ivan Pavlov

Specification content

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

Key term

Classical soft determinism: a theory that believes that human beings have an element of freedom despite their moral choices being completely determined by outside factors

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

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

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.'

This view of our actions allows for moral responsibility, whilst hard determinism does not. 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 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 person's life is determined and part free willed.

Key quotes

If determinism is true, as the theory of soft determinism holds it to be, all those inner states which cause my body to behave in whatever ways it behaves must arise from circumstances that existed before I was born; for the chain of causes and effects is infinite, and none could have been the least different, given those that preceded. (Taylor)

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

Thomas Hobbes

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 were said to claim that all moral choices made by people are completely predetermined. However, Hobbes explained the difference between classical soft determinism and hard determinism by considering two types of causes: internal and external.

Internal and external causes

An **internal cause** is the choice people 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 person to do something against their predetermined will, e.g. when a student pushes another student over as they try to move between classrooms.

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

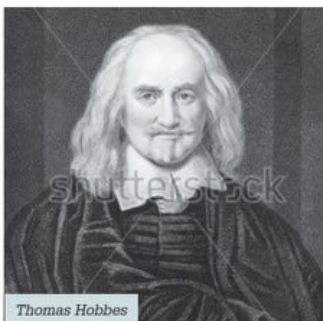
Classical soft determinism

In the case of soft determinism, a person 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 person had no choice but to want to take off their blazer in a warm classroom. However, because the person was able to take off their blazer without hindrance they were free from any external causes, i.e. a teacher does not stop the person 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 person 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 person 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.

Hobbes stated that a person was as free as an unimpeded river. A river that flows down a hill necessarily follows a channel. However, it is also at liberty to flow within the channel. He claimed that the voluntary actions of people are similar. To be at liberty is not to be restrained, which is not the same as to be uncaused. People are free because their actions follow from their will. The actions, however, are necessary in the sense that they originate from a chain of causes and effects. Freedom is all about acting as we will and not being coerced in any way.



Thomas Hobbes

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 applied his logical positivism theories to Hobbes' classical soft determinist argument. As a result, he furthered Hobbes' theory by illustrating empirically the language difference between soft and hard determinism.

Ayer argued that when a situation is soft determinist, i.e. when a person is only determined by an internal cause but not an external cause, the person will use the phrase 'caused'. For example, the person 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 person is determined by both an internal and an external cause, the person will use the phrase 'forced'. For example, the person was 'forced' to keep their blazer on by the teacher. Therefore, Ayer concludes, from his empirical studies of language, that people 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. This clearly illustrates there is a distinction between classical soft determinism and hard determinism.

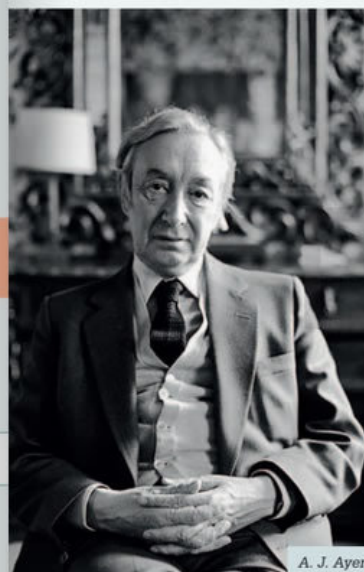
Ayer summed up the above difference with his famous analogy. He stated that if he walked across a room because someone compelled him, observers would conclude he was not acting freely and that this 'forced' movement was completely determined. However, if he walked across a room without being compelled by another, observers would still assume it had a cause because all actions must be willed by the person, 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.

Key quote

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)

quickfire

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



A. J. Ayer

Specification content

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

quickfire

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

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 quotes

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)

But now we must ask how it is that I come to make my choice. Either it is an accident that I choose to act as I do or it is not. If it is an accident, then it is merely a matter of chance that I did not choose otherwise; and if it is merely a matter of chance that I did not choose otherwise, it is surely irrational to hold me morally responsible for choosing as I did. But if it is not an accident that I choose to do one thing rather than another, then presumably there is some causal explanation of my choice; and in that case we are led back to determinism. (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 view to no more than 50 words. Each person then presents their summary to the other person in their pair.

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. Locke coined the phrase: 'free will is just an illusion'. People 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 person'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.

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.

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.

Key quotes

If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true ... and hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms. (Haldane)

All events in the physical world have causes except those subatomic events falling within the realm of quantum mechanics (O'Connor)

AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

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.

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 the hard determinist arguments studied, successfully illustrate 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 in support would be the philosophical concept of hard determinism that clearly illustrates that humanity has no free will. The work of 17th-century philosopher John Locke would be a good example to use. Locke developed a philosophical determinism theory based on universal causation. He concluded that 'free will is just an illusion'.

However, a counter to this could be that Locke does not, with the above argument, prove the concept of hard determinism and that humanity has no free will. This is because 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 the 20th-century philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre claimed that a person's freedom is obvious because of the way people go about trying to deny it. He argued that people create a self-deception of determinism, called 'bad faith'. For Sartre these attempts of people to escape freedom are a clear sign that we do have free will.

Another line of argument to challenge philosophical determinism would be to argue that determinism is self-refuting. If free will is an illusion and everything is predetermined, then the ultimate cause why a person believes that free will is an illusion must also be predetermined. Therefore, there can be no way of knowing whether free will is true or false.

Another difficulty with determinism is that it cannot account for the commencement of activity, given that the fundamental premise of determinism is that all activity is the effect of prior activity. It is not clear what can be said to be prior to the commencement of activity.

A further problem with determinism is that it leads to the idea of morality being totally incoherent, even if God predetermines actions. Morality is a vacuous concept since to be morally responsible the person must have involved some choice that was genuine choice. An automated robot cannot be classed as a moral being. It is programmed and so cannot act in a different way. However, others may argue that in some sense, human beings do choose and deliberate, but only in a way that obeys natural laws. Indeed, determinism allows for opportunity to modify a person's behaviour through punishment since it can be a deterrent and become a part of the causal chain.

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, people are no more than genetic robots; programmed, and thus determined by



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

their DNA. There are many empirical scientific studies to support such a conclusion such as Daniel Dennett's theory of 'genetic fixity'.

Some might appeal to modern quantum mechanics and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle to argue that modern science is no longer so confident about causation. The general opinion of experts in the field is that there is no causal laws governing subatomic events like radioactive emission or electron transits. They are not, even in principle, predictable.

However, this understanding of unpredictability does not explain how the occurrence of unpredictable events in the atoms making up a human brain can account for the brain events which correspond to human choices. Neither does it explain how moral values and responsibility are safeguarded, since it supposes that brain events corresponding to our choices are spontaneous and random rather than regular and law like.

A further counter argument could be that science does illustrate humanity has free will. This is because recent developments in neuroscience suggest people 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.

Key quotes

Free actions, if there are any, are not deterministically caused nor are they caused by random processes of the sort countenanced by quantum physicists or complexity theorists. Free actions need to be caused by me, in a non-determined and non-random manner. (Flanagan)

Sir, we know our will is free, and there's an end on't. (Samuel Johnson)

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. Pavlov argued that 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 people 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, people 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.

Others have appealed to the experience of emotion. If determinism is true then it is difficult to see why the human brain experiences emotion. It seems that the human brain cannot be fully measured and quantified to the point of predicting behaviour. It could be argued that everyone who deliberates must believe in free will, for it is impossible to deliberate without acting on the conviction that the decision is up to you to resolve.

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 people 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 person does have some freedom, for example, when they are not hindered from carrying out their determined 'will'.

Specification content

Strengths and weaknesses of hard and/or soft determinism.

Key quotes

A random event does not fit the concept of free will any more than a lawful one does, and could not serve as the long-sought locus of moral responsibility. (Pinker)

Nothing comes to me from the past that is not chosen by me. We do not receive our past ... One has to be one's past, to live it – now. (Sartre)



Jean-Paul Sartre

AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

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.

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 people have no free will and soft determinism that people only have partial free will. Many of the arguments for the previous discussion can also be used for this discussion and the answer could approach the above issue from several lines of argument.

One line of argument could be that determinism 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; further support comes from William James.

However, just because some events are clearly determined does not justify the widespread belief in an absolute universal determinism. Indeed, modern science casts some doubt about such confidence in causation and predictability. The development of quantum mechanics and indeterminism has challenged the traditional understanding of Newtonian views about cause and effect and predictability. This weakens the argument from causation, which is one of the determinists' main arguments. However, to argue that there are no causes or to suggest actions are random or chaotic is not what is meant by free will.

Some may argue that the unpredictability is only at quantum levels and so does not affect actions of human beings. But the issue of the initial commencement of the chain of cause and effect remains a problem for the determinist. If the fundamental premise of determinism is that all activity is the effect of prior activity, it is not clear what can be said to be prior to the commencement of activity. If it is God then the debate moves into considerations of predestination and God's omnipotence.

Sartre claimed people create a self-deception of determinism, called 'bad faith'. He argued that there is no God and a person does not have a fixed nature. A person's actions are not triggered causally, they are responses to the significance they see in things in the light of their wishes, projects and commitments. Therefore man is condemned to freedom.

Another line of argument is the logical argument that states that if free will is an illusion and everything is causally determined then the ultimate cause why a person believes that free will is an illusion must itself be causally determined. Therefore, there can be no way of knowing whether free will is true or false.

Perhaps the most serious weakness of determinism concerns moral responsibility. If we cannot act in a different way then, it is difficult to argue that we can be held morally responsible for our actions. They could not have been otherwise. However, its weakness may be mitigated by the counter-argument that in some sense, human beings do choose and deliberate, but only in a way that obeys natural laws. Indeed, the chain of events behind a particular cause may go back to uncaused creative events in our mind during deliberations. Also, a person's behaviour may be modified through punishment since it can be a deterrent and become a part of the causal chain.

Another line of argument that could illustrate a strength of hard determinism is that it has support from scientific determinism. One such scientific argument revolves around human DNA. Scientists claim that DNA illustrates all humans

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.

have a fixed scientific formula. Therefore, people are no more than genetic robots; programmed, and thus determined by their DNA.

However, recent developments in neuroscience suggest people 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.

Behaviourist Ivan Pavlov carried out experiments on dogs and found that they could be conditioned. From this Pavlov postulated that all actions by human beings 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, people 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 seems to 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 people are determined by internal causes but are free from external causes, is supported by the language used by people. Ayer observed that a person will use the phrase 'caused' when the action is soft determinist. For example, the person 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 person is determined by both an internal and an external cause, the person will use the phrase 'forced'. For example, the person 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 people in everyday language.

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 a person's moral choices are completely determined by external factors. Therefore, both hard and soft determinism theories accept that a person'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 person's predetermined will is not interfered with, it is still accepting the fundamental principle that the person has no independent will of their own; which is just the same as hard determinism.



Psychologist John Watson

T4 Determinism and free will



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

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.

WJEC / Eduqas Religious Studies for A Level Year 2 and A2 Religion and Ethics

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.

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 150 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 people are determined by internal causes but are free from external causes, is supported by the language used by people. Ayer observed that a person will use the phrase 'caused' when the action is soft determinist. For example, the person 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 person is determined by both an internal and an external cause, the person will use the phrase 'forced'. For example, the person 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 people 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.

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 stark. This is because hard determinists believe that a person's life is totally determined by factors such as environment or heredity. Therefore, if hard determinism holds true and people have absolutely no free will, then the only conclusion that can be drawn is that people have no control over their moral attitudes. This means that all human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value have no worth. They would be meaningless concepts.

The conclusion that human ideas on rightness, wrongness and moral value are valueless has many 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 a person's moral choices are merely the inevitable result of a chain of infinite regress. However, he thought we could be free by understanding and acceptance – understanding that we are part of a bigger whole and seeing that nothing that happens to any of us could have fallen otherwise. Spinoza argued that once we see this clearly we shall stop fretting and we shall become free. Freedom is found by yielding to the inevitable.

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 says that moral choice 'is all a matter of luck'. What Hospers means here is that any moral choice a person makes is not down to any value they may hold. It depends entirely on what set of determining factors caused the choice. As the behaviourist psychologist B. F. Skinner put it: 'Man has no will, intention, self-determinism or personal responsibility'.

The validity of blaming people for immoral acts

The theory that human moral value is a futile concept has several implications. One such implication is to question the validity of blaming people for immoral acts. It would seem unfair to punish people for committing immoral acts if it is beyond a person's control. As 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 students were guilty of the murder. 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. He claimed that 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

This section covers AO1 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)

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

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

quickfire

4.10 Explain why a person is not responsible for their moral actions if hard determinism is true.

quickfire

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

Specification content

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

Key quote

Without free will, we seem diminished, merely the playthings of external forces. How, then, can we maintain an exalted view of ourselves? Determinism seems to undercut human dignity, it seems to undermine our value (Nozick)

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.



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

Key quote

Nature has placed humankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. (Bentham)

Key terms

Normative ethics: the study of how people ought to morally act

Decalogue: a term for the Ten Commandments

is not admissible unless the offender has the free will to select this course'. It appears that Darrow's line of deterministic argument may have been successful because the students were sentenced to life imprisonment and not 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.

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 validity of blaming people 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.

The usefulness of normative ethics

It is also true that if human moral value is a meaningless concept, then the usefulness of **normative ethics** is brought into question. The aim of all normative ethics is to act as a moral guide, helping the person to manoeuvre down the path of **morality** and away from **immorality**. If the actions of a person are predetermined by one or more determining factors then normative ethics becomes redundant. This can be illustrated by considering two contrasting normative ethics: the religious-based deontological Divine Command Theory and the non-religious-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. Divine Command Theory is also of no use if human beings do not possess sufficient freewill to choose to follow those commands.

Secondly, Act Utilitarianism is a non-religious-based ethic created by Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832). He wanted to create a normative ethic that reflected the moral needs of people in society. 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 also presupposes that human beings 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 people 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 accepted by Hobbes and Ayer, states that a person 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 person's will is caused totally by determining factors. Therefore, the conclusions drawn above about hard determinism also stand for classical soft determinism:

- Human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value are meaningless
- It is meaningless to blame people for immoral acts
- Normative ethics as a moral guide are of no use.

But there are other soft determinist theories. These argue that a person's will is not completely pre-determined (as opposed to classical soft determinism). One such soft determinist theory, supported by Peter Vardy, gives a greater role for free will. This is because it argues that some of our determining factors can be overcome. How might they be overcome? Firstly, by using their intellect, people may be able to work out how actions are being determined by the determining factor, such as genetic makeup and conditioning.

Secondly, a person can attempt to overcome some of these determining effects. For example, people may recognise that they have been 'conditioned' to be impatient. Having recognised this, people can sometimes stop themselves from being impatient. This allows people to gain some freedom. It is questionable whether a person can become totally free from determining factors because a person may not be able to recognise and control all these 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 individuals can be blamed for some of their immoral acts and that normative ethics are sometimes be 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. The complexities of 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 Augustine or Calvin, states that all human beings are corrupted by sin because of 'the fall' of Adam and Eve. Sin entered the world as a result of humanity's weakness. One result of 'the fall' was that all people were prone to sin. However, some people will receive

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.

quickfire

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

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.

salvation from God whilst the rest of humanity are left as 'reprobates'. According to Calvin, God therefore has separated people into two groups; one for damnation (the reprobates), one for salvation the elect). The elect are chosen by God to have their sins forgiven through the atoning death of Christ. The individual has done nothing to deserve God's mercy; it is a divine mystery why some are chosen and others not.

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.

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. Augustine and Calvin argued that election is not based upon any merit/good works the individual has undertaken. Neither is it based upon God's omniscient nature to know which person would accept the offer of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God has chosen the elect by his omnipotent will. Therefore, the theory of predestination enhanced their concept of God's omnipotence.

This seems to be present in sacred texts of religions other than Christianity. For example, in the Qur'an it states in 76:30 'But you cannot will, unless Allah wills'. A person can do nothing without God, a human being is totally reliant upon God's omnipotent will.

Often God's omnipotence is seen as connected to God's foreknowledge. Augustine did not see any contradiction between freewill and God's foreknowledge. For Augustine, God does not foreknow what I shall do whether or not I will it. He foreknows what I shall will – eg. what I shall decide. Ilham Dilman (*Free Will: An historical and Philosophical Introduction*) comments that 'What is known in such a case is not that my decision is fixed, somehow taken before I take it.'

Key quotes

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

God knows what we shall will before we have willed it. In that case what He thus knows in advance comes to pass by our willing it. Hence God's foreknowledge does not exclude human agency. (Augustine)

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. As Augustine points out, God would still be just if he left all humanity to damnation because of 'the fall' of Adam and Eve. All humanity is related to Adam and Eve, and all of humanity inherited Adam's sin. Through God's grace, God shows his all-loving nature for humanity, by saving some people, called the elect by Augustine. God did this by sending his son Jesus to die on the cross, so that the elect could receive forgiveness for their sins and be saved. Therefore, God's omnibenevolence is illustrated by predestination.

