

## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

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

Issue 1: A consideration of whether religious believers should accept predestination

### AO2 Lines of argument

- Given that God's attributes are omnipotence and omniscience, the only possibility is that God already knows and has ordained our future for us. To suggest otherwise implies that we have power or knowledge that God does not.
- Our ability to reason properly about such matters has been damaged by the fall. As Calvin pointed out, if we contest God's absolute superiority, or try and work out where we are destined to end up, we risk reasoning poorly. We are better to have faith in God's control over the situation and so should just accept predestination.
- To suggest we have free will is contrary to scripture, because St. Paul states: "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son" Romans 8:29. This demonstrates that God has already chosen who will be saved and he knows our ultimate outcome.
- If we accept predestination, then the problem of evil is caused directly by God! To explain how evil exists in a world created by an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God, we need to see that our free will has been the main factor. To suggest otherwise, means that God is the author of evil.
- To suggest that our actions are unimportant for our salvation goes against scripture; "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love". Galatians 5:13 Moral exhortations such as this imply that our actions are important, and it is possible to choose differently.
- If as Augustine states, God chooses only a few for salvation regardless of our lives here on earth, this suggests an impersonal God who damns or saves us regardless of anything we desire. Christianity, however, teaches a God who responds to us in love through prayer and faith.

### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Can we coherently believe in free will and predestination at the same time?
2. Is there anything in Augustine or Calvin's teaching which appears to go against scripture?
3. If we accept predestination, does it matter how I behave now?
4. Does the Love of God rule out God deciding human fates prior to human decisions?
5. How important is it that God is omnipotent?

### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. It is vital that humanity accept God's power over all things if there is to be any consistency in the Christian faith.
2. To accept predestination means that God is not omnibenevolent, personal and compassionate. Such teaching devalues God's creative work and renders our lives on earth as futile.
3. It does not matter whether a religious believer accepts predestination or not. If God has predestined us, then he has done so regardless of our faith in this concept.

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### Issue 2: The extent to which God predestines humanity

#### AO2 Lines of argument

- God must predestine us fully, because his theistic qualities require that he have full power and knowledge from the moment he has conceived of us. If there were any area of the existence of humanity, over which God did not have full control, then he would not be God.
- It is vital that God has predestined us fully because humanity cannot be trusted to be responsible for our own destiny. As 'massa peccati' after the fall, we have demonstrated that we are incapable of any good action without God's direction.
- It is logical to believe that there was once free will because we were created in God's image (Genesis 1:27) and then turned away, but now it makes more sense to say that we are predestined because it is the only way God can save us from our mistake.
- Predestination is really only God's foreknowledge. It makes sense to say that the transcendent God knows what we will choose for ourselves. Hence, we are predestined, but we are also free.
- Predestination cannot be true at all if we are to accept that God is loving. A loving God would not condemn anyone to eternal damnation unless it was what they freely chose for themselves with the full knowledge of what they were choosing.
- Predestination in any form makes human life futile. A central part of human existence for Christians is that they pray and have a relationship with God. This requires the ability for humans to choose and to change. Predestination of any kind makes this impossible.

#### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Are there any scientific errors in Augustine's theology?
2. Is there any logical way that we can be both predestined and free at the same time?
3. If God knows what we will do but does not control it, does this compromise his omnipotence?
4. What difference does it make that the Bible teaches both free will and predestination?
5. Is there any way that we can be a little bit predestined?

#### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. We must be completely predestined by God in terms of our actions on earth now, and our ultimate destination after death.
2. We cannot be predestined by God at all if he is going to judge us on the last day. To have a system of judgement, reward and punishment, requires that humanity make their good and bad choices independently of divine interference.
3. It is possible that any theology that includes predestination, can also retain a concept of free will. Augustine's theology maintained that we began free and then fell into our second nature of predestination. Scripture maintains both are true.

## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

### B: Concepts of determinism

**Issue 3:** The extent to which philosophical, scientific and /or psychological determinism illustrate that humanity has no free will

#### AO2 Lines of argument

- We are strongly affected by events in our lives; thus, we cannot escape determinism. Pavlov's experiments were the tip of the iceberg and now we can look to modern animal training, child rearing and psychological treatment techniques to see that we are conditioned not free.
- The information that science now has on our genetic predispositions, coupled with conditioning from society, means that we must be determined. Genes are responsible for every element of us (both physical and mental). There are even genes for certain illnesses as well as behaviours such as a tendency to be violent.
- If there are external causes that influence our lives, then we cannot be considered free. Universal causality is the premise of many religious arguments; for example, the cosmological and teleological arguments and so it makes sense to argue that we are no exception.
- Scientific determinism is not proven beyond a doubt. Whilst we know that genes are a powerful indicator over behaviour, they can be overridden by some life experiences. This means that whilst causality still operates, it is not set in stone. Provided a person is not constrained by their genes, there is no reason not to call them free.
- Locke's sleeping man analogy is flawed, Locke has us believe that we are locked into the room without our knowledge. However in the analogy, the man could have got up and tried the door, thus discovering he is locked in. Thus, in the analogy, the man did have a free will. Maybe we do too.
- We experience being free to make our own decisions. No theory of determinism can explain the human experience of knowing the choices available to us, deliberating and then choosing one over another. The feeling of freedom is overwhelming evidence that we are free. The Principle of Credulity from Swinburne states that if it seems as if we are free, then we probably are.

**Key questions that may arise could be:**

1. Science works on the assumption that every effect has a cause. All successful scientific experimentation has been based on this truth.
2. Psychological determinism is demonstrated repeatedly in our approach to animal training, child rearing and crime.
3. The religious arguments for the existence of God work upon the assumption that there is a cause and effect for every event.
4. The debate focuses on contrasting free will with determinism, but it is possible that there is no contrast.
5. Caused behaviour may not be the same as forced behaviour.
6. Human experience is that we are free, not determined.

**Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:**

1. Is one Hard Determinist approach more convincing than any of the others?
2. If psychological determinism is right, then is there any point in punishing people for crimes?
3. Can the conclusions of science override my experience of being free?
4. Do determinist philosophers make choices?
5. Does it matter how I behave?

## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

### B: Concepts of determinism

#### Issue 4: Strengths and weaknesses of Hard and/or Soft Determinism

##### AO2 Lines of argument

- Hard Determinism has a very strong case because it is based upon empirical evidence which has been through the process of constant testing and experimentation.
- Psychological determinism is part and parcel of the way we treat each other. For example, our legal system depends upon the idea that we can deter people from committing crimes or rehabilitate offenders. If this is the case, then determinism has a powerful argument.
- Soft Determinism/compatibilism is convincing. We need determinism to be free, says Ayer, because it is rational to understand that we must be part of a chain of causality so that we are the cause of whatever it is we are to be blamed or praised for.
- Soft determinism has the weakness of being part of a game of semantics. As soft determinists are prepared to alter the definition of free will in order to make sure that we have it, they are not really participating in the argument properly.
- Scientific determinism fails because of the work of quantum physics which demonstrates some randomness in the universe at a quantum level. If this is the case then not everything is caused, which means that there is a chance we might be free.
- Philosophical determinists like Locke seem confused as to their own position. He claims we cannot be free because we cannot act differently, however, he also says we can be called free if we are not constrained. If Locke does not have a clear position, then his argument may be weak.

##### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is soft determinism or libertarianism more successful than hard determinism?
2. What is it that makes an argument strong or convincing?
3. Does human society need to assume determinism in order to function?
4. Is human experience adequate to offer as a challenge to determinism?
5. Is a redefinition of terms a cop-out when it comes to this debate?

##### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. The biggest strength of hard determinism is the wealth of supporting evidence from so many areas of study. It is hard to refute such evidence since most disciplines are in agreement and there are no obvious logical inconsistencies.
2. The biggest strength of soft determinism is that it combines the wealth of evidence from science and psychology in support of causation, with the understanding and experience of choice that humanity shares. This is also the most practical solution because it allows us to punish and reward in a way that is logically consistent with both the concept of free will and the concept of causation.
3. Determinism ultimately fails because it relies too heavily on the assumption that cause and effect operate without exception. Science has begun to demonstrate that this is not the case through quantum physics and if there is one exception to the rule, then the rule is insufficient.

## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

### Issue 5: Whether moral responsibility is an illusion

#### AO2 Lines of argument

- There can be no real moral responsibility for a person's actions if we are causally determined by so many factors such as genes, society and other external events. Moral responsibility requires us not to be forced to act in any way.
- If God has predestined us, then there is no way we can be held morally responsible for the actions we perform. This is the case because of original sin where we are the product of the sin of others. It is also the case for our individual sin which has been ordained by God before our birth.
- Moral responsibility is illusory if God or events cause our lives. This illusion conditions us so that we will be encouraged to behave in ways that are useful to society.
- Either an event is caused, or it is uncaused. Moral responsibility requires causation because otherwise acts couldn't be considered the agents 'fault', they would be uncaused and therefore random.
- Moral responsibility is the result of actions that we perform that are unconstrained. It cannot be illusory since there are options available that we can choose from, and it is the moral agent that chooses between the options.
- No action occurs on its own without wider consequences. Original sin is the source of moral responsibility. Even if we are predestined as a result of it, the original sin was free and humanity involves moral responsibility as a consequence.

#### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. What is the difference between moral responsibility and responsibility in law?
2. If moral responsibility is an illusion, could it still be valuable?
3. What purpose does reward or punishment serve?
4. Is the common feeling of personal responsibility enough to count against it being illusory?
5. What consequences could there be if we find that moral responsibility is an illusion?

#### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Moral responsibility must be completely illusory if we are to acknowledge that we are determined to act by other factors. It makes no sense to praise or blame a tree for its tendency to sway in the wind. Equally, it makes no sense to praise or blame a human for responding to external stimuli when that person could do nothing else.
2. Moral responsibility is a reality regardless of whether we are free or determined. Either way, we must be the cause of an act to be considered responsible for it. To suggest it is an illusion is an immature attempt to shift the blame or the decision making on to others - much as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden when they blamed the serpent for their own mistakes.
3. If moral responsibility is an illusion, it is a necessary illusion. Without it we are immobilised and can make no decisions to act at all. It is necessary for humanity to believe we are responsible so that we can make informed, careful decisions about our behaviour. If we believe moral responsibility to be an illusion, it no longer matters how we behave and so we have no reason to decide one thing or another.

## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

### Issue 6: The extent to which pre-destination influences our understanding of God

#### AO2 Lines of argument

- Predestination means that we can maintain our belief in God as an all-powerful being who we can turn to for help and salvation.
- Predestination influences our understanding of God negatively as being the author of evil in the world and it challenges an understanding of her as a loving parent who cares for her creation.
- Predestination means that everything is certain, and prayer no longer matters. Therefore, Christians have no reason to communicate with God or develop a relationship with God.
- Prayer and our relationship with God is not affected by a belief in predestination, for we can enjoy prayer knowing that God has already because it is simply evidence of what God foresaw would happen all along. It may not affect God, but it is a sign that he has already chosen the believer for redemption.
- Predestination makes sense of the belief in miracles. This is because without predestination God is forced to stay distant from us to enable our free will. If he has predestined us anyway, there is no reason for God to stay distant and so he can intervene in the world to ensure his will is done.
- Predestination does not need to lead us to questioning God's nature as a loving parent. This is because God is beyond human understanding. Christians can therefore simply trust that god is perfect.

#### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Why do believers pray to God; is this a sign of human freedom or not?
2. Are miracles signs of a God who wishes to predetermine our lives?
3. Is there a solution to the problem of evil that does not involve free will?
4. If we are predestined, what does this tell us about God's character?
5. Why is it important that God retains his Theistic qualities?

#### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. The belief in predestination dictates the kind of God that a person believes in. If you accept predestination, you are saying that the God you worship is distant, authoritative and uncaring of individuality. If you believe that there is no predestination then you believe in a God that lacks authority, power and is more like a large human.
2. There is no real influence of predestination upon a believer's understanding of God. Whether you accept Calvin or Arminius, you still believe in that God who has both power and love. Predestination or free will may then influence how you rationalise those qualities, but it does not affect whether you believe God has them.
3. Belief in predestination only partially influences understanding God. There are many other aspects to God's character revealed in the Bible (and accepted by faith) other than the quality of predestining.

## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will – Free will

### Issue 7: How convincing are religious views on free will

#### AO2 Lines of argument

- The Bible says we make choices! Both Pelagius and Arminius offer convincing arguments for free will on the basis that there is biblical evidence to support the idea that humanity is supposed to be free. For example: 2 Corinthians 9:7 says ‘Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the Lord.’ Only belief in free choice can counter complacency!
- Reward/punishment only makes sense with choice! The Christian teaching about Heaven and Hell, as an eternal reward or punishment makes more sense if people have chosen God or rejected him freely rather than if God has marked people out independently from their will or actions. Otherwise we may ask what the purpose is of reward or punishment?
- Choice and not predestination is a better fit with a loving God! Pelagius and Arminius offer a view of God that is much more consistent with his classical characteristics of being omnibenevolent and just. Original sin and Augustinian or Calvinist doctrines of the elect make God the author of sin and allow him to be arbitrary or partisan in his delivery of punishment.
- Both Pelagius and Arminius could be accused of picking and choosing a Biblical basis – avoiding placing weight on the passages that suggest predestination.
- Both Pelagius and Arminius could be seen as rejecting God’s omnipotence since they give the power for our ultimate end to humanity as well as God.
- The doctrine of double predestination claims to take the entirety of scripture seriously. This was recognised early in the Christian church with Augustine and, later by Calvin.

#### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Does the Bible assume that we are free to make decisions?
2. Are the traditional attributes of God (omnipotence, etc.) more compatible with freewill or predestination?
3. What features do Pelagius and Arminius include in their theories that agree with scripture?
4. Is there anything in Pelagius / Arminius’ views that goes against scripture or church teaching?
5. Is the idea of a ‘loving God’ more compatible with having to make free choices in a difficult world or with having those choices made for us?

#### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Pelagius has a convincing view of free will for human beings because his theory reflects the human experience of being free to choose, and directing our own lives, whilst at the same time allowing for God’s authority to reward and punish people for their moral decisions.
2. Arminius is convincing in his views on free will because he allows for a form of predestination that is consistent with the Bible (foreknowledge), whilst accepting that punishment and reward require us to take responsibility for our actions and our own faith in this life.
3. Neither one of the religious views on free will are at all convincing because they emphasise human control and remove any real need for the central role of Christ in human salvation. God is relegated to the back seat, and this is unacceptable in Christian theology.



## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will – Free will

### Issue 8: The extent to which an individual has free choice

#### AO2 Lines of argument

- Pelagius bases his position of free choice on the belief that humans are created innocent with the potential to do good or evil. This corresponds with our sense that babies are indeed innocent and that they are not born in an evil state. However, in a fallen world we are heavily influenced by the habits of others – and so it is easy to sin.
- For Arminius, humans do not have free will after the fall – they need God’s grace, which comes through faith. However, they are able to make choices in terms of developing their spiritual lives. Without this belief, we would be passive and not develop in holiness.
- Predestination was never accepted in any major, early creed of the church. This seems to indicate that, even though Christianity believes in the importance of Grace and Faith, that choice-making is a part of the Christian path.
- Pelagius has all people born innocent of sin. However, if we listen to modern scholarship we know that children learn from external influences. This means that the innocent child learns to sin from their surroundings. This means that they can never really be considered free to make their own choices.
- If God has chosen who to save us before the foundation of the world, it does not make sense to call our choices free.
- Scripture clearly states that we are predestined e.g. Romans 8:28-30 says ‘For those who he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son.’ Therefore we must not have free choice.

#### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is Arminius right about free choice if God knows what we will do in advance?
2. Are infants truly innocent and undetermined?
3. What is the role of ‘Grace’ in the thinking of Pelagius and Arminius?
4. What do most Christian churches officially teach on this subject?
5. Do Pelagius / Arminius’ theories conform to our human experience?
6. Do Pelagius / Arminius’ theories conform to scripture?

#### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Human freedom of choice is supported by both Pelagius and Arminius and their appeal to Scripture and the plain sense of applying reward and punishment to only free human beings.
2. Human beings are not entirely free – both Pelagius and Arminius recognise the power for sin and the need for Grace and forgiveness. In the case of Arminius, the power of sin is such that we cannot come freely to God, though after receiving God’s grace we can make choices about how to best grow in holiness.
3. Belief in God’s omnipotence and omniscience is simply not compatible with freedom of choice. It is theologically compelling to see god as the creator of evil and therefore to see humans as passive and helpless in their sin and their salvation.

## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

**Issue 9: The extent to which philosophical, scientific and/or psychological views on libertarianism inevitably lead people to accept libertarianism**

### AO2 Lines of argument

- Sartre's philosophical libertarianism inevitably leads people to accept libertarianism because our experience of being free to choose is overwhelming and to accept that we are determined, does feel like play acting or 'bad faith'.
- Sirigu has offered the first significant piece of scientific evidence to support free will. Until now all the evidence had been on the side of determinism. Her evidence is consistent with our human experience and so is compelling.
- Many psychological theories (and much of psychological practice) agrees with the insight of Rogers that we can reject our conditioning and grow into unique human beings.
- Sartre's philosophical libertarianism is not based on proof, but a kind of existentialist faith. Yet, there is plenty of evidence to support determinism.
- Sirigu's research only tells us where the event of choice takes place, it does not tell us that the choice we make is free. Just because she has not yet found a cause for why people choose A over B, does not mean there is no cause. The urge to act was still caused in Sirigu's experiments and so we may still be determined.
- Rogers offers no concrete explanation that has not already been challenged by determinism. Freud and others have already demonstrated that our conditioning is so complex and ingrained that we will not know when our actions are conditioned by social factors.

### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Is the evidence for freedom in daily life (repeating mistakes of the past; being held captive by our family-society conditioning) weaker or stronger than the evidence for determinism?
2. Does Sirigu or Roger's work conclusively prove that we are free?
3. What strengths or weaknesses are apparent in the idea that we are born a 'blank slate' and 'make ourselves'?
4. Does it take 'faith' to believe in Sartre's position?
5. What assumptions are made by libertarians?

### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. We must be free as this is proven from science, psychology and philosophy on libertarianism: we make our own free choices and that we ultimately take responsibility for what we do.
2. The evidence on human freedom from philosophy, science and psychology simply serves a desire we have to be called free when in fact all the strong evidence from these disciplines demonstrates overwhelmingly that we are caused. For example, nothing in Sirigu's research suggests that we are free, only that we can identify where decisions are made in the brain.
3. The fact that arguments can lead people to libertarianism does not mean that they are correct. After all, we can be attracted to ideas that have no correspondence to reality.

## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

### Issue 10: The extent to which free moral agents should follow a normative ethic

#### AO2 Lines of argument

- Normative ethics are very useful if we have free will because they act as a moral guide for us as individuals who live within a society. If we are free, then our actions matter, and normative ethics show us the behaviour that will benefit us individually, socially or spiritually.
- Without a normative ethic it would be impossible to praise or blame people for their actions because we would have no standard by which to judge them.
- There is freedom within the limits of a normative system. There is a place in all normative ethics for thinking, calculating and considering. Within Natural Law, for example, one has to determine how human laws can best reflect the primary and secondary precepts. In Utilitarianism one needs to make calculations about pleasure and pain.
- If we are truly free beings, then following the rules of a normative ethic places a limit on our freedom and responsibility (it is acting in 'bad faith') – we need to 'make ourselves' freely without any system.
- Many deontological normative theories such as divine command theory or natural law require a rigid observance to rules that prevent us from acting freely. Rogers thinks that the best way to maturity is to break free of such ingrained restrictive habits and make decisions for ourselves.
- Some normative theories such as utilitarianism or situation ethics are completely subjective in nature since you can justify any decision (despite, for example, utilitarianism's claim to be scientific). We don't fully recognize this because we want them to be objective! They can offer no real guidance; we must figure out our own path.

#### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. What is the purpose of a normative ethic?
2. Do some normative ethical theories require more human choice and calculations than other theories?
3. Does our need for any 'system' mean that we prefer not to be free?
4. How will an ethical theory interfere with our free choices (if at all)?
5. Does choosing to follow an ethical system curtail our freedom – or make us more truly free?

#### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Normative ethics are vital for a free moral agent. It is impossible for us to take responsibility for our own actions unless we have some knowledge of what could be considered a good or bad act. Normative theories provide this information and then we are free to follow them or disregard them, but that decision is then our responsibility.
2. The moment we say that a free moral agent 'should' follow an ethic, is the moment we ask them to voluntarily give up the free will we have been arguing for. As Sartre pointed out, then we do so without guidance at all. This is the only way the responsibility can be completely our own.
3. Following a normative ethical theory can be compatible with human freedom. A choice to follow, or not, any system can show psychological maturity, though we cannot advocate that someone 'should' or 'should not' follow anything.

## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

### Issue 11: The degree to which free will makes the use of prayer irrelevant

#### AO2 Lines of argument

- Free will does not mean that we do not need help in life! Theologians like Pelagius and Arminius argue that we need a relationship with God to know his will for us – prayer develops this relationship.
- Sin is still a powerful reality even though we have free will. Pelagius says that we need everything in our arsenal to overcome it – including asking God for help through prayer.
- Free will means that we can choose to sin (as well as to do good). Even theologians who are against predestination believe it is possible to become so stuck in sin that we lose our freedom of choice. Prayer helps us to obtain forgiveness and strength from God when we have freely chosen the wrong path. This is consistent with free will.
- We could argue that Rogers sees it as a mark of maturity if we can overcome our conditioning to achieve self-actualisation – prayer might help with this. Sirigu has identified the place in the brain where choices are made. If this is a mark of free will then it follows that the decision to pray is an exercise in free choice.
- If grace is ‘irresistible’ (as Calvin proclaimed) or, if holiness is unobtainable apart from predestination (as Augustine taught), then it follows that no amount of prayer can bring us grace; prayer is therefore useless.
- Prayer overrides free will: if God intervenes when we pray, then our free will is actually suspended. Prayer, then, is incompatible with free will. According to Sartre, we make our choices in abandonment and despair which means we cannot rely on God to guide us through prayer.
- Prayer cheapens our choices! If we are truly free to make both good and bad choices, it is necessary for us to live with the results of those choices. Any prayer to ask God to intervene in human affairs causes us to lose our freedom. If I am going to be forgiven every time I sin, do I ever really sin? After all, Rogers does not say we need prayer to achieve self-actualisation.

#### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. What roles does prayer play in a believer’s life?
2. Does having free will mean that we never need outside help?
3. Is prayer a way of avoiding responsibility?
4. Do Christians want God to override their free choices – is that why they pray?
5. If God is both completely free and omnipotent, is prayer useless?

#### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

- Prayer is dangerous because it makes the believer passive and reveals a longing for ‘God’ to determine human life.
- Prayer is relevant because it is simply reaching out for another form of help as we make choices. If prayer is freely chosen it is a sign of maturity.
- Prayer is useless because free will is an illusion – an omnipotent, omniscient and predetermining God has decided our fates.

## Specification Theme 4: Determinism and Free will - Determinism

### Issue 12: The degree to which beliefs about free will can be reconciled with belief about predestination

#### AO2 Lines of argument

- The idea of foreknowledge can be invoked to explain the fact that Christianity calls us to make choices and yet there are verses which suggested that things are predetermined. That is, God could foresee our actions (thus they are predetermined in time) yet not be responsible for our performance of them. Hence, we are also free.
- Scripture gives evidence for both free will and determinism. Since scripture is God breathed, it would be a matter of faith to believe both, even if it doesn't seem clearly logical to us.
- Predestination is known only by God who is outside of time and space. In time and space, we experience making choices. Thus, both are real: we experience the latter, though the former is also true.
- If God has predestined humans, then there is no way logically that it makes sense to say we are free. No decision that we make could make any difference to our future. Any decision we make, ultimately is predetermined and thus illusory. Theological thought would say, too, that reward and punishment make no sense if our actions have been dictated. Modern thought, too, sees predestination as incompatible with free will: thinkers such as Rogers and Sirigu in different ways emphasise the power of choice and, by implication, do not believe in predestination.
- If God is omniscient AND omnipotent it is impossible for human beings to make a decision that he does not control and know about. A God with these qualities is by necessity one who has predetermined our behaviour and thus our eventual outcome. This is not consistent with any concept of us being tabula rasa (a blank slate, free of predetermined goals).
- Free will damages God's absolute authority. It suggests that we can change God's mind or affect God's actions in some way. God as supreme authority over all things must predetermine our behaviour because he is in control and so we cannot be free as well.

#### Key questions that may arise could be:

1. Does 'foreknowledge' need to entail predestination or can an omniscient God refrain from predetermining human life?
2. Could the Bible be giving mixed messages on this issue because the relationship between freewill and determinism is mystery or a paradox?
3. Are humans truly 'blank slates' when they are born?
4. What kind of God (in terms of character) is entailed by religious belief in Free will? What kind of God (in terms of character) is entailed by religious belief in determinism?
5. For Sartre these two themes appear to be incompatible. Is this the case with Rogers and Sirigu?

#### Possible conclusions to some arguments put forward could be:

1. Freewill and predestination are ultimately compatible from God's point of view which is outside of space and time. Inside space and time we experience free will – but this is not the end of the story.
2. Freewill and predestination are not compatible – research in psychology and physiology shows that we are capable of great freedom.
3. Ultimately it is a matter of faith as to which side of the question one comes down on – even if that faith has nothing to do with religion (as Sartre exemplifies).