

Virtue Ethics Essay Questions

General Themes

- Action-guidance (210528 Q12, 200601 Q10 Either, 180525 Q11 Either, 140529 Q9)
- Primacy of Virtue (200601 Q10 Or, 180525 Q11 Or, 160526 Q12, 150528 Q5)
- Self-effacingness (220608 Q11)
- Developmental Model (170525 Q12)
- Flourishing (130523 Q7)
- Other (190603 Q11)

220608 Q11

Must virtue ethics be objectionably self-effacing?

210528 Q12

'Virtue ethics is an attractive account of the value of acting virtuously, but it has nothing distinctive to say about moral obligation in particular.' Discuss.

200601 Q10 Either

'Since virtues can conflict in difficult situations, virtue ethics cannot guide us in those circumstances in which we most need moral theory.' Is that right? Does it tell against virtue ethics as a moral theory?

200601 Q10 Or

'It is virtuous to tell someone the truth because they deserve it; it is not that they deserve it because it is virtuous to tell them the truth.' If that is true, would it be a problem for virtue ethics?

190603 Q11

Are virtue ethicists committed to the view that those who find it easier to be good are more praiseworthy for being good? What does your answer imply about the plausibility of virtue ethics?

180525 Q11 Either

'Do we really want a moral theory to tell us what to do? Aren't we losing an important sense in which we should be making our own decisions? Suppose I later come to think that what I did was actually the wrong thing to do ... in the moral case there is surely something problematic in the thought that either I got the theory wrong or the theory was wrong, but there is no worry as to my making the wrong decision.' (ANNAS) Is this a good defence of virtue ethics against the objection that it is not adequately action-guiding?

180525 Q11 Or

Can virtue ethicists make sense of the idea that the grounds of our duties to others are facts about those others?

170525 Q12

'[A] virtuous action is what a virtuous person would do...this is not something fixed but will depend on whether the virtuous person is a learner or more like an expert.' (ANNAS) Discuss.

160526 Q12

'The virtuous person does what she does for reasons quite independent of the fact that the virtuous person would do them. So virtue ethics presupposes one of its rivals' accounts of right and wrong, and thus inherits the very problems that it is supposed to solve.' How powerful is this objection to virtue ethics?

150528 Q5

'It is virtuous to relieve another person's suffering because her well-being matters; it is not that her well-being matters because it would be virtuous to relieve her suffering.' Discuss.

140529 Q9

'Rightness is a property of actions, goodness a property of persons.' Discuss.

130523 Q7

'The life of virtue is a flourishing life at most for those who are already virtuous, so the connection between virtue and human flourishing required for the truth of virtue ethics does not exist.' Discuss.