The above conclusion, however, is by no means universally accepted as an illustration of God's omnibenevolent nature. As both Augustine and Calvin argue, God predestines some people to be elect and thus be forgiven of their sins. The rest, the reprobates as Calvin called them, will not be saved by God. For some, this has grave implications for God omnibenevolent nature. God is punishing and

rewarding certain people on behaviour which only he had control over. Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) stated that God must be ‘a monster’, because ‘A God that punishes or rewards on the basis of God’s own eternal decisions in unfair and immoral’. How could God be omnibenevolent when he predestined such evil events as the holocaust?

This idea of God’s unfair and immoral decisions was taken up by the theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609). Arminius wrote 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’.

Some have taken the theory of predestination to an extreme limit and argued that people’s lives in every detail are determined by God. If this is the case, then God must create and control all moral decisions and actions. God’s omnibenevolent nature can also be questioned because if people’s lives are totally predestined and/or hard determined, by God, then he must also create and control all moral evil.

Furthermore, God’s omnibenevolent nature can be questioned if people’s lives are predestined by God, because people would have no free will. Therefore, people would be like automated robots just carrying out their God given pre-programmed life, with no will power 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. There is a strong case that this kind of 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. The Augustinian and Calvinist theory of election, (i.e. that it is God alone that chose the elect, based solely upon his own will) seems to question the value of prayer. Any attempt to pray to God for salvation would appear to be a complete waste of effort because your destiny has already been determined. For the elect, however, prayer is an integral part of the process by which God establishes a relationship with his people through repentance and the rapport with God that comes from communication between God and his elect.

Calvin supports this 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.

For those who hold the view that not only does God choose whether a person is saved or not, but chooses every detail of a person’s thoughts, words and deeds, the consequences are rather more far reaching. If a person’s life is predestined by God directly, then this brings into question the meaningfulness of prayer. The term prayer comes from the Latin term ‘precariis’ which means to ask earnestly or beg. However, if God does predestine every detail of human life, there seems little point in asking God for anything. This is because this kind of total predestination means that God has already predetermined all events. This suggests that earnestly asking God for anything through prayer is pointless. For example, a person may pray that they successfully get a place at a university they have applied for. However, if this particular extreme theory of predestination is right then it would be a waste of the person’s time to pray. This is because it has already been predetermined whether the person will get that place.



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

quickfire

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

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.

We’ve placed the image most recently supplied to us for this position, however we recognise that the manuscript mentioned about using an image of Muslims at prayer. Please let us know if this image should change – design



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

quickfire

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

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 cannot occur. It is quite conceivable that a predestining omnipotent and omniscient God could have pre-planned all miracles. This is illustrated by Aquinas’ theory of miracles when he distinguished between a deity carrying out miracles directly, which he called a primary cause miracle, and a deity carrying out miracles 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. Again, this could quite easily be 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 nature as the creator and controller of all laws of nature.

Of course it could be argued that if miracles are an act of God and if God has all knowledge of future events, then it must follow that all miracles are predestined because they are determined by God – they are his acts. Even if the miracles are a request from people, God still knows in advance how he will respond and what he will do. So in that sense all miracles must be predestined.



Moses parting the Red Sea

The link between God and evil

The last implication of predestination, for religious belief, is the link between God and evil. If God predestines all things he must also have caused 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 that he is the creator of all evil.

For Augustine, an evil person has something lacking in them, something that limits or impoverishes their life. To do evil is 'to neglect eternal things', to give one's love wholly to temporal things. God is not responsible for the bad use a person makes of God's gift to them. As Augustine put it, 'God is not the cause of sin. (*The Confessions* :Book 2)

It is very doubtful that Augustine or Calvin believed that predestination was total and applied to every action of a person. Calvin argues that God is not predestining a person to be evil but rather that predestination is about a person's inclination to repent and believe.

Calvin clearly stated that the 'elect' could still be sinful but that God chooses to grant them repentance and faith. Therefore, when they sin they cannot resist the calling on their lives to seek forgiveness. This forgiveness is through the atoning death of Christ. Therefore, Calvin's theory could be taken to suggest that evil is humanity's fault and what God does is to decide what that person does with that sin i.e. he grants repentance and faith or not.

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.

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? **Overmatter**
- 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

Issues for analysis and evaluation

Whether moral responsibility is an illusion

This issue is asking us to consider whether people 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.

The challenge of determinism to moral responsibility is from the idea that we are not able to do otherwise. The theory of hard determinism states that a person's life is totally determined by factors such as environment or heredity. Therefore, if hard determinism holds true and people have absolutely no free will, then the only conclusion that can be drawn is that people have no control over their moral attitudes. All human ideas of moral responsibility, therefore, are just an illusion. This point could be supported from a variety of perspectives.

Augustine stated in his predestination theory that people 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 seems to be saying is that if a person 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 person will often choose Y. The person's values of right and wrong are flawed. 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 a person's moral choices are merely the inevitable result of a chain of infinite regress.

However, Philippa Foot argued that because our actions are determined by our motives, our character and values, our feelings and desires, in no way leads to the conclusion that they are predetermined from the beginning of the universe.

The 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 a person 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 person's sense of moral responsibility is an illusion comes from psychologist B. F. Skinner when 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.

Recent research by scientists from the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences has shown that some moments before we are aware of what we will do next – a time in which we subjectively appear to have complete freedom to behave however we please – our brain has already determined what we will do. We then become conscious of this decision and believe that we are in the process of making it. This suggests that free will is an illusion and therefore moral responsibility is an illusion. A counter argument might be that although decisions are unconsciously prepared, we do not yet know where the final decision is made.

However, the above line of argument can be countered. It can be argued that moral responsibility is not an illusion. Libertarians believe a person's moral life is completely free from deterministic factors. Therefore, if libertarianism holds true, that people have absolute free will, then the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the person has moral responsibility. This is because a person 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.

This section covers AO2 content and skills

Specification content

Whether moral responsibility is an illusion.

Key quote

Among physically possible actions, only those which we actually think of are to be regarded as possible. When several alternative actions present themselves, it is certain that we can both do which we choose and choose which we will. In this sense all the alternatives are possible. What determinism maintains is that our will to choose this or that alternative is the effect of antecedents; but this does not prevent our will from being itself a cause of other effects. And the sense in which different decisions are possible seems sufficient to distinguish some actions as right and some as wrong, some as moral and some as immoral. (Russell)

AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

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 quotes

For to act by necessity and in such a way that one cannot avoid the act does not seem to be meritorious or blameworthy...it is not only contrary to faith but it overturns all the principles of moral philosophy. (Aquinas)

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

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 people 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.

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)'. Pelagius is saying 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.

Jacobus Arminius made a similar point when he stated: 'God has limited his control in correspondence with man's freedom'. Arminius is arguing that God does not force his 'will', via the Holy Spirit, onto people. This is because the vital part of morality, for God, is that the person 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 person'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. Human ideas of moral responsibility are vital because in essence, according to Sartre, it is all humanity has. People 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 person's own 'willed' moral choice. 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 people 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 judge actions. 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. 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 appears to have been successful because the killers' sentences were life imprisonment and not 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. They were just repeating what they had seen. Therefore, it can be argued that moral responsibility is just an illusion because people just repeat behaviour they are taught from a young age.

The above point can be countered because the idea that people have free will, and therefore that people 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, as for example, certified mental illness. Rational choice theory is the belief that people are reasoning agents who freely weigh up means and ends, costs and benefits, and make freely willed rational choices when committing an illegal act. Therefore, a court is considered right to punish such people 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 people involved in the riots: 'Those who deliberately participate in disturbances of this magnitude ... are committing aggravated crimes', i.e. the people were committing crimes that they were fully

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 to which 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 argued that God predestined some people to be forgiven and receive righteousness by means of God's grace. It was nothing that they could do themselves.

Calvinists took a similar approach to God's omnipotence. Election is not based upon any merit/good works the person has undertaken. Moreover, it is not even based upon God's omniscient nature to know which people 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 sacred 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 people 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.

Key quote

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

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, people 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 God. Augustine points out that God would be just in leaving all humanity to remain sinful and without God's mercy because of 'the fall' of Adam 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'. 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 through the atoning death of Christ can receive God's mercy and forgiveness and be saved. Therefore, predestination potentially influences our understanding of God's omnibenevolence.

Specification content

The extent to which predestination influences our understanding of God.



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

We've used the caption from the previous proofs here for image 4.29. I hope that we've done correctly. We recognise that the image has changed though. – design

AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

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.

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.

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 people to be elect and thus be forgiven of their sins. Therefore, only some people will receive salvation. The rest, the reprobates as Calvin called them, will not be saved by God and will not be made righteous. For some, this has grave implications for God's omnibenevolent nature. This is because God is punishing and rewarding certain people on behaviour only he had control over. Bertrand Russell concluded that God must be 'a monster' since 'A God that punishes or rewards on the basis of God's own eternal decisions in unfair and immoral'. Therefore, predestination potentially does influence our understanding of God's omnibenevolence. But this time it is the opposite conclusion that can be drawn, i.e. predestination illustrates God is not omnibenevolent.

Moreover, God's omnibenevolent nature can also be questioned because if people's 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? Indeed, 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 people's actions are all predestined by God, because it would mean that people would not have free will. Therefore, people would be like automated robots just carrying out their God-given pre-programmed life; with no willpower to change anything. Again, Arminius argued for free will because he wished to illustrate that: 'man is not an automaton in the hands of God'.

Key quote

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

Another line of argument that predestination influences our understanding of God is that predestination suggests that God intervenes in human affairs with miracles. It is quite conceivable that a predestining omnipotent and omniscient God could have pre-planned all miracles. This idea is supported by C.S. Lewis. Lewis argues that 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 might 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.

In response, it could be argued that even if the miracles are a request from people, God still knows in advance how he will respond and what he will do. So in that sense, all miracles are predestined.

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 people have no control over their moral attitudes because a person 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 person 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.

T4 Determinism and free will

This section covers AO1 content and skills

Specification content

Religious concepts of free will.

D: Religious concepts of free will

Religious concepts of free will: an introduction

As with every Specification there has to be some kind of breaking down and splitting up of material for study. In a sense, this is quite alien to how Academic study works. The study of philosophy, for example, involves a study of logical thought processes in order to establish a sense of truthfulness to material studied. We come across key terms such as empirical, realist, materialist, naturalist and so forth but really it is not as neat as we would like because within each term there is further philosophical debate as to what precisely that term may entail. As a result, different philosophers end up being labelled as specific types of empiricists or materialists. The same is true of theology that attempts to 'box' and 'categorise' different understandings of God in order to clarify specific positions taken.

The whole course you are studying involves an overlap between philosophy and theology by the very nature of being titled *The Philosophy of Religion*. This, too, brings further complications because philosophers and theologians do not always use the same language, approach or methods of analysis. You will have seen this especially in the sections on Finnis and Hoose.

One of the best bits of advice that the present author could offer to any student of philosophy, theology or religious studies is to appreciate the vast richness and diversity of thought, perspectives and approaches that these academic disciplines involve. In order to remember this perhaps we always need to question what is given, and in particular, ask ourselves, 'Is this view, theory or argument presented really as clear-cut as it may appear?'

In terms of the study of determinism and free will in Theme 4 we have already seen variety in the approaches to the issues of the theological ideas related to determinism as presented by Augustine and Calvin. However, we must make an important point here and acknowledge that predestination is not the same as determinism. Firstly, one term is philosophical and the other theological. Determinism covers all human actions; predestination can refer to just human 'destination' (i.e. salvation or not) and not necessarily the path along the way. Certainly in the case of Augustine we have already noted that the issues of predestination are not always straightforward; therefore, this raises the question as to whether or not the juxtaposition of free will and predestination is also as clear-cut? We shall see that there are a variety of positions taken on this.

The philosophy in Theme 4 is a little clearer in that we look at determinism (more specifically, predestination) and free will from an ethical perspective. However, there is also a rich tradition of debate within philosophy that involves what are termed **compatibilists**, that is, those philosophers who feel that the debate between free will and determinism is not at all clear-cut and that there is some merit in exploring views and arguments that suggest the two polarities of debate may actually have some middle ground. Although this is not really studied in depth, it does rear its head in the debate about soft and hard determinism.

It is this compatibilist approach to an issue that will help us to make sense of this section on religious ideas about free will and their implications for religious belief.



We often like to categorise concepts into neat boxes but sometimes it is not as easy as that.

Key term

Compatibilist: the view that one theory does not contradict another (i.e. a person can both have free will and be determined)

We have, on the one hand, a study of the different views of Augustine and Calvin in trying to understand what is actually meant by predestination; in some ways this mirrors the debate between hard and soft determinism in philosophy. We then have, on the other hand, Pelagius and Arminius who offer arguments as to how to understand the concept of free will, and, in the case of Arminius, within the context of predestination.

In some ways the division of free will and predestination is quite artificial for all four thinkers as they are all engaged with the same task. This is trying to make sense of whether the traditional understanding of the nature of God as being in control of and knowing everything (for want of a better word God as the 'Determinator'), is compatible with the notion of free will.

The best way to understand this debate is to reconsider something that was covered in year 1 when analysing the problem of evil. The Australian philosopher John Mackie clearly identified the nub of the issue when he raised his concerns about what he called the **paradox** of omnipotence. The essence of this is that if God is omnipotent, then to suggest there is something that God is not able to control or do then we are admitting that God cannot be omnipotent. In other words, if we allow free will for humanity then how can God be omnipotent?

Mackie's argument about the theodicies offered to answer the problem of evil and suffering was that each one had to re-define and clarify what the word omnipotence meant. That is, 'God is omnipotent but ...' For Mackie this was a failure for the traditional understanding of God because they change the premise of the argument, i.e. the meaning of omnipotence, and thus undermine its validity. The only solution Mackie sees to this is to 'deny that God is a continuing being; that any time can be assigned to his actions at all', or, 'by putting God outside time'; in other words, the concept of omnipotence becomes redundant.

However, for theologians defending God, it was not a failure at all, but rather a clarification of exactly what is meant by the traditional understanding of God, and in particular, the fuller meaning of the term omnipotence.

For instance, Mackie's assumption was that he failed to distinguish between having something and using it. In a sense Mackie definition of God's characteristic of omnipotence is absolute power, authority and strength but something that is a **constant** not just in what it **is** but what it **does**. Therefore, Mackie's own understanding of omnipotence is skewed.

Religious believers can argue that omnipotence has a **definitive absolute** of **being** but also by logic an **infinite** range of **action**. In other words to say God is omnipotent does not mean God can only do omnipotent things; God must be allowed to exercise the full range of possible actions. Similar to Hick's **epistemic distance**, the calculated step backwards is not that God 'gives up' control or 'allows' freedom but that God exercises omnipotence within the full range of possibilities that omnipotence allows.

To return to Mackie's paradox, Mackie had this the wrong way around: it should be 'Can God create something that God **chooses not to exercise/use control over**?' The answer 'yes' is not denying omnipotence at all as God is not **losing** power, but **using** power.



Are free will and the idea of an omnipotent 'Determinator' really a paradox?

Key terms

Epistemic distance: basically a gap of knowledge between humanity and God that God intends in order to allow human freedom

Paradox: a statement of reasoning that appears to be logical but ends up with an illogical conclusion by contradicting itself

Key quotes

This leads us to what I call the Paradox of Omnipotence: can an omnipotent being make things which he cannot subsequently control? Or, what is practically equivalent to this, can an omnipotent being make rules which then bind himself? (Mackie)

It is clear that this is a paradox: the questions cannot be answered satisfactorily either in the affirmative or the negative. If we answer 'Yes', it follows that if God actually makes things which he cannot control, or makes rules which bind himself, he is not omnipotent once he has made them: there are *then* things which he cannot do. But if we answer 'No', we are immediately asserting that there are things which he cannot do, that is to say that he is already not omnipotent. (Mackie)



The theological problem appears to be, 'on balance, how much free will do religious believers have?'

Two sets of Spec Content were given here, is this correct? – design

Specification content

Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of Pelagius.

The role of original sin, humanity maturing in God's image and accepting the responsibility of free will, free will as used to follow God's laws, the role of grace in salvation.

Specification content

The teachings of Pelagius.

For religious believers, then, God, in allowing free will, does give up 'control' but the mistake would be to equate this with giving up omnipotence. Therefore, God does not lose omnipotence, nor do we need to redefine it, simply God chooses as and when to exercise omnipotence, to what extent and how far.

It is this same principle that is at the heart of the debate between determinism and free will from a religious perspective. Augustine, Calvin, Pelagius and Arminius are all seeking an answer to the problematic relationship between predestination and free will. This may seem to challenge traditional notions of how the Christian God could be omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent; but it is not the same way as it is for philosophy.

