OCR H573 | INDEPENDENT REVISION

A* Model Essay

Kantian Ethics

Religion and Ethics

To what extent can Kantian morality be understood entirely through duty?

1,466 response words | Complete annotated PDF | Individual topic edition

What is included

A complete original response, an argument plan, paragraph-level AO1/AO2 annotations and source works for further reading.

A* describes the intended style of this teaching model. This is independently written, not an OCR-marked script or a guaranteed grade.

Use this model to study argument and evaluation, then write your own answer. Do not submit it as your own assessed work.

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Argument plan

To what extent can Kantian morality be understood entirely through duty?

Thesis: Duty is central because it expresses unconditional moral necessity and identifies when an action has moral worth, but Kantian ethics is not concerned with duty as blind obedience: autonomy, universal rational consistency, respect for humanity and a kingdom of ends explain both the authority and content of duty.

1. The good will gives actions moral worth when agents act from duty rather than inclination.

Counter-argument: This seems to devalue affection, emotion and admirable character.

Interim judgement: Duty identifies the sufficient moral motive without making every non-duty motive worthless.

2. Universal law derives perfect and imperfect duties through reason.

Counter-argument: Maxims can be manipulated and apparent duties can conflict.

Interim judgement: Duty remains central, but its application depends on honest maxim formulation and practical judgement.

3. The humanity formula grounds duties in unconditional respect for rational persons.

Counter-argument: Strict duties may still ignore consequences and relational care.

Interim judgement: Respect, rather than rule-compliance itself, supplies the theory’s deepest moral content.

4. Autonomy and the kingdom of ends present duty as self-legislation within a moral community.

Counter-argument: Kant’s abstract rational agent can understate dependence, emotion and tragic moral residue.

Interim judgement: The theory extends beyond duty narrowly understood, although duty remains the form through which its other concerns become obligatory.