

Natural Law - Knowledge organiser

<u>Sub-topics</u> • The writings of Cicero, influenced by Stoicism, stating there is a single Natural Moral Law • Aristotle’s four causes and understanding of telos as human fulfilment (flourishing) • Aristotle’s influence on Aquinas’ theory and his understanding of reason • Aquinas and the synderesis rule, an exploration of interior v exterior acts • Primary and secondary precepts as the foundation of Natural Moral Law • Evaluation of Natural Moral Law • Contemporary Natural Moral Law theories and their application	<u>Key words</u> Absolutism- an objective moral rule or value that is always true in all situations and for everyone without exceptions Apparent good- something which seems to be good/right thing to do but doesn’t fit human ideals Autonomy- Moral freedom Creation ex nihilo- The belief that God created the world from nothing Deontological- The moral worth of an action lies in your conforming to duties and rules Divine law- Natural and moral law are revealed to humans through divine law, which can be found in special revelation or through the teachings of the Church Eternal law- Law which comes from God’s nature as the Creator Eudaimonia- the final good for man (a complete and fulfilled life) Heteronomy- being influenced by an outside authority Intrinsic goods- something good in itself without reference to consequences Natural law- The natural moral order is discovered through human reason Primary precepts- the fundamental principles of Natural Moral Law Real good- The right thing to do- it fits with human ideals Secondary precepts- Worked out from the primary precepts Telos- Goal/purpose/end	<u>Key scholars</u> Cicero Aristotle Aquinas G.E Moore Karl Barth
<u>Possible H/WK/Questions</u> 8 mark Explore concepts of absolutism and legalism in ethics. Explore the Biblical foundations for natural moral law Explore the concepts of purpose and telos in natural moral law. Explore the concept of primary and secondary precepts in natural moral law	<u>Starting point- Important key facts</u> - The idea of Natural Moral Law did not originate with Christianity. The theory holds that there are rights and moral values that can be understood from human nature, and which can be deduced from human reason. Different accounts of this idea appear throughout history. - In the fourth century BCE, Aristotle developed his ethical theory based on virtue. Aristotle argued that the distinctive feature of human beings is their ability to reason. Humans can use their reason to discover the end or purpose of human life. Aristotle’s approach here is therefore teleological. - The most distinctive version of natural moral law is that of Thomas Aquinas. During the 13th century, Aquinas took up Aristotle’s ideas about the end or goal of human life being happiness or complete well-being, and married them to a Christian view of that goal as being union with God in the next life. - Aristotle describes four kinds of law- 1. Eternal law which refers to the law which comes from God’ nature. As God is the Creator of everything, the universe and nature reflects the principles of natural and moral law. 2. Divine law is shared with humans through special revelation such as the Bible, and through the teachings of the Church. 3. Natural Moral Law is the natural moral order which is discovered through reason. It is part of God’s eternal law that human beings can discover simply through the application of reason. 4. Human law is formulated through understanding the natural moral law. Human law should not contradict natural moral law. - The main guiding principle of Natural Moral Law is that ‘good is to be done and pursued and evil is to be avoided.’ - Aquinas lists ‘primary precepts’ (principles), as foundational for Natural Moral Law. They are as follows: 1. The preservation of life 2. Reproduction 3. The nurture and education of the young 4. Living peacefully in society 5. To worship God - The primary precepts are concerned with our final end- our telos, which is the vision of God- union with God. This is our telos after death, though our individual telos is based on our natural abilities - From the primary precepts we derive secondary precepts, these help us govern how we should act in specific situations - Aquinas supports the doctrine of double effect which helps avoid mistakes in moral reasoning in difficult cases	
<u>Stretch and challenge/Suggested further reading</u> Bowie, R. Ethical Studies, pages 23-35 Vardy, Peter and Charlotte. Ethics Matters(2013) Chapters 5-6 Jones et al (2002) pages 100-104 Pojman L. (2002) pages 45-59 Rachels J. (2006) pages 50-55 https://learning.watfordboys.herts.sch.uk/course/view.php?id=254 http://www83.homepage.villanova.edu/richard.jacobs/index.html http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.html http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/natural-law-ethics/ <i>Panpsycast podcast-</i> https://thepanpsycast.com/panpsycast2/2016/9/21/episode-4-aquinas-natural-law		