The key issue from a religious perspective is to offer a solution to understanding the nature of the terms 'predestination' and 'free will' in the light of God's absolute omnipotence. Theologians focus much more on how our choices affect our salvation. Their concern is about whether our salvation is achieved through our own free ethical actions or whether our salvation can only be achieved through God's actions and our choices have no ultimate effect on our salvation.

In other words, theologians ask different questions from philosophers, such as 'how much free will?' and 'how much does God choose to control and determine?' Philosophers are more concerned about such questions as 'do we have free will?' or 'to what extent do we have free will?' per se; they are different because questions from a religious perspective are already encased within the belief in an almighty, omnipotent deity.

In practice this involves positions that are not poles apart as the Specification may suggest. The issue for any religious concepts or theologies is not therefore, are free will and determinism compatible? The answer to this is clearly 'yes'. The issue seems to be to what extent is this compatibility with omnipotence balanced or distributed between the two parameters of free will and determinism?

Therefore, we may find that Augustine and Arminius share much more common ground, despite one defending predestination and the other free will, than do, say, Arminius and Pelagius who both defend free will.

In short, if it helps students and teachers, there is still much debate about the precise nature of the arguments presented.

The teachings of Pelagius: an introduction

Key quote

Pelagius is one of the most maligned figures in the history of Christianity. It has been the common sport of the theologian and the historian of theology to set him up as a symbolic bad man and to heap upon him accusations which often tell us more about the theological perspective of the accuser than about Pelagius. (Evans)

There is a key paragraph from the writing of Pelagius that summarises well his basis for a doctrine of free will. He writes:

You will realise that doctrines are the invention of the human minds, as it tries to penetrate the mystery of God. You will realise that scripture itself is the work of human recording the example and teaching of Jesus. Thus it is not what you believe (in your head) that matters; it is how you respond with your heart and your actions. It is not believing in Christ that matters, but becoming like him.

Pelagius (354–420) was a Christian monk from the British Isles and an **ascetic** monk, more associated with Celtic Christianity (closely linked to the Eastern rather than Western church tradition). He had chosen a lifestyle characterised by **abstinence** from worldly pleasures to pursue spiritual goals. The church historian Robert F. Evans points out that many have seen Pelagius as more of a moralist than a theologian concerned with the 'concrete problems of the Christian life'; however, his theological ideas did direct his ethical views.



Celtic Christianity is often associated with ornate images of the cross.

Whilst in Rome, Pelagius drew the criticism of orthodox leaders for teaching women to read scripture and for spending too much time talking indiscriminately to the public in town. However, for Pelagius, God's image is found in every person and his was a practical Christianity.

In terms of orthodox Christian theology, Pelagius is the 'bad boy', the 'villain' of Christian theology. As Evans explains, 'Pelagius and the heresy called by his name continue to provide occasion for careless slogans and confident postures'. In an article in *The Aisling*, a Celtic magazine devoted to Celtic Christianity and spirituality, Bishop Bennett J. Sims (an Anglican of the Episcopal Church in the USA) confirms the reasons for this scorn by directly relating it to the writings of Augustine and Augustine's influence of the Church throughout history in terms of the teachings of **original sin** and predestination. Bishop Sims also expresses his concerns that the obsession with original sin in the Church reflects the Church's underlying aim of control; he writes:

'If ever it seemed to you that church services were subtly designed to organise your guilt and then, by the standing privilege of an ordained person, offer you a pardon which only priestly officials of organised religion can bestow, you saw through, however dimly, the smokescreen of the control mechanism derived from Augustine's doctrine of original sin.'

As regards Pelagius, there were two main accusations made against him:

(1) Augustine saw Pelagius as the enemy of the grace of God because he rejected original sin; accordingly, for Augustine, Pelagius made the sacrificial death of Christ redundant by suggesting human beings were responsible for their own salvation. Karl Barth continued this accusation in the 20th century, insisting that Pelagius set out a doctrine of man's own self-determination in the place of a proper doctrine of man's being determined by God. The real issue here was that God's role in salvation, as omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent deity, was not recognised. It is God who saves, through God's grace and by faith alone and not through good works.

(2) For Jerome, Pelagius is the promoter of the perfectionism of Origen and his doctrine of sinlessness, who, according to church historian Harnack represented no more than a '**rationalistic moralism**'. This was the outcome of Pelagius' insistence on the autonomy of free will within the context of salvation. Pelagius insisted that it was possible to achieve a sinless life (although whether he meant everyone in practice is debatable).



Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden because of their sin against God.

Key terms

Abstinence: the option taken not to participate in something

Ascetic: the disciplined lifestyle of a monk

Original sin: the sin committed by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden

Rationalistic moralism: the theory that morality is purely accessible through reason and has no need for God

Key quotes

The doctrine that holds an unbaptised child as going straight to hell is the invention of human minds at work to secure the ecclesiastical establishment as a system of control. (Bishop Sims)

All Christians are free to choose for themselves what, for them, is orthodox or heretical what seems to them the straightest kind of searching into the enduring mysteries of God and the world. (Bishop Sims)

Key quote

May it not be appropriate now to insist that Augustine and Pelagius trade places as heretic and orthodox on the commanding mystery of sin and evil? (Bishop Sims)

Specification content

Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of Pelagius.

Despite this 'bad boy' image, the theology of Pelagius on free will and salvation has constantly been the underlying irritant for the doctrine of original sin, Augustine's theology and the theologies within traditional Christianity. Despite its rejection as heresy, Pelagius' theology does still attract curiosity and have a sense of earthy honesty to it for some Christians today. Indeed, the delicate conflict between faith and works is not a new dilemma. Even early Christians did ask if salvation was through faith alone then what do we make of good works? It is well known that James considers this dilemma when he writes in James 2:14–18, 24:

'What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith... You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.'

Indeed, for some Christians the idea of heresy is not as bad as it may sound; it does not necessarily mean that one is a bad person. After all, Pelagius advocated an open-to-all approach to the gospel and the inclusion of women in reading scripture. In addition, considering Pelagius' opening quotation, theology is the human mind attempting to make sense of the divine and thus is not infallible.

There are two possible approaches to the study of Pelagius; namely, a theological approach and a historical approach. Evans chooses a historical approach to understanding Pelagius over against the theological approach. A theological approach, for Evans, may well ignore the hostilities and distortions of historical context; however, abstraction inevitably brings with it its own measure of distortion. For example, a theological analysis does not differentiate between what Pelagius actually said and what people say he said. It also does not differentiate between Pelagius' statements and that doctrine which later became known as Pelagianism. For example, Sicilian Pelagianism does not always sit neatly with what Pelagius actually taught.

Religious concept of free will: Pelagius

For philosophers, free will may be seen as the opposite of determinism. However, free will in a religious context is not necessarily the opposite of the doctrine of predestination. That is because theology is operating within the context of an omnipotent deity, whilst in philosophy, all events are the result of the will of the human being per se. For theology, free will means that God has **given** human beings freedom, particularly when making moral decisions on whether to do good works based on the word of God or to rebel by rejecting the word of God. The outcome of free will for theology is that human beings are responsible for their own actions but not necessarily for their eternal life with God, i.e. to gain salvation or to be separated from God. In contrast, philosophy is only focused on human beings being ultimately responsible for their actions. A religious concept of free will, therefore, can be considered a form of religious libertarianism, that is, a theologically refined form of philosophical libertarianism.

Pelagius was deeply concerned with what he viewed as the low moral standards he found in Rome, the centre of the Western church tradition. Pelagius blamed the debauchery he found in Rome on the predestination theology, later formalised by Augustine's doctrine of original sin, that was prevalent in the Roman Catholic Church. According to Pelagius, predestination suggested that human beings were unable to control their moral conduct. As a result, original sin was seen as an

excuse for their immoral behaviour and so encouraged people not to even try to control their urge to sin. Sins could be confessed and be forgiven.

Pelagius insisted that people were responsible for their own action through freedom to choose good or evil. He wrote two major treatises on free will: 'On Nature' and 'Defense of the Freedom of the Will'. Pelagius was partly influenced by early Christian writers such as Saint Justin (100–165). Saint Justin had written in the 2nd century: 'every created being is so constituted as to be capable of vice or virtue. For he can do nothing praiseworthy, if he had not the power of turning either away.' Pelagius was eventually declared a **heretic** by the Catholic Church at the Council of Carthage in 418. This was mainly due to the writings of Augustine against Pelagius; Augustine was petrified of the implications that a teaching of unfettered free will would bring for the doctrine of salvation.

Pelagius and the role of original sin

For Pelagius, the force of sin does not result from degraded human nature (as for Augustine), but from a corruption and ignorance of righteousness that results from the long-term habit of sin. As Evans writes, 'Pelagius' theology finds its centre of gravity in the problem of man – his nature, his relation to God, and his moral obligation.'

Pelagius argued that human beings were created as rational creatures and had the ability to distinguish between good and evil; this ability, however, is God-given. Natural goodness in human beings is voluntary goodness, goodness that is spontaneously willed. This autonomy, albeit given by the grace of God, is the only way to make virtue meaningful. However, the crucial thing here for Pelagius was the fact that human beings **cannot take credit for their freedom to choose**, this is not willed by humanity but the creative activity of God. In other words, a human being may be able to do good, but they can only do this good because God has allowed them to.

Pelagius' free will theory starts with an interpretation of 'the fall' when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, against the explicit instructions of God. This act of disobedience was the original sin. Firstly, Pelagius restated that one of God's attributes is an omnibenevolent nature. Therefore, according to Pelagius, God would not punish all human beings for the sins of Adam and Eve. Therefore, Pelagius argued that Adam's sin only affected Adam and is not inherited by all human beings. Pelagius rejects the doctrine of original sin.

Pelagius pointed to Deuteronomy 24:16 as evidence to support this claim: 'Parents are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their parents; each will die for their own sins.' Pelagius argued this was a very important point because human beings should not be punished 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'.

This is the crucial point at which Augustine and Pelagius depart. Both thinkers accept free will, however, Augustine is wary that God's sovereign nature is upheld. For Augustine, it is a kind of restricted free will that is demonstrably within the control of the Almighty God otherwise it would imply human beings have achieved their own salvation but also that human beings could become perfect like God.

Key quote

Pelagius is indeed perfectly clear that Adam was in fact the first sinner... that sin entered the world through the one man Adam. By this he means simply that men allowed themselves to follow the example set by Adam in disobeying the will of God. (Evans)

Key term

Heretic: a person whose beliefs are against the laws and beliefs of a specific religion

quickfire

4.17 Why did Pelagius believe that predestination theory was responsible for the debauchery he found in Rome?

Specification content

Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of Pelagius. The role of original sin.



Confession is a key aspect of Roman Catholic religious tradition.

Key quotes

Will is irreducibly characterised by its own freedom of choice as it is related both to the will of God and to the non-human creation. (Stranglin and McCall)

Looking into the face of a newborn child is not to see a soul already corrupted but alight with the beauty of God's goodness. Each child is corruptible to be sure, and quickly, since evil is real and humanity bears the burden of free moral choice. But everything newborn is a gift already cherished by God. This is Pelagian doctrine. (Bishop Bennett Sims)

Specification content

Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of Pelagius. Humanity maturing in God's image and accepting the responsibility of free will.

Key terms

Autonomous: self-governing

Manichaeism: a belief in two equally forceful powers of light and darkness in constant battle against each other

Key quote

If God had simply instructed Adam and Eve to eat from the tree, and they had obeyed, they would have been acting like children. So he forbade them from eating the fruit; this meant that they themselves had to make a free will decision, whether to eat or not to eat. Just as a young person needs to defy his parents in order to grow to maturity, so Adam and Eve needed to defy God in order to grow to maturity in his image. (Pelagius)

Pelagius proposed that it is **participation** in the fallen world that leads to sin and not an inherited tendency. Pelagius argued that to see sin as inherited from Adam and Eve, that is, as human beings we have an inherent element of sin within us, is to fall foul of the doctrine of **Manichaeism**, which incorporated determinism and dualism. For Pelagius, sin was the ownership of the individual soul; to argue that it was inherited means that it becomes a necessary element of human existence and implies that we are essentially dualistic by nature. As Evans writes, 'To make sin necessary would be to deny the nature of will, whose only necessity lies in its capacity both to sin and not to sin'.

Pelagius: humanity maturing in God's image and accepting the responsibility of free will

This idea of participation in the world enabled human beings to engage with their **autonomous** will and choose their actions carefully. Pelagius then went further by arguing that 'the fall' can actually be seen as a good thing for human beings. The gift of free will enabled Adam and Eve to choose whether or not to eat the forbidden fruit; but also in eating the fruit enabled the process of maturity to begin. Pelagius' reasoning was that humans go through a learning process, and, as they do, they grow and mature in wisdom, learning from their mistakes. Part of this process is defiance – just like Adam and Eve – in order to discover oneself how things are. Therefore, in exercising their free will and making their own decisions, the long-term benefits outweigh the short-term pitfalls.

This free will meant that Adam and Eve, and thus all their descendants, became responsible to God for their own actions. Therefore, human beings had gained free will to choose and independently determine either to do good or turn to sin.

Pelagius developed this further in relation to the Old Testament where he identified two clear periods of development and maturity in following God's laws.

The first period is from Adam to Moses. This offers examples of men who did live according to the laws and did in fact lead sinless lives. Such men as Abel, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham and Job, Pelagius saw as men who were equipped with and in touch with their own nature, recognising God's law and enabling them to freely choose to act without sin.

The laws of Moses were introduced as a reminder for human beings, as a remedy for ignorance to their own nature that had the capacity to choose between good and evil. By constant application of the laws, ignorance to this is gradually removed, revealing in the words of Evans 'man's newly polished nature' that would 'stand out again in its pristine brilliance'.



Manichaeism taught that people a dualistic nature battling within, reflecting an elaborate dualistic cosmological struggle between a spiritual world of light and a material world of darkness.



The laws of Moses were there to make human beings aware of their capacity to do good.

Pelagius: free will as used to follow God's laws and the role of grace in salvation

Pelagius believed that human beings can use their free will to fulfil God's moral law (or as Pelagius put it 'do good works'), such as following the commandments. This is because Pelagius believed that since God knows, as our creator, our human capabilities, God would not create commandments that humans could not follow. As Pelagius stated: 'No one knows better the true measure of our strength than He who has given it to us nor does anyone understand better how much we are able to do than He who has given us this very capacity of ours to be able ...'

However, this brings us once again to the heart of the debate between Augustine and Pelagius. For Augustine, original sin ensured that human beings could never be worthy of their own salvation. This was very clear. Paul also stated this in his biblical writings and according to Church teaching it is only through the grace of God as demonstrated in the atonement of Christ that salvation could be received. It is salvation freely given by God. According to Evans, therefore Pelagius was condemned for 'teaching a correlative doctrine of the possibilities of human achievement which appeared to deny the necessity of grace'.

Nonetheless, Pelagius did have something to say about the role of grace in salvation. According to Pelagius there was a role for grace in salvation. Even though many have considered it to be a 'deficient' role in comparison to Augustine's role, it is still there.

So what was the role of grace in salvation for Pelagius?

Pelagius argued that human beings were perfectly able to fulfil the law without divine aid. He continued that all good works are done only with the grace of God. Therefore, Pelagius saw God's grace as **enabling**, not **determining**, good works. As Pelagius stated: 'God helps us by His teaching and revelation, whilst He opens the eyes of our heart. Whilst He points out to us the future, that we may not be absorbed in the present; whilst He discovers to us the snares of the devil ...' Therefore, God is not just acting as a guide to do good works, God is the agent of empowerment that allows us the freedom to do good works in the first place.

Pelagius argued that God wished all human beings to do good and tried to guide human beings towards the good with their own free will. As Pelagius stated: 'Our most excellent creator wished us to be able to do either (be good or bad) but actually to do only one, that is, good.' However, the human being still has the free will **capacity to ignore God's guidance and be sinful**. Pelagius believes this ability to sin is actually a good thing because it emphasises the goodness when a human being does good works. 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.'

Ultimately, Pelagius believed, that human beings do have the free will to choose to do good works, or be sinful, but when their free will chooses to do good works it is by the enabling grace of God. As Pelagius states: 'Free will is in all good works always assisted by divine help.'

Furthermore, Pelagius believed that if human beings, with their free will, do choose not to follow God's commandments and instead sin, that they can seek forgiveness. This is because through God's Grace human beings can be forgiven and thus achieve salvation. Pelagius stated that God grants atonement through the sacrifice and death of Jesus Christ, to all those who freely choose to have faith in him. Therefore, Pelagius is suggesting universal atonement – Christ's death on the cross was for the atonement of all human beings. Therefore, all human beings can achieve salvation.

Specification content

Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of Pelagius. Free will as used to follow God's laws and the role of grace in salvation.

