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Introduction

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Question 2

2* "Good" is meaningful. Discuss.

Exemplar 1 AO1 Level 6, 14 marks AO2 Level 6, 21 marks
Total 35 marks

Good is used often within ethics, to give validation to an act or to help determine the course of action. However, these claims may not stand if we have good has no meaning, as some believers subscribe such as Ayer believe it holds no meaning, as it is just an expression. I will be arguing as to why a non-cognitivist approach presents the 'best argument as to whether a statement has meaning or not.'

Intuitionism states that we know intuitively whether an act is right or wrong. This is an ethical non-naturalist approach (ethical non-natural terms cannot describe moral goods), and we do not need to relate the concept of good to something else, such as pleasure in utilitarianism. We just know what is 'this holds a meaning within us' if we see a bad action, then we simply know within us, there is no argument needed. It provides us with guidance needed, we can use our reason like Aquinas argued, which is innate to decide the best approach which should come with ease. Because this idea of good is innate, it holds meaning, as we can feel it happening when we make decisions, showing how it is a real thing.

However, this innate idea of right and wrong may not be anything more than an emotion. Emotions believe a non-cognitive approach (do not have a true or false) and believe that good and bad hold no meaning because they are just emotions which are subjective. Ayers would agree.
thany highlights know when we say “euthanasia” is wrong. We are just saying that we don’t like it. Because of good-taking moral statements only being emotions, we can not say that good is meaningful as it is not based on any facts. It is an opinion that can change, it is unreliable. Therefore, to say “good” is meaningful is wrong as it is entirely based on the emotions of the user.

All in all, I believe that an innate idea of right and what is good holds no major meaning, as the morals that come from it are just emotional responses to a scenario, these innate ideas can easily change along with our emotions, showing how there is little meaning.

Phillipa Foot believed that when Ethical naturalists hold an opposite view to non-naturalists as they believe we can verify if something is good by relating it to something natural. Phillips Foot believed that when we view an action, such as someone stopping a child from walking into traffic, then we know it is good because we can see the consequences; we know this action is good because we have saved a life, we have provided happiness. Because we can say what is a good act is, there has to be meaning because without meaning we wouldn’t be able to because we can identify the act. Moore states that, like the colour yellow, we cannot define. These acts would not be praised and called good if they held no meaning as we would therefore disregard them.

But there are those who believe that we make an error in stating that these statements are facts. Mackie states that someone like Mackie would argue that it is an error to believe ethical statements are meaningful, that because
moral facts are not real. Goodness cannot qualify as meaningful if it does not exist. The user of a moral statement falsely believes that what they're saying is a true statement, but it is in fact false as there is no meaning that can be real as there is no meaning. Thus because one person states that something is good, it doesn't make it true. Therefore the concept of God can have no meaning as it does not truly exist as an actual moral statement.

Overall, Mackie's antirealism approach highlights a key problem with the idea of good holding meaning as it shows how although we can identify those good acts, it doesn't make the moral statement true, unlike the user believes, as there is no true meaning behind it.

In conclusion, the concept of good is not meaningful as it can be viewed as just an emotion towards an idea there is no value to it, it is not true. It may hold meaning within the user but on a universal scale, a moral statement about something being wrong does not ring true as people will always be in conflict. We have no means of testing these statements as really being true or false, settledly, therefore statements such as "good" are not meaningful.

1. The conscience is a complex idea that has been at the centre of debate for hundreds of years. St Thomas of Aquinas' theological approach is perhaps one of the most successful ideas due to it closing loopholes surrounding a God-given conscience going wrong. In more modern times, people have turned to psychological approaches such as that of Freud to explain the conscience, however, I believe that Aquinas' approach is still the most well written approach to the conscience, and I will be arguing this throughout this essay.
Exemplar Candidate Work

Many people such as Butler and Newman have believed that the conscience is God given, and that is why we should always follow it. This has been the centre for many problems as everything God creates is perfect. Then why does the conscience go wrong? Aquinas solves this problem in his approach by stating that the only part of the conscience that is God given is reason, our reason therefore is the only divine part of the concept of conscience. When we go wrong it is the fault of the Conscience (our application of reason to a moral situation). This part of moral reasoning is down to human application, so when we go wrong, it is not the fault of God but the user. This approach to conscience is extremely successful for Aquinas as it sticks to previous early ideas of a God given conscience which are dominant in Christianity but helps to excuse God, helping retain his attributes which is important within Theology as we can attain a consistent idea of God throughout.

