

	Utilitarianism			Deontology		Virtue Ethics
	Act	Rule	Preference	DCE	Kantian	
Abortion	<p>A. could be justified – esp in ‘hard case scenarios’</p> <p>However, if the unborn life ‘counts as one’ in the hedonic calculus, then would we really justify the annual 175 000 abortions in the UK?</p> <p>Problem 1: what does the unborn human life count for in the h. calculus?</p> <p>Problem 2: How is the denial of one life (that of the unborn) properly weighed against the ‘advantages’ abortion brings</p> <p>∴ many of the acute difficulties of AU – e.g. incommensurability of pleasure/pain, problem of factoring in all relevant consequences – surface when it is applied to the abortion issue</p>	<p>This is tricky...</p> <p>RU rules must be framed around some basic intrinsic value (e.g. happiness)</p> <p>BUT it must also concern itself with ‘acceptance-utility’ i.e. the <i>appeal</i>* of the rule to the moral community</p> <p>So which rules work best under RU:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Abortion is forbidden? 2. Abortion, except in hard case situations, is forbidden? 3. Abortion is permitted, provided there is adequate medical care? <p>* ‘Divorce is forbidden’ has high (potential) utility but low <i>acceptance</i> utility in today’s world</p>	<p>Peter Singer, the modern advocate of PU, finds justification – in certain highly specified cases – for abortion, and even for infanticide.</p> <p>For PU:</p> <p><i>Basic unit of utility = preference satisfaction, or interest promotion</i></p> <p><i>Members of moral community = sentient beings</i></p> <p>∴ interest-promotion of adult higher mammal may count for more than that of unborn human life</p> <p>∴ interest-promotion of vulnerable woman (and any dependants) may well count for more than that of unborn human life</p>	<p>Judaism</p> <p>Like other monotheistic faiths, Judaism generally <i>proscribes</i> abortion.</p> <p>However, the Hebrew Scriptures do not, on the face of it, directly condemn abortion.</p> <p>In the Torah, hurting a pregnant woman so as to cause her to miscarry incurs the penalty of compensation. Should she die, the penalty is ‘life for life’. Does this mean the life of the unborn is ∴ worth less? Not so simple, in the same passage the penalty for beating a slave to death is <i>less</i> than death. Hence, the passage (Ex 21:18-25) reflects the not-fully-developed moral awareness of the Israelites.</p> <p>Christianity</p> <p>Catholic A Catholic DCE combines the revelation from scripture with insights from the Natural Law (hence there is engagement with human reason). Abortion is absolutely proscribed.</p> <p>Protestant A <i>sola scriptura</i> (scripture alone) view taken by fundamentalist Protestant Christians generally weighs against abortion. The Bible does not explicitly say: ‘Thou shalt not commit abortion’. However, there is reason to see an <i>implicit</i> condemnation of abortion.</p> <p>Liberal Protestant Christians (cf. American Theologian Joseph Fletcher) tend to see abortion as justified in certain circumstances.</p>	<p>Would K. adopt an <i>indirect duty</i> position (i.e. assume that the unborn life is akin to that of an animal)?</p> <p>Would he extend the rationality condition even into the womb, arguing on the expectation that a moral being is developing? Note the ‘good will’ is the intrinsic good for K.</p> <p>Also, K. was suspicious of the inclinations and denied there was moral value in purely hypothetical imperatives. Would the reasons women give for seeking abortions count as hypothetical imperatives? Are they inclination driven? Or could an abortion be conceivably one’s duty? (cf. Auschwitz case)</p>	<p>For the ancients, abortion and infanticide were closely associated. Direct methods to kill the unborn life had not come in to play, thus ‘exposing’ an unwanted infant – leaving them out in the open – was more common.</p> <p>Both Plato and Aristotle would have been aware of these practices – Plato even advocated that in his utopia some infants (i.e. those judged weak or defective in some way) should be exposed.</p> <p>Aristotle himself had a mistaken view of the development of the unborn human life: he saw it passing through the vegetative and appetitive stages before ‘formation’ – receiving its rational capacity. Its ‘value’ thereby gradually increased through the stages. In his Politics, he wrote “<i>when couples have children in excess, let abortion be procured before sense and life have begun; what may or may not be lawfully done in these cases depends on the question of life and sensation</i>”</p> <p>Some suggested ways in which Aristotelian virtue ethics might shed light on the <i>current</i> abortion debate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sexual intercourse by which the unwanted pregnancy comes about would most likely be judged <i>vicious</i> (opposite to virtuous). - intemperate behaviour (i.e. pleasure sought in the wrong degree, at the wrong time, in the wrong way etc.) 2. Once the pregnancy has occurred, the ending of it through bloody means might be a kind of cowardice (comparison: Aristotle condemned <i>suicide</i> as a cowardly act – trying to end a problem by violence instead of facing what one should) 3. The human telos (final purpose), according to A., is eudaimonia (happiness, fulfilment, flourishing). Could it be simply said that abortion stops the possibility of human fulfilment for the aborted life?