Key quotes

No one knows better the true measure of our strength than He who has given it to us nor does anyone understand better how much we are able to do than He who has given us this very capacity of ours to be able ... (Pelagius)

It is also true that Pelagius' understanding of the term 'grace' is a very deficient one when regarded from the point of view of Augustinian theology. *Should we have a name here? – design*

Our most excellent creator wished us to be able to do either (be good or bad) but actually to do only one, that is, good. (Pelagius)

Pelagius' insistence that men can be without sin is an emphatic assertion of the doctrine of creation by a just God; it is nothing more, and it is nothing less. (Evans)



The cross of Christ was the ultimate source of grace.

quickfire

4.18 Briefly explain why the fall of Adam and Eve was a good thing for human beings.

However, for Pelagius, simply asking for forgiveness is not enough for a human being to receive repentance of their sins. Repentance entails not only freely asking for forgiveness, but also choosing not to sin again. While Pelagius recognises that human beings might, through habit or free will, sin again, he maintains that those sins need to be confessed, and an effort be made to avoid sin and act righteously.

According to Evans, this aspect of Pelagius has been one of the main contributors to misunderstandings of his view. We need to consider his historical, undeveloped view and not that associated with later Pelagianism or that seen purely through the eyes of Augustine.

Indeed, the initial dialogue between Augustine and Pelagius is always seen through the eyes of Augustine – original sin is necessary to ensure that salvation is by the grace of God and through faith alone. There is no in between ground for Augustine. This then becomes the main question and focus: is grace necessary for salvation? The answer can only be if we all have sinned.

However, what we should be asking, according to Pelagius – and to avoid any accusation of Manichaeism – is, 'what is the **role and nature** of that grace that is required for salvation?' For Pelagius, justification by faith alone can take place without respect to human merits but at the same time he also speaks of the 'merit' of faith and deserving the grace of God. As Evans writes, 'Faith "merits" grace in the sense that it is the indispensable and freely chosen condition of the effectual working of grace.' It seems that rather than disposing of the role of grace in salvation as is often understood of Pelagius, instead Pelagius appears to give the role of grace a 'light touch' as it were, rather than the fully-fledged and absolute dependence of Augustine's theology. It is this 'correlative doctrine' between good works and God's grace that opens up Pelagius to the accusation, whether justified or not, that he preaches a gospel of salvation through good works.

In summary, it appears that we are back where we started. Free will allows good works but challenges the nature of salvation; original sin raises the question of the possibility of such depraved creatures achieving good. Augustine was terrified of Pelagius' theology because it suggested that humans have some decisive role in their own salvation; Pelagius was horrified that the idea of original sin was closely aligned with the Manichaean teaching of dual nature as well as being a general excuse not to strive for the moral life.

Maybe both Augustine and Pelagius were not poles apart and that their concerns reflect the possible extremes of challenge to Christian theology; the two sides of the Christian theological coin, so to speak. Just as *sola fide* leads to James' concerns about 'good work', then maybe Pelagius' insistence on morality as a means to salvation naturally throws up concerns about the role of God's grace?

It is clear from the history of Christianity that Augustine won the battle. It is a shame there is no 'middle ground'. However, maybe that is where Arminius enters the debate!

AO1 Activity

Work in groups of four. Firstly, divide the four parts of Pelagius free will theory between you:

1. Pelagius' free will theory – the role of original sin.
2. Pelagius' free will theory – humanity maturing in God's image and accepting the responsibility of free will.
3. Pelagius' free will theory – free will as used to follow God's laws
4. Pelagius' free will theory – the role of grace in salvation

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

Religious concept of free will: Arminius free will theory – denial of predestination

Jacob Arminius was born in 1559 in Oudewater, Utrecht, only five years before the death of John Calvin. His father and mother died whilst Jacob was still a child, leaving a priest, Theodorus Aemilius, to adopt Jacob. After completing his education at Leiden, Arminius travelled to study at Calvin's academy in Geneva. Theodore Beza, a successor to Calvin was the Chair of theology at the university, and he and Arminius became close friends. Later, Arminius challenged Beza's 'high Calvinism' and argued for conditional election and hence a different understanding of predestination. Arminius died in 1609.

Jacobus Arminius (1559–1609) was taught by Theodore Beza, the son-in-law and successor of predestination proponent John Calvin. In his early life Arminius identified as a Calvinist and was a supporter of Beza who continued to promote Calvin's teachings of predestination. Arminius became dissatisfied with Calvinism and rejected Calvin's predestination for a version of predestination that he developed himself. Arminius' predestination was grounded in the theological concept of God's providence and was compatible with the notion of free will.

Key quote

It is important to note that Arminius does not abandon predestination. He is careful, however, to define it with specific reference to Scripture. (Studebaker)

Arminius did not reject or deny predestination. In his very own words:

'The Dogma of predestination and its opposite, reprobation, is taught and emphasised in the Scriptures, for which reason it is also necessary. But it must be seen which and what kind of predestination it is that is treated in the Scriptures as necessary, and which is called the foundation of our salvation.'

In the same way, Arminius was not a teacher of the priority of free will. He instead wrestled directly with the problem that we stated initially at the start, that is, the delicate relationship between human free will and the sovereignty of God. In doing so, Arminius came up with a revised form of **conditional predestination** or **middle knowledge** predestination.

Conditional predestination is foreknowledge without determinism. This type of predestination is linked closely with the idea of **providence**. Providence is the idea that God is closely involved in monitoring and guiding the created world. Arminius writes in his seminal work *Declaration of Sentiments*:

'Providence is a solicitous, continued, and universally present supervision of God over the whole world in general, and all creatures in particular, without any exception, in order to preserve and to direct them in their own essence, qualities, actions and passions, such as befits him and is suitable to them, to the praise of his name and the salvation of believers.'

The notion of providence for Arminius involves both preservation of the world but crucially governance of it. God sustains the universe by being involved in it. Without God's preservation the world would cease to be; without God's governance there would be chaos within it. Rustin Brian observes that 'Arminius agrees that predestination should not be founded upon anything other than God's pure goodness'.

Specification content

Religious concepts of free will, with reference to the teachings of: Arminius. Denial of predestination, the effect of original sin on free will, God's 'prevenient' grace (the Holy Spirit) in allowing humans to exercise free will, the Elect and the possibility of rejecting God's grace, the election of believers being conditional on faith.

quickfire

4.19 How was Arminius associated with Calvinism?



Jacob Arminius

Key terms

Conditional predestination: the complex theological notion based upon the idea that free will and predestination are compatible (see later)

Middle knowledge: a theory developed by Luis de Molina, a Spanish Jesuit priest, that argues God is aware of every computation of possible choices (see below)

Providence: the theological idea that God is closely involved in monitoring and guiding the created world

We've highlighted 'divine concurrence' here. We hope that we've done correctly – design

Key term

Divine concurrence: God 'concurs' human activity through being part of it and providing the powers and abilities to act but does not necessarily approve

Specification content

Arminius: The effect of original sin on free will and God's 'prevenient' grace (the Holy Spirit) in allowing humans to exercise free will.

Key quote

Nothing in life occurs fortuitously or by chance. Both the will and the actions of rational beings are subject to divine providence, so that nothing can be done outside God's control. There is, however, a distinction between the good which God both wills and performs and the evil which he only permits.

(Skevington-Wood)

The key to the governance of the world is the theological idea of **divine concurrence**. Divine concurrence, in the words of Stranglin and McCall, 'is meant to give an account of divine activity in relation to the contingent agency of finite creatures'. God 'concurs' human activity through being part of it and providing the powers and abilities to act. Free will then, nor the actions of any creature, can be outside the parameter of God's providence. However, this does not mean that creatures are merely vehicles through which God acts. Arminius writes:

'The concurrence of God is not his immediate influx into a second or inferior cause, but it is an action of God immediately flowing into the effect of the creature, so that the same effect in one and the same entire action may be produced simultaneously by God and the creature.'

God is the enabler, or one that empowers, but this is not the same as actually performing or doing the action for the creature. This is crucially important for Arminius' idea of free will and his overall theology of how this is compatible with predestination.

Key quote

No creature acts in complete independence of God; without God's preserving activity they would pass from existence, and without God's concurrence they would be unable to do anything at all. At the same time that he preserves, God also gives creatures the ability to perform actions and concurs with their effects. (Stranglin and McCall)

Arminius: original sin and God's 'prevenient' grace (the Holy Spirit) in allowing humans to exercise free will

In regard to sin, Arminius rejected any idea that it is an illusion; however, he was also definitely and resolutely opposed to any suggestion that the origin of sin can be found in God. In line with concurrence, God permits sins and allows sinful acts to occur, rather than making them impossible, but this does not at all mean that God approves of sinful behaviour.

Stranglin and McCall state, 'some things happen because God *does* them, but others because he *allows* them to be done'. Arminius' argument is very much in line with Augustine here: that because God is omnipotent and omnibenevolent, part of God's omnipotent goodness is to be able to produce goods from evils and that this is a far superior solution than to not allow evils at all.



Providence means God preserves and governs the world throughout time.

Key quote

Sin is the result of the abuse of creaturely freedom of choice. Sin was not inevitable for creation. It was not forced upon human creatures by some independent evil force ... it was not forced upon humans by God ... Sin is the result of the abuse of the precious gift of freedom that God graciously bestowed upon humanity. (Stranglin and McCall)

Unlike the earlier free will theology by Pelagius, Arminius believed that original sin, when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, was bad for humankind. For Arminius, original sin is a lack of original righteousness but it is also a punishment. The physical punishments are pain and death but the spiritual punishments are less clear to him.

Arminius considers whether spiritually original sin meant deprivation or depravation. Deprivation is to be deprived of the original spiritual likeness to God, created in his image that existed prior to original sin but has somehow been lost due to the fall of humanity. Depravation is the idea that a certain state was generated, or in Arminius' words 'infused' into humanity because of original sin. Arminius tends towards the idea that the consequence of original sin was to be deprived of, or lacking, what he calls 'original righteousness and of primeval holiness, with an inclination to sinning, which likewise formerly existed in humanity, although it was not as vehement nor so disordered as it is now'. Despite all this, the two meanings of deprivation and depravation have often been conflated and seen as two sides of the same original sin coin.

Therefore, in the fallen state, human beings are deprived of that original righteousness that could so easily seek out good. Despite this, God's providence does give the grace to choose freely the righteous path in life through faith.

Arminius' understanding of original sin means that human beings are not necessarily predestined to continually sin. This is because of God's loving grace. God's grace, for Arminius, is associated with the Holy Spirit. This association of God's grace with God's Holy Spirit is called '**prevenient grace**' because it is God's grace precedes each human moral decision.

Arminius believes that within all human beings God has placed his Holy Spirit. God's subsequent grace works through God's Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit encourages all human beings to do good works. As Arminius stated the Holy Spirit will: 'fight against Satan, sin, the world and their own flesh'. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit will be ever present to aid and assist believers through various temptations. Accordingly, salvation is freely chosen by the righteous but it is not awarded on grounds of merit, as Rustin Brian comments:

'That God might save an infant that has committed no sin is definitely within the realm of possibility for a loving, gracious and all-powerful God. It must also be pointed out that if God elects to do so, it is surely not because salvation is owed, in any way, to any human, let alone an infant. Rather, salvation is the result of God's grace. It is God's hope for humanity, sinful as it is, and it is the hope of God that all might be saved.'

Therefore, despite the encasement of divine providence and the notion of concurrence, Arminius held very strongly that free will was possible within the divine plan. By free will Arminius meant a clear and obvious choice not based upon determinism of causality or context, but a real choice between authentic and actual unconstrained alternatives.

The way this was made possible was through the notion of conditional predestination based upon middle knowledge.



God's providence provides the grace to choose freely a righteous path in life.

Key term

Prevenient grace: God's grace that precedes each human moral decision, associated with the Holy Spirit

Key quotes

Arminius believed that the culpability of that first sin affected, and continues to affect all people, both biologically and socially. (Brian)

In this [fallen] state, the free will of man towards the true good is wounded, infirm, bent, and weakened. (Arminius)

Arminius also believes that God is providentially active in a world marred by sin. Because God is good, he exercises his omnipotence to bring good from evil. (Stranglin and McCall)

Key quotes

Arminius affirms foreknowledge without determinism. In his omniscience, God knows all that exists and he also knows all that will be. Middle knowledge means that God knows the result of any contingent event under any hypothetical set of circumstances without necessarily determining that outcome. (Skevington-Wood)

Arminius wrestled with divine sovereignty and human freedom without sacrificing either on the altar of the other. (Stranglin and McCall)

The decrees of election and reprobation are founded in God's will alone, but salvation and condemnation in time are based on Christ's work and human sin, respectively... Arminius brings Christ back as the foundation of election (not just salvation) and impenitent unbelief as the cause of reprobation. (Stranglin and McCall)

In summary, the notion of divine providence as outlined above, combined with the doctrine of middle knowledge, provided Arminius with the underpinning basis of his theology of conditional predestination. Stranglin and McCall summarise it thus:

'Working from the doctrine of middle knowledge, with its divine knowledge of all possible choices and actions of creatures prior to the divine decision, Arminius is thus able to insist upon a robust doctrine of divine providence. It is one in which the particulars of life are within the overall divine plan – but without divine determinism and its implications for God's involvement with (or "authorship" of) sin.'

Arminius' summarises it as, 'A thing does not happen because it has been foreknown or predicted, but it is foreknown or predicted because it is about to be'. This idea of middle knowledge was developed just before Arminius in the 16th century by Luis de Molina, a Spanish Jesuit priest. Like Arminius, Molina held that middle knowledge did not mean that predestination had to be rejected as God has full knowledge of future contingent events.

Middle knowledge (MK) has certain characteristics:

- MK is prior to any creative act of God (prevolitional)
- MK is independent of God's will
- MK is contingent
- God has full awareness of the various possible outcomes of MK
- MK informs God of what humans would do if a certain scenario beset them.

This aspect of God's providence is the key to understanding the compatibility between free will and predestination according to Arminius.

In order to clarify his position on predestination and salvation, Arminius presented his *Declaration of Sentiments*, a written exposition of his theology, delivered before the states of Holland, at the Hague, on the 13 October, 1608. Arminius' theological ideas, and in particular his ideas on free will and predestination, were never meant to spearhead his thinking. His notions were firmly set within the 'bigger picture', or overall decree, of God's providence. As Stranglin and McCall attest:

'God's decree is one, yet manifold, dealing with all sorts of matters. The general decree about anything concerning the created order is called God's providence; the special decree about election and salvation in particular is God's predestination.'

This overall framework of providence holds that God does nothing without purpose, nor plan. Although God's providence is eternal, this is a logical rather than temporal, and this means that it can be 'enacted in time by various means leading to salvation or condemnation' according to Stranglin and McCall.



God knows all possible outcomes of any possible choices to be made.

Arminius: The Elect and the possibility of rejecting God's grace and the election of believers being conditional on faith.

The Declaration of Sentiments

Rustin Brian writes:

'The issues of predestination and election were so important to Arminius that he risked everything... to defend his fundamental impulse, namely, that all are elect in Christ, and thus have the real possibility of salvation. God does not will that anyone should perish or be damned.'

This is a crucial point to understand about Arminius. His belief was that despite God's providence and middle knowledge, the fundamental principle was that salvation was available to all. All do not choose salvation, but in principle and within the workings of his theology, they could do. However, God's middle knowledge foresees the conditional predestination of humanity. The fact still remains, God's grace and the possibility of salvation are prior to this predestination. In order to clarify his views, Arminius was asked to present them. He did so in what is called his *Declaration of Sentiments*.

The *Declaration of Sentiments* has four sections (decrees).

The first decree is Christological: Christ fulfills roles as 'Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour, Priest and King'. It is through Christ that people receive salvation. This is the foundation upon which the rest of the decrees rest.

The second decree reads:

'To receive into favour those who repent and believe, and, in Christ, for HIS sake and through HIM, to effect the salvation of such penitents and believers as persevered to the end; but to leave in sin and under wrath all impenitent persons and unbelievers, and to damn them as aliens from Christ.'

It is this decree that deals with election and reprobation but according to scholars it is meant to be generic and not about individuals. Stranglin and McCall write, 'It is a decree of corporate salvation and condemnation with reference to the properties of belief and unbelief in general.' Arminius states, 'election to salvation and reprobation to condemnation are conditional. God chooses those who are foreknown to be penitent believers, and he condemns those he knows to be impenitent unbelievers.'