However, the emphasis on our ability to reason could be a problem. Augustine and Barth would argue that human have a fallen nature due to the events of the Fall of Man and God punishing us with original sin. If our reason is so severely damaged, then should we really follow our conscience all the time like Aquinas suggested as we may allow ourselves to go wrong, when we could use an alternative approach such as following a different ethical approach that can guide us to the right outcome.

All in all, I believe that our ability to apply reason and do the right thing could be damaged due to the fall, but reason itself is not damaged due to it being God given. Aquinas knew that the application would go wrong, but it is part of having a conscience for us to go wrong sometimes as we will learn and reflect on our mistakes. Aquinas’ approach is still successful as it then provides the opportunity for us to grow.
A more modern approach could threaten the ideas of St. Aquinas in the form of Sigmund Freud. Freud believed that our conscience is not the ‘Sapere Aude’ that is influenced by our parents and societal view, when we do something wrong we are not hearing our reason, we are hearing the opinions and arguments of our parents who would scold us as children and the ideas of society. There is no underlying divinity. Because our morals will change as we grow, then how much of our conscience is innate, like Aquinas argued, our reason is an innate gift from God.

This approach takes less blame from the user like Aquinas' which can be seen as too harsh on humanity. Freud's view is a more modern and secular approach which threatens Aquinas' approach as it shows how our idea of conscience can change and be adapted.

But, Freud can be criticised unlike Aquinas on his lack of evidence; Freud's ideas are based upon his middle class patients in his Vienna hospital. His lack of results compromises his reliability. Similarly, one of his most famous ideas, the "Oedipus complex" is often rejected because of this lack of evidence. Aquinas' approach, being a theological approach has the teaching of the Bible as support, he has a basis for his ideas which to can also be seen in our behaviours. Without much to base his ideas on, Freud does not remain as much of a threat to the ideas of Aquinas whose approach remains strong and just.

Overall, I believe that to view Freud's ideas as a threat to Aquinas' is wrong. Freud's ideas are too abstract and based upon little evidence to be truly supported. Aquinas maintains his strong approach through his firm part application of the conscience as it has been backed up from the Bible for ideas of a God given reason and humans go wrong with the right ideas in conscience.

Overall, Aquinas' theological approach to conscience is extremely successful, in large part with him being
The candidate confidently explains what the issue is and offers intuitionism as a possible solution. The explanation of intuitionism uses technical terms and offers examples. The sentence on ‘testing empirically’ is odd but is perhaps a slip of the pen. Emotivism is used to offer an alternative approach to good if good is not factual. There is good understanding of Foot and Mackie with the latter being used well to advance the argument.

The AO1 mark is sufficient for Level 6: it is fully focused on the question and presents a range of material. There is confident use of technical terms. Perhaps not quite the depth or complexity/nuance for full marks.

The AO2 mark is just into Level 6. There is very good discussion of intuition vs emotion and Mackie’s error theory in response to Foot. These arguments are considered (although a little more critical analysis or evaluation would have increased the mark) and lead to a logical conclusion.

Exemplar 2

The statement refers to the question of whether ‘good’ can be defined, qualified or quantified and what the inherent meaning of ‘good’ is.

Ethical naturalists such as Philippa Foot argue that good and evil are in nature rooted in nature and that humans can perceive degrees of good and evil through observing the world. However, it can be said that ethical naturalism offers...
Objective idea of what good is isn’t good and evil subjective and varies for different people. Machle argues that even rules are not hard facts; they are just all agreed upon by the individuals within the institution. This suggests the ‘good’ is not a natural quality in the world.

Hume argues against ethical naturalism stating that people make an illegitimate jump between two statements. Hume argued that you cannot derive a moral conclusion from a factual statement. This is known as the is/ought problem. For example; slavery still exists (facts) therefore slavery ought to be abolished. Hume argues a jump has been made with no justification.

However, many moral realist would argue that justification is not needed.