Euthanasia	<p>As above, AU could – given specified circumstances - justify voluntary and nonvoluntary euthanasia.</p> <p>Might AU justify involuntary euthanasia too?</p> <p>As above, there is a real difficulty when performing the h. calculus – particularly when we try to factor in the pain of those elderly or vulnerable people who wouldn’t wish the community to allow vol. euthanasia because of the pressure it places on them</p>	<p>Consider the following rules:</p> <p><i>A person in terminal pain should (with safeguards) be euthanised if they request it.</i></p> <p><i>No person, even if in terminal pain, should be helped to die (but they should be kept comfortable).</i></p> <p>You have to consider: - utility AND - acceptance utility</p> <p>Which rule ‘wins’?</p>	<p>Peter Singer, once again, has summed up the PU argument for <i>voluntary</i> euthanasia:</p> <p><i>what is so special about self-conscious beings is that they can know they exist over time and will, unless they die, continue to exist. Normally this ... is fervently desired; when the foreseeable continued existence is dreaded rather than desired however, the desire to die may take place of the normal desire to live, reversing the reasons against killing based on the desire to live. Thus the case for voluntary euthanasia is arguably much stronger than the case for nonvoluntary euthanasia ...</i></p>	<p>One of the four famous examples K. gave was one of <i>suicide when life promised more ill than good.</i></p> <p>Using the Categorical Imperative K. proscribes the option of suicide</p> <p>He claimed that a universalised maxim would be a contradiction in the law of nature (see Moral Problems, Palmer)</p> <p>Similar insights can be applied to the voluntary euthanasia debate ...</p> <p>... except there is third party involvement could a maxim: ‘I should help to end the life of a terminally ill patient who requests it’ be universalised without contradiction?</p>		
Animal Treatment	<p>As above, it seems that any type of animal treatment might – given the circumstances – be justified</p> <p>However, since <i>sentience</i> is key in hedonic utilitarianism, this is more likely to mean sentient animals being included as <i>direct</i> members of the moral community</p>		<p>Do animals have preferences or interests? Singer believes some do (higher sentient animals).</p> <p>As such, their interests should weigh equally against similar human claims, given the circumstances.</p> <p>Singer, like others, uses the <i>argument from marginal cases</i> to justify his thinking</p> <p>He also accuses those who don’t weigh animal interests as they should (according to PU) of <i>speciesism</i></p>		<p>Good will – intrinsic value</p> <p>Animals – nonrational and so are not ‘ends’ in themselves</p> <p>Nonetheless there are <i>indirect</i> duties to animals To treat animals cruelly and to kill them without concern is wrong</p> <p>A person thereby is likely to become depraved and to treat his or her fellow human beings in a depraved manner</p> <p>Some Philosophers, like Tom Regan, adopt a Kantian approach – but he extends the ‘never-solely-as-means’ condition to animals since they have rights (being subjects-of-a-life)</p>	