Key quotes

Arminius is careful to differentiate his understanding of man's free will and ability to do good from that of Pelagius ... since it always remains dependent upon the work of God's grace in and through man. (Strdebaker)

God's grace is a 'gratuitous affection' ... It is also an 'infusion' of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit which pertains to the regeneration and renewing of man. It is not, however, irresistible, since Arminius sees many scriptural examples of those who do, indeed, 'resist the Holy Spirit and reject the grace that is offered'. (Strdebaker)

Skevington Wood writes, 'What distinguishes Arminius and Calvinism, in other words, is not that the latter has a doctrine of election or predestination while the former does not. Rather, what distinguishes them is the ground of election or predestination. For Calvinists, election is unconditional. For Arminius, it is

Specification content

Arminius: The Elect and the possibility of rejecting God's grace and the election of believers being conditional on faith.

Key quote

It is, moreover, markedly and deliberately Christ-centred and Christ-controlled. Instead of starting off with God's predestination of individuals, Arminius puts first the decree by which God appointed his Son Jesus Christ for a 'Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour, Priest and King'. (Skevington-Wood)



Jesus Christ is Mediator, Redeemer, Saviour, Priest and King.

Key quotes

God's love is communicated not as an irresistible coercion, but as a tender persuasion that will not finally override the human will.

(Stranglin and McCall)

The stress on prevenient, redeeming, and preserving grace makes it abundantly clear that it is on the basis of God's work in them and not their own that believers are elected. (Skevington-Wood)

conditional, based on God's foreknowledge-middle knowledge, to be precise-of a person's faith.'

This conditional predestination is enacted in the third decree in which God manages, directs and orchestrates the divine plan together through God's wisdom and justice, and, by grace in accordance with what is necessary for repentance and faith.

The final decree is the climax of Arminius' theology in that he identifies the means to salvation through God's prevenient grace; he states, 'grace must still precede the human will to enable any turn toward God'. This is the sharp distinction from Pelagius' thinking. Whilst Pelagius, as we have seen, did have some idea of grace and its role, unfortunately he did not establish how exactly this worked and where it belonged in relation to free will. Arminius does this.

Arminius writes that this final decree is, 'in the foreknowledge of God, by which he knew from eternity which persons ... through his prevenient grace would believe and through subsequent grace would persevere, and also who would not believe and persevere'. Through middle knowledge God knows who will have faith and who will reject his prevenient grace and then persevere in God's subsequent grace to salvation through Christ's redeeming grace.

However, the security provided by the Spirit was conditional on the believers' own will to follow through on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As Arminius stated: 'provided they (believers) stand prepared for the battle, implore his help, and be not wanting to themselves, the Spirit preserves them from falling'. Therefore, a human being's impulse to sin, because of their inherited original sin, is balanced by the work of the God's Holy Spirit. However, Arminius was clear that the Holy Spirit balances the impulse to sin, rather than overrides it, because the Holy Spirit does not force itself on to a human being; it acts only as a God given moral guide. As Arminius states: 'God has limited his control in correspondence with man's freedom.'

Rustin Brian summarises this fact well:

'Arminius maintained that God's divine foreknowledge does not result in determinism and, therefore, that, while God's eternal foreknowledge includes knowledge of all those that will be saved as well as those that will be damned, it does not guide, force, or fate any person into either salvation or damnation.'

Key quotes

God has limited his control in correspondence with man's freedom. (Arminius)

... provided they (believers) stand prepared for the battle, implore his help, and be not wanting to themselves, the Spirit preserves them from falling. (Arminius)



The Holy Spirit guides believers.

AO1 Activity

Work in groups of four. Firstly, divide the four parts of Arminius free will theory between you:

1. Arminius free will theory – denial of predestination.
2. Arminius free will theory – the effect of original sin on free will.
3. Arminius free will theory – God's 'prevenient' grace (the Holy Spirit) in allowing humans to exercise free will.
4. Arminius free will theory – the Elect and the possibility of rejecting God's grace and the election of believers being conditional on faith.

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

Arminius free will theory – Synod of Dort

Several years after Arminius' death his supporters, known as the 'Remonstrants', summed up his free will theory into five points at the 'Synod of Dort' (1619). 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 free will and predestination. The five points presented by the Remonstrants were called the 'Five Articles of Remonstrance'. The five points are basically stated as:

1. Salvation (and condemnation) on the day of judgment is conditioned by the faith (or unbelief) of humankind.
2. The atonement of Jesus Christ is available to all humankind but is limited to only those who trust in Christ.
3. Humankind cannot resist sin by their own will. They need to be aided by the Holy Spirit.
4. The grace of God, through the Holy Spirit is the beginning and continuance of any good, yet humankind may resist the Holy Spirit.
5. Believers are able to resist sin through freely following God's grace. However, on whether a believer could commit apostasy, Arminius declared that this matter required further study.



Synod of Dort (1619)

Key skills Theme 4

The final sections of theme four have tasks that consolidate your AO1 skills and focus these skills for examination preparation.

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 achieved 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 new task is this:** you will have to write a response under timed conditions to a question requiring an examination or explanation of **the implications of free will on God's omnipotent nature**. This exercise is best done as a small group at first.

1. Begin with a list of indicative content, as you may have done in the previous textbook in the series. It does not need to be in any particular order at first, although as you practise this you will see more order in your lists that reflects your understanding.
2. Develop the list by using one or two relevant quotations. Now add some references to scholars and/or religious writings.
3. Then write out your plan, under timed conditions, remembering the principles of explaining with evidence and/or examples.

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:

- 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?

quickfire

4.20 Do the 'Five Articles of Remonstrance' accurately sum up Arminius free will argument?

Issues for analysis and evaluation

How convincing are religious views on free will?

This issue is asking candidates to consider whether the weight of evidence is pointing religious believers into accepting free will. Candidates could approach the above issue from several lines of argument.

One line of argument is that religious views on free will are convincing because they have support from holy texts. This point could be explored from several different religious traditions or a candidate could just concentrate on one tradition. Potential holy texts to support free will 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.'

Therefore, religious texts provide potentially convincing evidence for religious views on free will.

However, the above line of argument could be countered by a consideration of holy texts that suggest human beings are predestined. Again, this point could be explored from several different religious traditions or a candidate could just concentrate on just 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'

Therefore, religious texts do not provide convincing evidence for religious views on free will.

A line of argument that religious views on free will are not convincing comes from theology. Such theological support could come from the predestination theories that have already been studied, e.g. Augustine's 'Doctrine of Original Sin' and Calvin's 'Doctrine of Election'. However, what is more important to say is why these two doctrines work to illustrate that religious views on free will are not convincing. 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. 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. 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

This section covers AO2 content and skills

Specification content

How convincing are religious views on free will?



Religious texts offer advice



The Methodist Church has been influenced by Arminius.

Key quote

The theology of Mormonism is completely Pelagian. (McMurrin)

AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

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.

acceptance of all five of the Calvinist points, namely: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the elect. Therefore, potentially illustrating that theological arguments do not provide convincing evidence for religious views on free will.

However, the above line of argument could be countered by a consideration of theological arguments supporting free will. Candidates could exemplify the ideas of those theorists that have been studied, e.g. Pelagius and Arminius. Again, however, what is more important to say is why these two religious free will theories are convincing. 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 human beings: '... 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. Therefore, theological arguments provide potentially convincing evidence for religious views on free will.

Another line of argument that religious views on free will are convincing is that they support one of God's attributes. As we have seen, monotheistic religions generally attribute the quality of omnibenevolence to their deity. Omnibenevolence is the quality of being all-loving. 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 human beings can achieve salvation by freely follow 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 human beings, therefore, only some human beings 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 human beings 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.' However, free will theory can defend God against such accusations and thus support God's omnibenevolent nature. This point is illustrated in Pelagius' theory. Pelagius argued that when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, to create the 'original sin', God would not punish all human beings for the sin of Adam and Eve. Pelagius argued this was a very important point because an omnipotent God would not punish all human beings through no direct fault of their own. As he stated: 'we (human beings) 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 human beings not to be predestined by inherited sin and thus all human beings 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 human being. Therefore, God's omnibenevolent nature is supported by free will theory because it opens the possibility that all human beings 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 human beings to make their own choices, as opposed to being mere pre-programmed robots. This is because if a human being'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 will power to change anything, 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 automaton in the hands of God'. Therefore, it can be argued that free will views are convincing because it is only free will theory that enhances the notion that God is omnibenevolent.

However, the above line of argument could be countered by a consideration of the theological consequences of predestination on God's attributes. As we have seen earlier, 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 human beings, that He was able to execute. The above point can be exemplified from Augustinian theory. This is because, as we seen, Augustine reacted angrily to the teachings of 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 human being to decide freely whether to be morally good or sinful. The implication of this was that the human being 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 human being could choose their own response to God salvation would become partly dependent upon the human being; therefore, reducing God's omnipotent nature. Therefore, it can be argued that free will views are not convincing because it is only predestination theory that enhances the notion that God is omnipotent.



Key skills Theme 4

The fourth theme has tasks that consolidate your AO2 skills and focus these skills for examination preparation.

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.

AO2 Activity

Now you've read through this line of argument can you 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 the consequences of free will, for God's attributes, mean that religious views on free will are convincing.

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.

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 new task is this:** you will have to write a response under timed conditions to a question requiring an evaluation of **the effectiveness of religious views on free will**. This exercise is best done as a small group at first.

1. Begin with a list of indicative arguments or lines of reasoning, as you may have done in the previous textbook in the series. It does not need to be in any particular order at first, although as you practise this you will see more order in your lists, in particular by way of links and connections between arguments.
2. Develop the list by using one or two relevant quotations. Now add some references to scholars and/or religious writings.
3. Then write out your plan, under timed conditions, remembering the principles of evaluating with support from extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence.

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?
- Does my work show an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation?
- Will my work, when developed, contain thorough, sustained and clear views that are supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence?
- Are the views of scholars/schools of thought used extensively, appropriately and in context?
- Does my answer convey a confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of any possible connections with other elements of my course?
- When used, is specialist language and vocabulary both thorough and accurate?

E: Concepts of libertarianism

Libertarianism defined

Libertarianism (sometimes called Agency Theory) is the belief that human beings are completely free to act. In terms of making moral decisions, the human being's personal will, to do a particular action, is a hundred per cent their own. Therefore, agents are morally responsible for their own actions; they are not compelled to act by forces outside their moral consciousness, i.e. moral actions are not chance, caused or random events, they result from the values and character of the human being. However, libertarians concede that human beings are only free to choose within the constraints of physical natural laws.

Philosophical Libertarianism – Jean Paul Sartre

Philosophical support for libertarianism comes from the French existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980). Sartre's libertarian beliefs were explicitly stated when he argued: 'there is no determinism – man is free, man is freedom'.

Key quote

Freedom is the being of man. (Sartre)

When Sartre spoke about freedom he was not referring to particular cases but rather the distinction between the character of human existence and other forms of existence. He claimed that human beings are unconditionally free regardless of their circumstances and described this aspect of human existence as 'being for itself' (*pour-soi*). This was in contrast to 'being in itself' (*en-soi*) which refers to things that have no say in what happens to it. It lacks consciousness and its destiny is not its own.

Sartre argued that a person is conscious of their own existence, i.e. a self-consciousness. It was this consciousness that enables human beings to have free will. Sartre believed that self-consciousness enables human beings to think about and consider the different possible futures that might come about from different actions. Therefore, human beings can stand back from their own lives and interpret them in different ways. This, according to Sartre, opens up a distance between a person's consciousness and the physical world, with its potentially determining influences. Sartre refers to this as 'the gap' and it is this gap that allows human beings to have free will. Therefore, a person is capable of making choices and these make a difference to what happens to them. Their actions are not triggered causally, but are responses to their appraisal of the situations they meet in life and the significance they see in things.

Sartre further argued that 'there is no God, so man must rely upon his own fallible will and moral insight. He cannot escape choosing.' In other words, because there is no God there is no higher power controlling human beings. Therefore, humankind is condemned to freedom, i.e. they have no choice but to embrace freedom. The irony of this was not lost on Sartre when he argued humankind is totally free to make decisions with one exception: 'man is not free not to be free'. Novelist Isaac B. Singer had the same idea when he stated: 'We must believe in free will, we have no choice.'

According to Sartre, humankind's freedom is obvious because of the way they go about trying to deny their own freedom. He believed freedom can bring pain and anguish; and therefore, people try to avoid the reality of their own freedom.

This section covers AO1 content and skills

Specification content

Philosophical (Jean-Paul Sartre: man is not free not to be free, waiter illustration).

quickfire

- 4.21 Libertarians accept that human behaviour is still constrained by what?



French existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre

Key terms

En-soi: animals are unable to grasp their own free will because they are 'beings in themselves', i.e. they have no self-consciousness

Pour-soi: human ability to grasp free will because human beings are 'beings for themselves', i.e. they have possession of a self-consciousness

The gap: the distance between a person's consciousness and the physical world, with its potentially determining influences; it is this gap that allows people to have free will

Key quote

Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. (Sartre)

quickfire

- 4.22 Give two ways in which 'being in itself' differs from 'being for itself'.

Key quotes

Life has no meaning *a priori* ... It is up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing but the meaning that you choose. (Sartre)

We are our choices. (Sartre)

Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. (Sartre)

We only become what we are by the radical and deep-seated refusal of that which others have made of us. (Sartre)

Freedom is what you do with what's been done to you. (Sartre)

Once we know and we are aware, we are responsible for our action and inaction. We can do something about it or ignore it. Either way, we are still responsible. (Sartre)

quickfire

- 4.23 What is meant by 'bad faith'?

quickfire

- 4.24 What example did Sartre use to illustrate bad faith?

Key terms

Bad faith: an attempt by people, to escape pain and anguish by pretending to themselves that they are not free

Existentialism: existentialism theory states that existence comes before essence, i.e. human beings are not born with a particular predetermined nature, instead they must create one for themselves as they go through life

They, according to Sartre, create a self-deception; which he called 'bad faith'. Bad faith is the attempt, by human beings, to escape pain and anguish by pretending to themselves that they are not free. People try to convince themselves that their attitudes and actions are determined by their character, their situation, their role in life, or anything other than themselves.

Sartre illustrated this point with the example of a cafe waiter. The cafe waiter's movements and conversation are a little too 'waiter-esque'. Sartre explains what he means by this: 'The waiter's voice oozes with an eagerness to please; he carries food rigidly and ostentatiously; his movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid.' Ultimately, the cafe waiter is doing his job just a little too keenly; he is, according to Sartre, just 'acting the part' of the waiter. For Sartre, the waiter's exaggerated behaviour illustrates that he is play acting as a waiter. He has become an automaton whose essence is to be a waiter, i.e. that this particular role of a waiter determines his every action and attitude. However, Sartre argues that the way the waiter is acting belies that he is ultimately aware that he is not merely a waiter, but is freely deceiving himself. Through bad faith, the waiter is denying his own freedom, by actively using this freedom itself to do so. The waiter ultimately knows that he is free and could give up being a waiter at any time, but freely denies this to himself. Therefore, for Sartre, bad faith is paradoxical in nature because when acting in bad faith, a person is ultimately aware they are free. According to Sartre, a person is not essentially anything they do not 'will' to be.

Sartre is partly using existentialist theory for the above argument. **Existentialism** theory states that 'existence comes before essence'; this means that human beings are not born with a particular predetermined nature, such as a predisposition to be a waiter, but human beings must create one for themselves as they go through life. People, such as the waiter, do this by responding to their experiences of the world, but they are not determined by them, since they are free to choose who they are and how they live. Therefore, Sartre is claiming that people are not simply what they conceive themselves to be, such as a waiter, but they are what they freely 'will' themselves to be.

Sartre therefore rejects scientific psychology since it treats human beings as having a 'positive being', that is as a thing whose being is determined from the outside. For Sartre, a person determines their own being through the choices they make in the way they commit themselves for the future. However, he does not deny the inevitable contingencies of human life, such as where one is born or one's upbringing or one's physical characteristics. He refers to this as being thrown into life. But he argues '... though I am thrown into it, I do not just happen to be there. I grow in it. I choose from it. I make it mine. ... It is this place which thus enables me to engage with my surroundings and it is in these engagements that I become a person in my own right.'

Such inevitable contingencies may appear as a restriction but that is because of what the person has made of them. They are free to revise the choices they have made. If they complain about 'my lot' then they are in 'bad faith'.

In Sartre's view, freedom is both a gift and a curse for human beings. The gift is that, a person always has the freedom of making something out of their circumstances. However, this comes with the responsibility that a person must shape their own lives. With total freedom comes total responsibility. Sartre believed that even those people who wish not to take responsibility for their actions, such as the waiter, are still making a free choice. Therefore, they are still responsible for anything that happens as a consequence of their actions or even inactions.

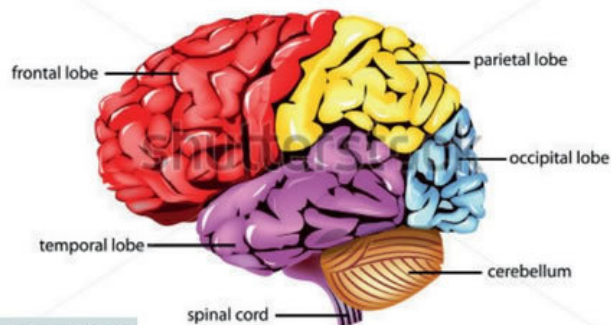


Sartre used the waiter illustration to demonstrate bad faith.