Ayer argues that when make moral statements like ‘murder is wrong’ it is just an emotional response to murder and doesn’t hold any meaning. The statement ‘murder is wrong’ is unverifiable and therefore, according to Ayer meaningless.
Exemplar Candidate Work

G.E. Moore argues that 'good' is not meaningless, but it is indefinable. Moore argued against Bentham’s utilitarianism and the idea that 'goodness' can be quantified, qualified and defined as pleasure. Moore’s intuitionism led him to develop the open question argument: "'X' is good, but is it pleasant? Can we give the example of bear-baiting? Bear-baiting is good, but is it pleasant?" According to Moore, intuitionism argues that humans have intuition at what is good.
Examiner commentary

This essay covers a lot of ground but not always in depth. There is a brief account of Foot’s naturalism and Mackie’s relativism is used to counter this. The argument is put but not analysed or considered. The is-ought problem is understood although the example is ambiguous. The point on justification is not followed up. There is understanding of A J Ayer but the criticisms given and the confusion about logical positivism may suggest that the candidate is not totally clear. The candidate has good understanding of G E Moore but again the assessment is brief.

The AO1 mark is sufficient for Level 5 due to the breadth of material covered. At times there is a slight feeling that the candidate is going through their meta-ethics notes rather than specifically focusing on the question.

The AO2 mark is weaker but is sufficient for Level 4. Arguments are put for and against positions – some development and justification - but there is not the depth of analysis that could support a higher level mark.
Question 3

3* Assess the view that natural law is of no help with regard to the issue of euthanasia. [40]

Exemplar 1

AO1 Level 5, 12 marks  AO2 Level 5, 18 marks
Total 30 marks

Euthanasia is often seen as the killing of a patient to prevent them undergoing a long and painful death, it can be done actively (lethal injection) or passively (denial treatment). It is a controversial area as many believe that it goes against Christian morals presented in theories such as Natural Law, the idea of right reason in accordance of nature, but I believe that if used correctly, Natural Law helps support the practice of Euthanasia.

The Doctrine of Double Effect is the idea that we can have the intentions of doing the right thing but the outcome can be a bad act. The Doctrine allows the user to be right and not condemned as bad because they had the right intentions and like Immanuel Kant stated, we can never predict the outcome. In Natural Law, Aquinas set out the five primary precepts that must be followed in order to reach our purpose of life, one of which being to protect the innocent.

This precept can be applied to euthanasia as we are protecting the patient from suffering and pain that can be stopped by the act of euthanasia. And because we have the correct intentions, we will be supported by the doctrine, all we intended was to fulfill the precept of protection. Therefore, we can see how Natural Law provides help in the case of euthanasia through correct application of the precepts and natural law.

However, some may argue that the use of Euthanasia may have results that threaten the precept of an ordered society. The idea of the slippery slope was highlighted by Jonathan Glover, who believed that if we allow Euthanasia we could begin euthanasing...
people against their wills, like the Nazis did in World War Two, with the justification of protecting the innocent. The Nazis justified the gassing of Jews as it would then protect the world from them. The idea of pr This can endanger the precept of an ordered society as we would be unfairly killing people under the manipulation of a precept. Therefore, Natural Law presents no help to euthanasia as it lead to disastrous consequences if used incorrectly.

All in all, I believe that the argument for a slippery slope is just a scaremongering tactic that can only ever be used in the most extreme cases. I believe that Natural Law is of help with regards to euthanasia as it can be followed clearly and the correct intentions will lead to the best outcomes.

However, although Natural Law may be seen to have a strong view against euthanasia that cannot be argued against. The precept of "Worship God" would be violated by euthanasia as there are many points within the Bible that forbid the killing of anyone. The Bible furthermore explicitly states that it is only God who gives and takes away. We would be committing blasphemy by playing God if we commit euthanasia. Therefore Natural Law cannot begin to support euthanasia. Another Christian ethical theory, situation ethics, would be more appropriate as they would permit the act of euthanasia eg as in cases such as that of Tony Bland who was in a Persistent Vegetative following the fallschirmjäger accident. The most loving thing to do would be to euthanise him, easing the pain of him and his family, presenting a more personal and situational and loving approach unlike that of Natural Law that would provide no help.