Scientific libertarianism – Dr Angela Sirigu

Traditionally science has been used by determinists to illustrate their arguments, e.g. biological determinism, etc. However, recent advancements, particularly in genetics and **cognitive neuroscience**, potentially support libertarianism.

Parts of the Human Brain



The human brain

One such recent development was by Dr Angela Sirigu and her team, in early 2012, at the Cognitive Neuroscience Centre in Bron, France. They found that free will is sited in a part of the brain called the parietal cortex. Sirigu electrically jolted this region of the brain in seven patients, undergoing brain surgery, each of which were awake during surgery, so they could answer questions. They each claimed to feel a desire to move when they were jolted: such as to wiggle their fingers, roll their tongues or move their limbs. Even stronger electrical pulses convinced patients they had actually done these movements, although their bodies remained motionless. Sirigu argues this tells us that the **parietal cortex of the brain** makes predictions about potential future bodily movements. However, it only sends one specific instruction to another part of the brain, called the premotor cortex. The premotor cortex then returns the outcome of the movement to the parietal cortex. As Sirigu states: 'You need both systems, the parietal and premotor cortex, to generate intention and check whether this is followed through.' Therefore, the parietal cortex goes through a variety of possible movements that could be made but selects just one to send to the premotor cortex that then makes the move. Therefore, at some point the parietal cortex 'wills' what particular movement to make from a variety of potential options. As Sirigu argues: 'What it tells us is there are specific brain regions that are involved in the consciousness of your movement.' Therefore, there is a part of the brain that potentially allows human beings to make a specific decision from several choices.

Patrick Haggard, a neuroscientist at University College London says the above experiment, by Sirigu, breaks new ground on the study of volition or will because it pinpoints the specific part of the brain where volition resides. As he states: Sirigu's experiment is 'extremely interesting, because up to now it has been very difficult for neuroscientists to deal with the idea of intentions or wishes or will'.

Other neuroscientists have also identified possible areas of human free will. Randy Jirtle, a professor of radiation oncology at Duke University, and assistant Robert Waterland, are two such neuroscientists. They found that small changes to a mother's diet could have a dramatic impact on the gene expression of their baby. What they mean by gene expression is that the 'Human Genome Project' may have

Specification content

Scientific (Angela Sirigu's research evidence that the brain allows for free will).

Key quote

Before, genes predetermined outcomes. Now everything we do, everything we eat or smoke can affect our gene expression and that of future generations. Epigenetic switches introduces the concept of free will into our idea of genetics.

(Jirtle)

Key term

Epigenetic switches: code DNA to produce the right proteins for a particular function

quickfire

4.25 Which part of the brain did Sirigu believe free will resides in?

Specification content

Psychological (Carl Rogers: humanist approach, self-actualisation).

Key quote

What it tells us is there are specific brain regions that are involved in the consciousness of your movement.

(Sirigu)

Key terms

Cognitive neuroscience: scientific field that is concerned with the study of the biological processes and neural connections in the brain

Parietal cortex of the brain: one of the four major lobes of the cerebral cortex in the brain

identified the 25,000 or so genes that make up the human genetic code but genes themselves still need instructions for what to do, and where and when to do it, e.g. a human liver cell contains the same DNA as a brain cell, yet somehow it knows to code only those proteins needed for the functioning of the liver. Those instructions are known as '**epigenetic switches**'. However, the greatest surprise of their discovery was that epigenetic switches are sensitive to the environment of the gene carrier, i.e. what a mother eats in pregnancy, her behaviour or surroundings could affect the 'epigenetic switches' and the foetus and thus the health and behaviour of their child. More and more studies have supported these findings; with researchers reporting that, for example, an extra bit of a vitamin, a brief exposure to a toxin, even an added dose of mothering can tweak the epigenetic switches; thereby altering the software of the foetus' genes in ways that will affect an individual's body and brain for life. Through the study of epigenetic switches, it would appear that human beings have control over their genetic legacy. As Jirtle states: 'Before, genes predetermined outcomes. Now everything we do, everything we eat or smoke can affect our gene expression and that of future generations. Epigenetic switches introduces the concept of free will into our idea of genetics.'

Psychological Libertarianism – Carl Rogers

The psychological school of thought called 'Humanism' supports libertarianism theory. Humanism is a psychological approach that encourages the human being to consider their own behaviour, as opposed to the psychologist considering their behaviour. It is sometimes referred to as a phenomenological approach. One of the early founders of Humanism was American psychologist Carl Rogers (1902–1987). Rogers advanced the field of Humanism by stressing that the human person is an active, creative, experiencing being who lives in the present and responds freely to current perceptions, relationships and encounters. Rogers' humanist theory can be interpreted as libertarian.

Rogers starts his theory by conceding that a human being's life can, as supported by Behaviourism theorists, become determined by external conditioning such as: parental, peer or societal pressures. Rogers, however, rejected the permanent deterministic nature of Behaviourism because he believed that the human being can achieve free will through the process that Rogers termed 'self-actualisation'. Rogers argued that all children have their own ideas and thoughts about numerous aspects of life, such as: politics, religion, sexual matters, etc. For such ideas to flourish the child needs an environment that provides them with three elements:

1. Genuineness: the child is in an open environment where they can freely disclose and explore their own ideas.
2. Acceptance: the child is in an environment where they are given unconditional positive regard and love. Unconditional acceptance is where parents, and significant others, accept and love the child for what he or she is. Positive regard is not withdrawn if the person does something wrong or makes a mistake.
3. Empathy: being in an environment where the child is understood by parents and significant others.

Without these three elements Rogers believed a healthy free-willed personality will not develop, much like a plant will not grow without sunlight and water. Therefore, when a child's parents, peers or society disapprove of their thoughts and feelings, the child considers itself to be a rebel and thus thinks their freely willed feelings and thoughts are wrong. The child believes the only way to achieve acceptance from their parents, peers or society, is to forget about their own free-willed thoughts and feelings. In a sense the child rejects who they really are and just acts in a way they think their parents, peers, etc., want them to, i.e. they reject their own 'will' and replace it with the deterministic model encouraged by the parents.

peers, etc. For example, a child may freely 'will' that they are attracted to someone of the same sex; however, because of parental, peer or societal pressures the child will bury away these 'self-willed' feelings.

However, according to Rogers, a human being can regain their own 'will' by going down the path of **self-actualisation**. Self-actualisation basically involves human beings getting in touch with their own real feelings and acting on them. Rogers believed that this was a personal journey that was unique to the human being. As Rogers stated: 'As no one else can know how we perceive, we are the best experts on ourselves.' Rogers believed that if a human being can act on their own 'willed' feelings, the human being is then breaking the chains of determinism and expressing their free will. Rogers believed that it is only as human beings achieve freedom to be themselves that they can fulfil their potential and achieve the highest level of 'human-beingness'. This means that self-actualisation occurs when a person's '**ideal self**' (i.e. who they would like to be) is congruent with their actual behaviour (self-image). Rogers describes an individual who has actualised as a fully functioning person. As Rogers stated: 'The paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change for the better.' Rogers believed that every person could achieve their goals, wishes, and desires in life, if they free themselves through the process of self-actualisation. Rogers called human beings, who were self-actualising, 'fully functioning persons'. Rogers identified five characteristics of the fully functioning person:

1. Open to experience: both positive and negative experiences/emotions are accepted. Negative feelings are not denied, but worked through rather than resorting to predetermined defence mechanisms, e.g. accepting and freely analysing criticism rather than automatically rejecting criticism as a personal attack.
2. Existential living: avoiding predetermined prejudices and preconceptions.
3. Trust feelings: feeling, instincts and gut-reactions are paid attention to and trusted. People's own decisions are the right ones and we should trust our own 'free-willed' choices.
4. Creativity: creative free thinking and risk taking are features of a human being's life. A person does not play safe all the time, but seeks new experiences.
5. Fulfilled life: person is happy and satisfied with life, and always looking for new, freely chosen challenges and experiences.

Therefore, Rogers' self-actualised 'fully functioning person' is very much the based on libertarian principles.

AO1 Activity

Work in groups of three. Firstly, divide the three parts of libertarianism between you:

1. Philosophical libertarianism – Jean-Paul Sartre
2. Scientific libertarianism – Angela Sirigu
3. Psychological libertarianism – Carl Rogers

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

Key quote

The paradox is that when I accept myself just as I am, then I can change for the better. (Rogers)

Key terms

Ideal self: who they would like to be is congruent with their actual behaviour

Self-actualisation: involves the human being getting in touch with their own real feelings and acting on them



Carl Rogers

quickfire

- 4.26 What process, according to Rogers, do we have to go through to achieve free will?

Key quote

As no one else can know how we perceive, we are the best experts on ourselves. (Carl Rogers)

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 achieved by practising more advanced skills associated with AO1. 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 new task is this:** you will have to write a response under timed conditions to a question requiring **an examination or explanation of Sartre's libertarian theory**. This exercise can either be done as a group or independently.

1. Begin with a list of indicative content, as you may have done in the previous textbook in the series. This may be discussed as a group or done independently. It does not need to be in any particular order at first, although as you practise this you will see more order in your lists that reflects your understanding.
2. Develop the list by using one or two relevant quotations. Now add some references to scholars and/or religious writings.
3. Then write out your plan, under timed conditions, remembering the principles of explaining with evidence and/or examples. Then ask someone else to read your answer and see if they can then help you improve it in any way.
4. Collaborative marking helps a learner appreciate alternative perspectives and possibly things that may have been missed. It also helps highlight the strengths of another that one can learn from. With this in mind, it is good to swap and compare answers in order to improve your own.

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:

- 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

The extent to which an individual has free choice

This issue is a very broad discussion about whether human beings have free will. Candidates should consider both religious free will arguments and libertarian arguments when answering this issue.

An initial line of argument that could be used to illustrate that an individual has complete free choice is that holy texts illustrate this. Again, 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 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 90:10 it states: 'And did We not show him the two highroads (of good and evil)?'

Therefore, some religious texts provide potentially convincing evidence that an individual has free choice.

However, the above line of argument could be countered by a consideration of holy texts that suggests that individuals do not have free choice. 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'

Therefore, some religious texts do not provide convincing evidence that an individual has free choice.

Another line of argument is that an individual has no free choice because theological arguments illustrate this. Candidates could exemplify this point by a consideration of the predestination theories they have studied, e.g. Augustine's 'Doctrine of Original Sin' and Calvin's 'Doctrine of Election'. However, what is more important to say is why these two doctrines work to illustrate that individuals have no free choice. 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 one of the Councils of Carthage. The 418 Council of Carthage fully approved Augustine's predestination 'Doctrine of Original Sin' and denounced the contrary view of 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,

This section covers AO2 content and skills

Specification content

The extent to which an individual has free choice.



Qur'an 90:10

AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

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.



Sartre held that we all wore a mask of bad faith in pretending to be what we are not.

AO2 Activity

Now you've read through this line of argument can you 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 psychological arguments do illustrate an individual has free choice.

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.

unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the elect. Therefore, the above official supports for predestination doctrine strongly suggests the idea that an individual has no free choice.

However, the above line of argument could be countered by a consideration of the theological arguments supporting an individual's free choice. Candidates could exemplify the ideas of those theorists that have been studied, e.g. Pelagius and Arminius. Again, however, what is more important to say is why these two religious free will theories are convincing. 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 human beings: '... 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. Therefore, the above supports for free will doctrine support the idea that an individual has free choice.

Another line of argument that an individual has free choice is illustrated in the work of 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 human beings go about trying to deny it. Therefore, human beings create a self-deception of determinism, called 'bad faith'; however, for Sartre these attempts by human beings to escape freedom are an absolute sign that human beings have free will. Therefore, the above supports the idea that an individual has full free choice.

A counter to the above line of enquiry is from the work of philosopher John Locke. Locke argued that human beings believe they have the free will to make decisions because they can pause and reflect before making a choice. However, Locke believed that all such thoughts were just people's ignorance; most agents do not have the intelligence to see that actually there are no choices at all to be made. Therefore, the above supports the idea that an individual has absolutely no free choice.

Another line of argument that an individual has free choice comes the scientific concept of libertarianism. This is because recent developments in neuroscience suggest human beings do have a free will part of the brain. One example of such a study comes from researcher Dr Sirigu. Sirigu 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 human beings have free will.

However, a counter to this could be that the above the scientific concept of libertarianism does not illustrate human beings have free choice. This is because some scientists claim that DNA illustrates all humans have a fixed scientific formula. Therefore, human beings 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 from the moment of conception.

Another line of argument that an individual has free choice comes the psychological concept of libertarianism. This is because Humanist psychologists suggest that human beings can have free will. One such Humanist psychology supporter is Carl Rogers. Rogers argues human beings 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.

However, a counter to this could be that Rogers does not prove the concept of libertarianism. This is because Rogers admits that a human being is conditioned from an early age. Therefore, human beings that do not self-actualise, will remain in a psychologically determined condition. Moreover, behaviourist psychologists, like Ivan Pavlov, Watson and Skinner would argue that the determining effects of conditioning cannot be broken.



Pavlov demonstrated psychological conditioning by his famous experiment with dogs.

The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological views on libertarianism inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism

This issue is asking candidates to consider whether one, or more, of the libertarian arguments they have studied (philosophical, scientific and/or psychological) successfully illustrate that libertarianism is correct, i.e. that it is clear to people that they have free will. Similar arguments can be used from the above discussion but not the religious arguments.

One line of argument that an individual has free choice is illustrated in the work of 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 human beings go about trying to deny it. Therefore, human beings create a self-deception of determinism called 'bad faith'; however, for Sartre these attempts for human beings to escape freedom are an absolute sign that human beings have free will. Therefore, the above philosophical view could inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism.

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Sirigu 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 human beings have free will. Therefore, the above scientific view could inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism.



Locke's example of a locked room

Specification content

The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological views on libertarianism inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism.

AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

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, a counter to this could be that the above the scientific concept of libertarianism does not illustrate human beings have free choice. This is because some scientists claim that DNA illustrates all humans have a fixed scientific formula. Therefore, human beings 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, is determined from the moment of conception. Therefore, the above scientific view could lead people not to accept libertarianism.

Another line of argument that an individual has free choice comes from the psychological concept of libertarianism. This is because Humanist psychologists suggest that human beings can have free will. One such Humanist psychology supporter is Carl Rogers. Rogers argues human beings 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. Therefore, the above psychological view could inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism.

However, a counter to this could be that Rogers does not prove the concept of libertarianism. This is because Rogers admits that a human being is conditioned from an early age. Therefore, human beings that do not self-actualise, will remain in a psychologically determined condition. Moreover, behaviourist psychologists, like Ivan Pavlov, Watson and Skinner would argue that the determining effects of conditioning cannot be broken. Therefore, the above psychological view could lead people not to accept libertarianism.

AO2 Activity

Now you've read through this line of argument can you 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 psychological arguments do inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism.

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.



Self-actualisation is the process through which we have free will.

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 new task is this:** you will have to write a response under timed conditions to a question requiring an evaluation of **whether an individual has free will or not**. This exercise can either be done as a group or independently.

1. Begin with a list of indicative arguments or lines of reasoning, as you may have done in the previous textbook in the series. It does not need to be in any particular order at first, although as you practise this you will see more order in your lists, in particular by way of links and connections between arguments.
2. Develop the list by using one or two relevant quotations. Now add some references to scholars and/or religious writings.
3. Then write out your plan, under timed conditions, remembering the principles of explaining with evidence and/or examples. Then ask someone else to read your answer and see if they can then help you improve it in any way.
4. Collaborative marking helps a learner appreciate alternative perspectives and possibly things that may have been missed. It also helps highlight the strengths of another that one can learn from. With this in mind, it is good to swap and compare answers in order to improve your own.

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?
- Does my work show an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation?
- Will my work, when developed, contain thorough, sustained and clear views that are supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence?
- Are the views of scholars/schools of thought used extensively, appropriately and in context?
- Does my answer convey a confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of any possible connections with other elements of my course?
- When used, is specialist language and vocabulary both thorough and accurate?

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 AO1 content and skills

Specification content

The implications of libertarianism on moral responsibility: the worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value, the value in blaming human beings for immoral acts, the usefulness of normative ethics.

F: The implications of libertarianism and free will

Implications of libertarianism on moral responsibility

The worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value

The implications of libertarianism for moral responsibility are in many ways the polar-opposite of hard determinism. This is because libertarians believe an agent's moral life is free from determining factors; such as God's omnipotent predestination power, psychological behaviourism, biological determinism or universal causation. Therefore, if libertarianism holds true, that a human being has absolute free will, then the only conclusion that can be drawn is that a human being has control over their moral attitudes. Therefore, human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value are meaningful concepts.

The above conclusion is clearly supported by some of the contributors to the libertarian theory examined earlier. For example, in his free will doctrine religious libertarian Pelagius stated: 'Our most excellent creator (God) wished us to be able to do either (be good or bad).' Pelagius also 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.' Pelagius is saying is that God-given free will to do good works or sin is a good thing because it emphasises the goodness when a human being does good works.

Therefore, human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value have worth because the fact we are free to act means our actions are not morally neutral and it acknowledges that there is, therefore, a right and wrong and that we have moral responsibility.

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 the Holy Spirit's 'will' onto human beings because the vital part of the process, for God, is that a human being makes a free-willed choice to decide not to rebel and follow the path of godly goodness. However, some may view Arminius' argument as watering down the worth of human ideas of rightness and wrongness because the Holy Spirit acts as a human being's moral guide, it does not come from the agents own 'will'.

The worth of human ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value are perhaps better emphasised by the libertarian supporters we have considered. This is particularly true of philosopher Jean-Paul 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 rightness, wrongness and moral value are vital because according to Sartre 'existence comes before essence'. Human beings are not born with a particular nature but must create one for themselves as they go through life. They are free to choose who they are and how they live. It is all human beings have. Moral agents cannot blame their moral 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 a human being's 'willed' moral choice. For instance, a human being cannot hide their moral values behind, for example, biological determinism because, as both Sirigu and Jirtle, highlighted, the further science examines evidence, the more it is pointing towards

human beings having free will. This was perhaps best summed up by Jirle when he argued: 'Epigenetic switches introduces the concept of free will into our idea of genetics.' Moreover, the idea that a human being's moral values are determined by social conditioning has also been dismissed by Humanist psychologists, like Rogers. Rogers makes it clear that all human beings can self-actualise and therefore achieve their full potential, including developing their own willed ideas of rightness, wrongness and moral value.

Key quote

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

The value in blaming human beings for immoral acts

The theory that human moral value is a fruitful concept has several implications. One such implication is that there is value in blaming human beings for immoral acts, i.e. it would seem morally fair to punish people for committing immoral acts. This is because the choice of whether to be moral or not is within an agent's own 'willed' moral and thus physical control. Also, with total free will comes total responsibility. Sartre believed that even those human beings who wish not to take responsibility for their actions, are still making a free choice. This is why Sartre stated, 'Human kind is condemned to freedom'.

An idea that supports libertarian theory that there is value in blaming human beings for immoral acts can be found 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 human beings are reasoning actors 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 human beings when found guilty of an illegal act. For example, after the 2011 riots, 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 by Lord Judge, the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, when considering appeals against lengthy jail sentences for some people involved in the riots: 'Those who deliberately participate in disturbances of this magnitude ... are committing aggravated crimes', i.e. the offenders were committing crimes that they were fully aware were wrong. Lord Judge dismissed all the appeals.

Key quote

Those who deliberately participate in disturbances of this magnitude ... are committing aggravated crimes. (Lord Judge)

The usefulness of normative ethics

A further implication of libertarianism is to uphold the usefulness of normative ethics. The aim of all normative ethics is to act as a moral guide, helping a human being use their free will to manoeuvre down the path of morality and away from immorality. As libertarianism holds that human beings have free will, the usefulness of a normative ethic is clear to see. This is particularly true because a human being's free will choice to choose the moral path may be compromised by ignorance of morality. Without a normative ethic to guide the agent's sense of morality, they may become **amoral**, i.e. lacking any moral sense because they are unaware of right or wrong. Let's consider the usefulness of two contrasting normative ethics: Divine Command Theory and Act Utilitarianism.

T4 Determinism and free will



How does free will affect the moral value of what we choose?

WJEC / Eduqas Religious Studies for A Level Year 2 and A2 Religion and Ethics



Normative ethics means following rules.



In response to the death of Mark Duggan, 1566 people were punished by the British justice system.

Key term

Amoral: lacking a moral sense therefore unable to distinguish between right and wrong

quickfire

4.27 Why does a human being need free will to fully utilise a normative ethic like Act Utilitarianism?

Firstly, Divine Command Theory is a normative ethic that states that the status of an action as morally good or bad is based upon what God commands or forbids. 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 is 'You shall not murder'. Therefore, human beings know that murder is morally wrong because God has commanded this. This is not a determinist doctrine because, like all normative ethics, this acts only as a moral guide for the agent. However, it must be conceded that the use of human free-willed reason is reduced in this particular normative ethic. This is because human beings do not need to use their own reason to rationalise morality; it is provided for them; such as 'murder is morally wrong'. However, a human being still needs to freely reason whether Divine Command Theory is or is not the rational understanding of God's eternal moral law. Therefore, whether it is the right normative ethic for them to follow to achieve their freely chosen goal of following God's moral law.

Secondly, Act Utilitarianism is an atheist normative 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 pleasure. As Bentham stated: 'Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure.' From this idea Bentham created Act Utilitarianism, which basically 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 maximum amount of people 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.' Bentham is pre-supposing with the principle of utility that human beings have the free will to select the course of action which will bring about the greatest happiness. For example, if an act of kindness would bring about the greatest happiness then a human being is morally guided by Act Utilitarianism to do this action. However, this is based on the principle that a human being has a free will choice to make, when weighing up whether to help the elderly person across the road.

Therefore, if libertarianism advocates are correct when stating that all human decisions are free willed then normative ethics, such as Divine Command Theory and Act Utilitarianism, are of value.

Key quote

By the principle of utility is meant that principle which approves or disapproves of an action on whether an action augments or diminishes happiness. (Bentham)

AO1 Activity

Work in groups of three. Firstly, divide the three parts of the implications of libertarianism on moral responsibility:

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

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

Implications of free will on religious belief

Background

The concept of free will has many important theological implications for religious belief. Free will, as traditionally presented by theologians like Pelagius and Arminius, states that human beings have free will because they were not totally overcome with the consequences brought by 'the fall' of Adam and Eve. Pelagius argued 'the fall' was Adam's sin only and is not inherited by all human beings. Pelagius pointed to Deuteronomy 24:16 as evidence to support this claim: 'Parents are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their parent; each will die for their own sins.' Pelagius went further by arguing that 'the fall' can actually be seen as a good thing for human beings. He wrote: 'If God had simply instructed Adam and Eve to eat from the tree, and they had obeyed, they would have been acting like children. So he forbade them from eating the fruit; this meant that they themselves had to make a free will decision, whether to eat or not to eat. Just as a young person needs to defy his parents in order to grow to maturity, so Adam and Eve needed to defy God in order to grow to maturity in his image.'

Therefore, in Pelagius' view, Adam and Eve, by eating the forbidden fruit gained maturity by illustrating to God they were ready to receive the gift of free will. This free will meant that Adam and Eve, and thus all their descendants, became responsible to God for their actions. Therefore, human beings had gained free will to choose, for themselves, to follow God's word or rebel. Pelagius, however, was not arguing that a human being was perfectly able to fulfil the law without divine aid. Pelagius argued that **all good works are done only with the grace of God. But Pelagius saw God's grace as enabling, not forcing, good works. As Pelagius stated: 'God helps us by His teaching and revelation, whilst He opens the eyes of our heart. Whilst He points out to us the future, that we may not be absorbed in the present; whilst He discovers to us the snares of the devil' Therefore, God is acting as a guide to do good works. As Pelagius states: 'Free will is in all good works always assisted by divine help.'**

Arminius, unlike the free will theology of Pelagius, believed that 'the fall' was bad for mankind. This is because all human beings inherit this sin from Adam. As Arminius argues: 'In this [fallen] state, the free will of man towards the true good is wounded, infirm, bent, and weakened.' Arminius believed that 'the fall' did not completely determine humans to continually sin. This is because of God's loving grace; God's grace, for Arminius, was associated with the Holy Spirit. Arminius believed that within all human beings God has placed his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit encourages all human beings to do good works. As Arminius stated the Holy Spirit will: 'fight against Satan, sin, the world and their own flesh'. Furthermore, the Spirit will be ever present to aid and assist believers through various temptations. But this security provided by the Spirit was conditional on the believer's own will to follow through on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As Arminius stated: 'provided they (believers) stand prepared for the battle, implore his help, and be not wanting to themselves, the Spirit preserves them from falling'. Therefore, a human being's impulse to sin, because of their inherited original sin, is balanced by the work of God's Holy Spirit. However, Arminius was clear that the Holy Spirit balances the impulse to sin, rather than overrides it, because the Holy Spirit does not force itself on to a human being; it acts only as a God-given moral guide. As Arminius stated: 'God has limited his control in correspondence with man's freedom.' Therefore, all human beings have free will to decide whether to follow the will of God's Holy Spirit or give in to their natural inclination to sin. Therefore, all human beings have the ability inside of them to be saved, if they freely follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, salvation is accomplished through the combined efforts of God,

Specification content

The implications of free will 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.

Key quote

Free will is in all good works always assisted by divine help. (Pelagius)

God has limited his control in correspondence with man's freedom. (Arminius)

who takes the initiative by guiding human beings, and a human being themselves who must respond to God's guidance.

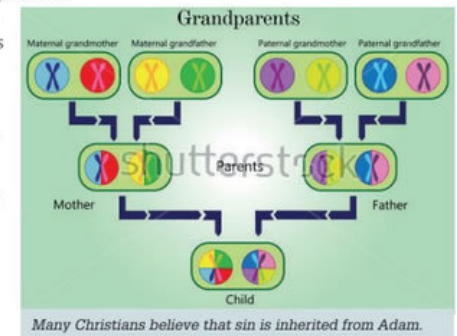
There are many implications of the above free will theories for religious belief, which in many ways are the opposite of the implications for hard determinism. Some of which are addressed below.

The implications for God's omnipotence

Monotheistic religions such as Islam, Judaism and Christianity, attribute the quality of omnipotence to their deity. Omnipotence is the quality of having unlimited power. The concept of free will can seem to question God's omnipotent nature. This is because humanity's free will is an illustration that God does not have the omnipotent quality to execute an eternal predestination plan for all human beings. This point was highlighted by Augustine. Augustine reacted angrily to the free will teachings of Pelagius because his libertarian 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 human being to decide freely whether to be morally good or sinful. The implication of this was that a human being 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 Johnathan Edwards, who argued that the concept of free will was incompatible with individual dependence on an omnipotent God. This is because if a human being could choose, their own response to God's salvation would become partly dependent upon a human being; therefore, reducing God's omnipotent nature. Therefore, according to Augustine, if Pelagius is right that human beings do have free will, then God cannot be omnipotent. Pelagius would have contested this, however.

A consideration of libertarian arguments seems to extend the above arguments. For example, Sartre believed that humanity's free will not only illustrated there was no omnipotent God controlling human choice but was, indeed, a clear illustration there was no God at all. As Sartre states: 'There is no God, so man must rely upon his own fallible will and moral insight.'

However, it can be argued that the above points do not illustrate that free will diminishes God's omnipotent nature. Perhaps instead they show that God illustrates an omnipotent nature in different ways. For example, as we have seen, Arminius argued that within all human beings God has placed his guiding Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit encourages, but does not force, human beings to do good works. It could be argued that only an omnipotent God could have the power to do such a thing for all human beings, especially when balancing omnipotent and omnibenevolent characteristics.



quickfire

4.28 Briefly explain why if a human being has free will can God not be omnipotent.

The implications for God's omnibenevolence

Monotheistic religions also 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 does seem to support God's omnibenevolent nature.

This is because firstly free will theory opens up the possibility that all human beings can achieve salvation by freely following God's eternal moral laws. This seems to reflect more the action of an omnibenevolent God than does the doctrine of predestination. This is because predestination theory, as stated by both Augustine and Calvin, shows that God only appears to predestine some human beings. Therefore, only some human beings will receive eternal life with God. The rest, the reprobates, will not be saved by God and will inevitably not receive forgiveness or eternal life with God. Such a view can be seen to raise questions about God's omnibenevolent nature since God is punishing and rewarding certain human beings on behaviour only God 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.' However, free will theory can defend God against such accusations and thus support God's omnibenevolent nature. This point is illustrated in Pelagius' theory. He argued that when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, to create the 'original sin', God would not punish all human beings for the sin of Adam and Eve. Pelagius argued this was a very important point because an omnipotent God would not punish all human beings through no direct fault of their own. As he stated: 'we (human beings) 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 human beings not to be predestined by inherited sin and thus all human beings had the ability, within themselves, to achieve salvation.

Moreover, free will theory can also enhance the idea that God is omnibenevolent because God is allowing human beings to make their own choices, as opposed to being mere pre-programmed robots. If a human being'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.

However, the above can be potentially countered. The free will theory can be used to illustrate that God is not omnibenevolent. This is because another attribute given by the monotheistic religions to their deity is omniscience. Omniscience is the quality of knowing everything, being all-knowing. Therefore, it can be argued that God must have known that human beings would do great deeds of evil, such as the holocaust, with the free will God allowed all human beings. However, despite this knowledge, God still went ahead and gave human beings free will. This, it could be argued, is not the deed of an omnibenevolent God.

Key quote

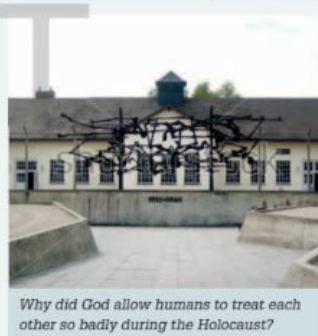
We (human beings) may not seem to be forced to do evil through a fault in our nature. (Pelagius)

The use of prayer

A further implication of free will theory, for religious belief, is the value of the use of prayer. The term prayer comes from the Latin term 'precariis' which means to ask earnestly or beg. If a human being's life is free willed then, it could be argued, this supports the meaningfulness of prayer. This is because prayer can be used to build a rapport with a God, to either seek God's guidance on the right moral path to follow or to seek God's forgiveness for sin. Both these points are consistent with the free will theory.



Would a lack of free will mean that Christians are just God's puppets?



Why did God allow humans to treat each other so badly during the Holocaust?

quickfire

4.29 Briefly explain why free will could be seen to illustrate God is not omnibenevolent.

quickfire

4.30 Briefly explain why free will could be seen to illustrate the value of prayer.

quickfire

4.31 Briefly explain why the theory of free will is incompatible with miracles.

Key term

Theodicy: a religious argument put forward to defend the existence of the God of classical theism but also justifies why God allows evil

Firstly, Pelagius argues that a human being is not able to fulfil God's moral eternal law without divine aid. As Pelagius stated: 'God helps us by His teaching and revelation, whilst He opens the eyes of our heart. Whilst He points out to us the future, that we may not be absorbed in the present; whilst He discovers to us the snares of the devil ...' Therefore, Pelagius believed, that human beings do have the free will to choose to do good works or to rebel against God, but when their free will chooses to do good works it is through the guiding grace of God. As Pelagius states: 'Free will is in all good works always assisted by divine help.' This divine aid to guide human beings down the righteous path could be enhanced with prayer; as a human being opens themselves up to the guiding light of the divine.

Secondly, Pelagius believed that if human beings, with their free will, do choose not to follow God's eternal moral law, and instead rebel, they can seek forgiveness. This is because through God's grace human beings can be forgiven and thus still achieve eternal life. Pelagius stated that God grants forgiveness through the sacrifice and atoning death of Jesus Christ, to all those who freely choose to have faith in him. However, Pelagius argues that sins need to be freely confessed, through prayer. Therefore, free will theory clearly illustrates that the use of prayer has important value.

Key quote

Free will is in all good works always assisted by divine help. (Pelagius)

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 'violations of the laws of nature'. Such 'violations' are often attributed to God. The acceptance of free will theory has a fundamental effect on the belief in such miraculous events. This is because if God has granted human beings free will, then this would raise questions about God's intervention through miracles.

This is illustrated by Aquinas' theory on miracles, when 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; and a secondary cause miracle is where God works a miracle through a human agent. However, both types of miracle involve God influencing an outcome. For example, in Joshua 10:13 in the Judeo-Christian Bible, it is stated that God made the sun and moon stand still so that Joshua could defeat the enemies of Israel. Therefore, God was clearly determining the outcome of a major event, with a miracle. Therefore, overriding any ideas that this event was as a result of the free will decisions by those human beings involved. Therefore, some would argue that the free will theory is not compatible with such an understanding of miracles.

The link between God and evil

The reason why free will theory can defend God against the accusation that God is 'the author of all sin' is that free will gives a human being the 'will' to choose to do good works or to sin. As Pelagius argued: '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, free will theory makes it clear that human beings are responsible for evil acts, not God.