Although, it could be better in a delicate and emotive emotional application such as Natural Law to have
Examiner commentary

There is a brief description of euthanasia followed by an account of double effect and the primary precepts. There is some understanding of the idea of slippery slope although the conclusion that this counts against Natural Law seems a little confused. There is some valid contrast between Natural Law and situation ethics which by and large the candidate makes relevant and brings back to Natural Law. The conclusion sums up the argument presented.

The AO1 mark is in Level 5. The candidate selects relevant material and has sufficient detail to move beyond Level 4 particularly on ideas such as double effect and the relevant primary precepts.
Examiner commentary continued

The AO2 mark is also in Level 5. The argument for the most part is clear and at times has very good analysis and evaluation in weighing up the merits of Natural Law as opposed to a theory like situation ethics. Other points are stated and not fully developed or are confused so only lower Level 5.

Exemplar 2

AO1 Level 3, 7 marks  AO2 Level 3, 12 marks
Total 19 marks

<table>
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<th>3</th>
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<tr>
<td>The view that natural law is of no help with regard to the issue of euthanasia is correct as a very rigid natural law is essentially a legalistic, rationalistic theory and does not provide room for flexibility or negotiation unlike situation ethics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural law sees God as the absolute, a central authority; immediately it can be criticized as being outdated as it was during the time that it was put forward by St. Thomas Aquinas, majority of people today are Christians, however it is now the 21st century due to secularisation and immigration, the world is becoming less religious, and even in those countries where religion stands out we have been influenced by many different religions groups. This means that natural law can be criticised as no longer being relevant in the world today as it is a Christian theory.</td>
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<td>However, natural law must be credited because it is easy to understand and is straightforward in regards to euthanasia, although you would still say that the natural law approach would say that it is wrong because euthanasia is the deliberate and pointless killing of someone dying from a painful disease, therefore it goes against the primary precept “preservation of life.” It is a result of this, that the rest of the primary precepts cannot be carried out due to the fact that Natural law provides a deonobologal ethical theory,</td>
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it provides an absolute answer to the question of euthanasia and helps humanity understand that euthanasia is not right.

One could argue that using natural law as a basis in regards to the issue of euthanasia is wrong in itself. One of the two greatest commandments is to "love your neighbour as yourself." Therefore, following on from this teaching it is only right that situational ethics is used to help in regards to reference to the issue of euthanasia. Situational ethics follows six propositions, with some of them being "love wins the neighbour's good," "love and justice are the same," "love is the only thing that is good." Situational ethics, unlike natural law, follows the idea that "love" and "goodness" are synonymous, therefore the loving thing to do is also the good thing to do. In reference to euthanasia, situational ethics would see it as being a good thing if it shows love. As an example, a person could be dying from a terminal illness, the most loving thing to do would be to kill that person by means of euthanasia so they don't have to go through that pain anymore. The Bible says, "God is love." Therefore, it would not make sense for humans not to be able to carry out the most loving actions for their neighbours.

Situation ethics is not without flaws however. The Bible itself says in the Book of God himself says in the Book of Exodus, "Thou shall not kill." This therefore leads to the problem of whether people should follow the pre teaching "love your neighbour" or the teaching, "Thou shall not kill" in regards to euthanasia. Situation ethics does not provide an answer. It leaves...
Examiner commentary

The candidate begins with a popular criticism that Natural Law is outdated due to its religious nature; there is some confusion in the statement of this point and the candidate does not develop this or show relevance to the issue. The point on clarity of Natural Law is itself clear but not developed. The candidate then moves on to situation ethics and the depth presented here leads to the feeling that the candidate may have preferred a question on situation ethics. The assessment in favour of situation ethics gives implied criticisms of Natural Law but we are having to do a lot of work on behalf of the candidate.

The AO1 mark is in Level 3. Much on the answer is on situation ethics and not linked to the question. Nevertheless there is some knowledge of Natural Law including 2 of the relevant primary precepts. There is some accurate and relevant knowledge.

The AO2 mark is also in Level 3. The analysis is partial and implicit. Views that are asserted are often not justified. A criticism of situation ethics is not in itself a point in favour of Natural Law.
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