This idea is supported by the theodicy of Irenaeus (130–202). A **theodicy** is a religious argument put forward to defend the existence of the God of classical theism but justifies why God allows evil. Irenaeus argued God created human

beings imperfect. God did this because the purpose of human being in life was to develop and grow into God's likeness. Irenaeus supports this view with a quote from Genesis 1:26 in the Judeo-Christian Bible: 'God said 'Let us make man in my image and after in my likeness.' Irenaeus interpreted this as being made in God's image to mean that God made human beings possessing potential qualities of God's perfection, e.g. a sense of morality. However, to actualise these qualities, of God's perfection, human beings must freely make moral decisions. Every moral decision where a human being chooses to do 'good works' develops that agent into God's likeness/perfection. Irenaeus created an analogy to illustrate the above theory, e.g. God is a craftsman working with human beings as his material and suggests that humans should freely allow themselves to be moulded into God's likeness. Therefore, Irenaeus argues, God had to grant humans genuine and total free will so they could choose to be like God. However, genuine free will opens the possibility of people not only choosing to be good but also choosing to be morally evil. Humans did use their free will to disobey God, causing moral evil in the world to develop, but this is not God's responsibility. This is because, Irenaeus claims, moral evil is a necessary part of life because it enables humans to develop. Without it, decisions in life would have no real value. Virtues such as courage and perseverance, which Irenaeus called 'second-order goods', could never be developed if there were not the challenges in life that tested such 'second order goods'. Therefore, God can never step in to stop potential moral evil occurring because this would compromise human freedom and stop human beings having the potential to develop in God's likeness. Therefore, Irenaeus, in his theodicy, is clearly supporting the idea that free will means that human beings are responsible for the moral evil not God. John Hick added to this point by stating that God also has to allow natural evil. He argued the natural world could not be a paradise. This is because in a paradise there would be no chance of ever causing harm and thus human beings would not be truly free to choose to be like God, i.e. it would be too easy to be like God in a paradise. As Hick stated: 'Our world is not designed to maximise human pleasure but for the purpose of soul making.' Therefore, for human beings to be completely free to make meaningful moral decisions God must allow natural evil, as well as moral evil.

However, the above could be countered, i.e. perhaps God is responsible for all evil even though the actual evil acts are being freely carried out by human beings. This is because even Irenaeus conceded that God created human beings imperfect. Therefore, all sin manifested by an imperfect moral agent is ultimately the responsibility of its creator. Moreover, as was explained earlier, one of God's other attributes, as stated by the monotheistic religions, is omniscience. Omniscience is the quality of knowing everything, being all-knowing. Therefore, it can be argued that God must have known that human beings would do deeds of great evil, such as the Holocaust, with the free will God allowed all human beings. However, despite this knowledge, God still went ahead and gave human beings free will.

AO1 Activity

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

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

Key quote

Our world is not designed to maximise human pleasure but for the purpose of soul making. (Hick)



Irenaeus

quickfire

- 4.32 Briefly explain why the theory of free will might suggest God is not responsible for evil.

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 achieved by practising more advanced skills associated with AO1. 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 new task is this:** It is impossible to cover all essays in the time allowed by the course; however, it is a good exercise to develop detailed plans that can be utilised under timed conditions. As a last exercise:

1. Create some ideal plans by using what we have done so far in the Theme 4 Developing Skills sections.
2. This time stop at the planning stage and exchange plans with a study partner.
3. Check each other's plans carefully. Talk through any omissions or extras that could be included, not forgetting to challenge any irrelevant materials.
4. **Remember, collaborative learning is very important for revision.** It not only helps to consolidate understanding of the work and appreciation of the skills involved, it is also motivational and a means of providing more confidence in one's learning. Although the examination is sat alone, revising as a pair or small group is invaluable.

When you have completed each plan, as a pair or small group 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:

- 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

The extent to which free human beings should follow a normative ethic

This issue is asking candidates to consider whether a human being, with free will, should follow a normative ethic. Candidates could approach the above issue from several lines of argument.

One line of argument is that a free human being should follow a normative ethic because they help an agent use their free will to manoeuvre down the path of morality and away from immorality. This is particularly true because a human being's free will to choose the moral path may be compromised by ignorance of morality. Without a normative ethic to guide the agent's free-willed sense of morality, the agent may become amoral, i.e. lacking any moral sense because they are unaware of right or wrong.

This point is supported with a consideration of a particular normative ethic, such as Act Utilitarianism. Act Utilitarianism is an atheist normative ethic created by Jeremy Bentham. He wanted to create a normative ethic that reflected the moral needs of people in society, which he believed was pleasure. As Bentham stated: 'Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure.' From this idea Bentham created Act Utilitarianism, which basically 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 maximum amount of people 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.' Bentham is pre-supposing, with the principle of utility, that human beings have the free will to select the course of action which will bring about the greatest happiness. For example, if helping an elderly person across the road would bring about the greatest happiness then the human being is morally guided by Act Utilitarianism to do this action. Therefore, a normative ethic is very useful for a 'free' human being because it acts as a guide to morality.

However, the above point could be countered because some normative ethics could be seen to compromise an agent's free will, e.g. Divine Command Theory. Divine Command Theory is a normative ethic that states that an action's status as



The Ten Commandments are an example of normative ethics.

This section covers AO2 content and skills

Specification content

The extent to which free human beings should follow a normative ethic

Specification content

The degree to which free will makes the use of prayer irrelevant.

AO2 Activity

Now you've read through this line of argument can you 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 it is possible for human beings to have free will to follow a normative ethic.

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.

morally good or bad is commanded by 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 is 'You shall not murder'. Therefore, human beings know that murder is morally wrong because God has commanded this. However, it could be conceded that the use of human free-willed reason is reduced by this particular normative ethic. This is because human beings do not need to use their own reason to rationalise morality; it is just provided for them; such as 'murder is morally wrong'. On the other hand, the human being still needs to freely reason whether Divine Command Theory is, or is not, the rational understanding of God's eternal moral law. Therefore, whether it is the right normative ethic for them to follow to achieve their freely chosen goal of following God's moral law.

It is also a big assumption to make to say a human being has free will to use a normative ethic. If a human being does not have free will then the effectiveness of normative ethics can be questioned. As we have seen, the aim of all normative ethics is to act as a moral guide, helping a human being guide an insight into morality and then follow it. However, if a human being is absolutely determined by one or more determining factors then normative ethics become redundant. For example, Divine Command Theory pre-supposes that human beings have a free will choice to follow God commands or not. This is illustrated when some Christians wear a band around their wrists with the initials 'VWJD', meaning 'What would Jesus do?', to remind them to always follow God's commands, as Jesus did, in any moral dilemma. However, if human beings have no free will, as Augustine puts it, 'our will can merely do evil and desire evil', then normative ethics, like Divine Command Theory, becomes utterly pointless.

The degree to which free will makes the use of prayer irrelevant

This issue is asking candidates to consider whether a human being, with free will, should use prayer to interact with a deity. Candidates could approach the above issue from several lines of argument.

One line of argument that free will makes the use of prayer relevant is that one of the attributes of God that human free will suggests is omnibenevolence. An omnibenevolent God would wish to have a relationship through prayer and/or help all human beings as an answer to prayer. Therefore, human free will may suggest prayer is relevant because it would be to an omnibenevolent God. This point could be illustrated through Pelagius' theory. Pelagius argued that when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, to create the 'original sin', God would not punish all human beings for the sin of Adam and Eve. Pelagius argued this was a very important point because an omnipotent God would not punish all human beings through no direct fault of their own. As he stated: 'we (human beings) 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 human beings not to be predestined by inherited sin and thus all human beings 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 human being. Therefore, because God's omnibenevolent nature is evidence, through human free will, then the use of prayer is relevant because an omnibenevolent God, by definition, would wish to have a relationship and help all human beings. The best way human beings can interact with God is through prayer.

However, a counter-argument could be that a human being, with free will, should use prayer because human free will illustrates that God is not omnipotent. If God is not omnipotent then He does not have the power to answer human prayer. This point can

be illustrated by Augustine. Augustine reacted angrily to the free will teachings of Pelagius because his libertarian 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 human being to decide freely whether to be morally good or sinful. The implication of this was that the human being 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. Moreover, Arminius' free will defence of God seems to diminish God's omnipotent nature. This is because Arminius' free will doctrine makes it clear, as he states: 'God has limited his control in correspondence with man's freedom.' Therefore, if human beings have free will this is a clear indication that the use of prayer is irrelevant because God does not have the omnipotent power to answer human prayer.



Religious believers often use prayer for God's guidance in life.

Another line of argument that free will makes the use of prayer relevant is that prayer can be used to build a rapport with a God, to either seek His guidance on the right moral path or to seek His forgiveness for sin. Both these points are supported by free will theory. Firstly, Pelagius argues that a human being is not able to fulfil God's moral eternal law without divine aid. As Pelagius stated: 'God helps us by His teaching and revelation, whilst He opens the eyes of our heart. Whilst He points out to us the future, that we may not be absorbed in the present; whilst He discovers to us the snares of the devil ...' Therefore, Pelagius believed, that human beings do have the free will to choose to do good works, or be sinful, but when their free will chooses to do good works it is through the guiding grace of God. As Pelagius states: 'Free will is in all good works always assisted by divine help.' This divine aid to guide human beings down the righteous path could be enhanced with prayer; as the human being opens themselves up to guiding light of the divine. The same could be argued with Arminius' theory that the Holy Spirit acts as a guide for human beings. The work of the Holy Spirit in a human being's life could be enhanced by prayer. Secondly, Pelagius believed that if human beings, with their free will, do choose not to follow God's eternal moral law, and instead sin, that they can seek forgiveness. This is because through God's Grace human beings can be forgiven and thus still achieve salvation. Pelagius stated that God grants atonement through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, to all those who freely choose to have faith in him. However, Pelagius argues that sins need to be freely confessed, through prayer. Therefore, free will theory clearly illustrates that the use of prayer has important value.

However, the above line of argument could be countered. This is because human free will does not allow for God to use miracles, as an answer to prayer. This is because miracles, by their nature, involve God compromising human free will. This is illustrated by Aquinas' theory on miracles, when 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; and a secondary cause miracle is where God works a miracle through a human agent. However, both types of miracle involve God pre-determining an outcome. For example, in Joshua 10:13 in the Judeo-Christian Bible, it is stated that God made the sun and moon stand still so that Joshua could defeat the enemies of Israel. Therefore, God was clearly predetermining the outcome of a major event, with a miracle. Therefore, overriding any ideas that this event was the result of the free will decisions by those human beings involved. Therefore, free will theory is clearly incompatible with miracles. Even with C.S. Lewis' definition of miracle 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. However, the very nature of God introducing new natural laws strongly suggests that God is somehow compromising human free will. Therefore, no matter which way a miracle is defined it still compromises human free will. Therefore, if God does wish human beings to have the gift of free will then He cannot initiate miraculous events. This, therefore, limits the use of prayer because God cannot use miracles to answer a human being's free will prayer, thus potentially reducing the relevance of prayer.

The degree to which beliefs about free will can be reconciled with beliefs about predestination

This issue is asking candidates to consider whether there is any middle ground between the religious concepts of free will and predestination. Or does a religious believer have to accept one of free will or predestination? Candidates could approach the above issue from several lines of argument.

One line of argument is that it appears clear from the theological arguments between Augustine (predestination) and Pelagius (free will) in the 5th century and/or Calvin (predestination) and Arminius (free will) in the 17th century that there is no middle ground between predestination and free will. Therefore, a human being cannot believe in both predestination and free will. This line of argument was supported by the historical outcome of both the above theological debates. For example, at 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 did not support that free will could be reconciled with beliefs about predestination. 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 did not support that free will could be reconciled with beliefs about predestination.

However, the above line of argument could be countered with a deeper look at some of the theological arguments presented. For example, in Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin he concedes that a human being is born with free will. He argued human

Specification content

The degree to which beliefs about free will can be reconciled with beliefs about predestination.

AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
3. Think of any questions you may wish to raise in response to the arguments.

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.

AO2 Activity

Now you've read through this line of argument can you 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 degree to which free will makes the use of prayer irrelevant.

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.

beings have an 'essential human nature' which is liberum arbitrium. Liberum arbitrium is a Latin phrase that means a human being has the power of making choices that are free from predestination. However, Augustine then argues that concupiscence acts as secondary nature which overrides a human being's essential human nature of liberum arbitrium. Therefore, it could be argued that Augustine is actually putting forward a soft determinist argument not a predestination argument. This is because a human being has two natures, one of which is free willed. Therefore, Augustine's Doctrine of Original Sin could be seen to support that free will could be reconciled with beliefs about predestination. However, it could be argued that the above is an absurd argument. This is because if a human being's secondary nature of sin always overrides their essential human nature of free will, then human beings have no free will at all.

Moreover, Calvin concedes that even the 'Elect' could still be sinful but God pre-destines 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 actually presenting a soft determinist theory not a predestination theory. Therefore, Calvin's Doctrine of Election could be seen to support that free will could be reconciled with beliefs about predestination.

Furthermore, Arminius in his free will theory concedes that human beings do inherit original sin from Adam and Eve. As Arminius argues: 'In this [fallen] state, the free will of man towards the true good is wounded, infirm, bent, and weakened.' Therefore, like Calvin, Arminius believed that if left in this state a human being's natural predetermined impulse would be to sin. However, Arminius argues, God balances this impulse to sin with the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit encourages all human beings to do good works, by acting as a God-given guide to morality. Therefore, all human beings have free will to decide whether to follow the will of the God's Holy Spirit or give in to their pre-determined natural inclination to sin. Therefore, Arminius theory can also be interpreted as a soft determinist approach, i.e. human beings have a predestined impulse to sin but have the free will to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, Arminius' theory could be seen to support that free will could be reconciled with beliefs about predestination.



AO2 Activity

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

1. Pick out the different lines of argument that are presented in the text and identify any evidence given in support.
2. For each line of argument try to evaluate whether or not you think this is strong or weak.
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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.

AO2 Activity

Now you've read through this line of argument can you 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 degree to which beliefs about free will can be reconciled with beliefs about 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.

Another line of argument is that holy texts do not suggest that free will could be reconciled with beliefs about predestination. Candidates can explore this point from several different religious traditions or a candidate could just concentrate on one tradition. For example, in the Bible it states in Romans 8:29: 'For those God foreknew he also predestined...' Therefore, this Biblical verse is clearly illustrating that human beings lives are clearly predestined. Therefore, predestination and free will cannot be reconciled because some holy texts clearly illustrate predestination.

However, a candidate could refer to a variety of religious texts to counter the above. For example, in Matthew 7 Jesus gives an analogy that 'healthy trees cannot produce diseased fruit'. This verse has been interpreted as reconciling predestination and free will. This is because this verse is making it clear that a human being has to choose to do good works or sin. However, once a human being freely starts down the path of righteousness (becomes a healthy tree) they cannot turn away from election (produce diseased fruit). Therefore, predestination and free will can be reconciled because some holy texts illustrate they can.

Another line of argument is that God's attributes do not suggest that free will could be reconciled with beliefs about predestination. Some theologians would argue that God has the characteristics necessary to predestine. God is omnipotent, omniscient, absolute sovereign, etc., therefore predestination is possible. What can be doubted, however, is free will, because if God is sovereign then nothing can happen without God's will or knowledge. If human choice has already been decreed then it is no choice in the real sense of the word at all. Therefore, predestination and free will cannot be reconciled because God's characteristics suggest predestination.

However, it could be argued that God has the power to give human beings free will, but also predestine certain events. Therefore, reconciling the two concepts. God gives human beings free will so that human beings can choose to love Him. However, because of God's omnibenevolent nature He will also occasionally intervene in certain circumstances to predetermine an event with a miracle. This was an idea supported by Richard Swinburne. Therefore, predestination and free will concepts can be reconciled.



Determinism and free will are compatible.

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 new task is this:** It is impossible to cover all essays in the time allowed by the course; however, it is a good exercise to **develop detailed plans that can be utilised under timed conditions**. As a last exercise:

1. Create some ideal plans by using what we have done so far in the Theme 4 Developing skills sections.
2. This time stop at the planning stage and exchange plans with a study partner.
3. Check each other's plans carefully. Talk through any omissions or extras that could be included, not forgetting to challenge any irrelevant materials.
4. Remember, collaborative learning is very important for revision. It not only helps to consolidate understanding of the work and appreciation of the skills involved, it is also motivational and a means of providing more confidence in one's learning. Although the examination is sat alone, revising as a pair or small group is invaluable.

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?
- Does my work show an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation?
- Will my work, when developed, contain thorough, sustained and clear views that are supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence?
- Are the views of scholars/schools of thought used extensively, appropriately and in context?
- Does my answer convey a confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of any possible connections with other elements of my course?
- When used, is specialist language and vocabulary both thorough and accurate?

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.