Alexandria Tanner

PHIL 335E

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Case Analysis – 5

In the YouTube video of released footage from an US military official titled “Collateral Damage?” we witness multiple killings from the Apache helicopter in Baghdad, Iraq. What is unique about the situation is that at no point was any of the targets positively identified prior to permission to fire. The very first incident the pilot(s) and gunmen circled a group of 8 individuals who happened to be holding cameras, but while circling one camera was mistaken for and RPG. Prior to the misidentification request for fire was asked for and approved… again with no positive ID. The Apache then proceeded to fire on all 8 people and reported back that all individuals had either AK-47s or RPGs in their possession. Rules of engagement at the time permitted the sight or clear possession of a weapon justified fire.

Only one of the ‘targets’ survived, and they anticipated and hoped he would maybe reach for a weapon so they could confirm the final kill. He did not, however; a van that held children, came to rescue the wounded man, and remove the bodies of the 7 that were killed. The Apache was given permission to fire on the vehicle, killing the wounded man and those children. 20 minutes later the ground troops reported gunfire 300 meters from the initial shooting. The pilot(s) and gunmen witness *one* individual with a weapon entered the building, and two more weaponless individuals shortly after. They request fire upon the building because it is occupied by "individuals with weapons" although they are not sure of this, and no positive ID was made. Permission was granted an upon doing so a civilian is walking past the building and is killed in the crossfire. In this Case Analysis I will argue how *Ethics of Care* shows us that Manning did not act out of loyalty to the United States, and her actions were a moral case of whistleblowing.

The dictionary definition of a “whistleblower” is someone who reveals something surreptitious or private. Usually, they are an employee who discloses information either internally (higher ups) or externally (lawmakers, media, watchdog orgs., etc.). The whistleblower most times chooses to disclose the private information because he or she believes it is in violation of something: an abuse of power, a violation of the law or basic rights, or just plain immoral. *Ethics of Care* primarily focuses on justice and impartiality and stresses the utilitarian belief that you should act in the interest of the majority because the greatest good = the greatest number.

In the story, *Whistle Blowing and Rational Loyalty* by Wim Vanderkerckhove he argues that there is no contradiction between the need of loyalty and any “institutionalized whistle blowing”. He poses the question of why whistleblowing would be an organizational need for an institution? Vanderkerckhove gives two answers, the first being because there are more people, and more people equal a larger authority behind decision making. Organizations/Companies should be aware of any acts that are taking place that are harmful to them; Managers and the board are the center of this idea as they should be aware of what is going on or going wrong. His second answer was the presence of the “watchdog value” meaning as responsibility increases for the company the public has a *case* when wrongdoing happens that might affect them. Monitoring and detecting the presence of anything that might appear to be out of control or harmful.

Whistleblowing itself blows away the belief that employees have an obligation to the company. On page 226, Duska (1997) exclaims, “most business ethicists claim that employees have some obligation to the company or employer”. I agree with this statement because if there were no loyalty on either the employee or employers’ side there would be no sense in job security or trust. Imagine at the slightest inconvenience or mistake your job was in jeopardy and you were ready to be replaced, even if you are the best at what you do. Companies would also hate to lose their best employees to competition, and they expect some sort of loyalty from them upon hire. It would be a waste of resources and an investment if anyone could easily snatch your employees and/or buy them because they don’t value their position at your company. So, I believe loyalty is an important factor in that sense, but I also believe that if that company were participating in any activities that were harmful to the public or their employees that loyalty goes out the window. The “Encyclopedic Dictionary of Business Ethics writes that loyalty refers to a willing-ness to sacrifice... a loyal individual designates someone who is willing to act for benefit of someone or something else” (227). Loyalty contributes to organizational effectiveness and because of that should be taken seriously, however, in the event the organization is participating in events that are harmful anyone that blows the whistle is not bonded by that loyalty nor are they breaking it. The only thing I would say is to make sure your facts are correct, you are whistle blowing for the right reason (good of the people/majority), and you are prepared for the consequences of blowing the whistle.

In the last paper we analyze, *Care and Loyalty in the Workplace* by Julianna Oxley and D.E. Wittkower loyal is related and compared to care. In order to understand loyalty in the workplace as a kind of care you must create an account for when it is morally appropriate to demonstrate loyalty in a business context. This idea of care in loyalty in the workplace is the epitome of ethics of care in my opinion. The ethics of care holds ‘caring relationships’ as the moral basis of how to treat the people closet to you. This paper argues how loyalty to a corporation, or your job is sometimes earned but is *not* an obligation. Care ethics is the framework for how we view “the nature of loyalty”, the commitment to something in virtue of our own care or concern for that something. There are three *core* commitments of care ethical theories, and they state: first, the language of care is central to our everyday lives. I interpreted that as everyone caring about something and demonstrates that throughout our lives and daily. Secondly, “the concepts, metaphors, and images associated with the practice of caring, rather than contracting, best express the dynamics of the moral life and should thus be used in ethical analysis” (224). The images and concepts we naturally associate with care go hand and hand with our association to right/wrong and the accepted standards of a ‘moral life’. The third core commitment is that moral agent must seek to nurture and preserve the most solid relationships you have. Basically, do not take those genuine and meaningful relationships for granted or treat them with anything other than care.

Loyalty tends to emerge while keeping the core commitments of care ethics in mind. How? Might you ask, well, ethics of care holds the bonds we make and the relationships we have very highly. They are viewed as valuable pieces of our lives that help mold our own identity. Loyalty is developed through the care and concern we possess and is often the product of a truly caring relationship between individuals. Therefore, allowing loyalty to be interpreted as *partiality* for those we care for and is justified on the basis that, that loyalty is reciprocated. Making it selective and similar to favoritism. The paper looks at loyalty in the workplace as well and argues that loyalty itself cannot be contractually mandated. Because you cannot do that *‘loyalty’* in the terms of a contract is described as *care* and companies tend to list ways you can go above and beyond your duties to care for the company. This could look like attending events outside of work, donating money to charities supported by your company, participating in work activities (Secret Santa, etc.) are all ways you could show you care. We do similar things to show your care for people in our lives all the time but again aren’t things that would be listed in a contract nor is it obligation to participate, usually.

To conclude, in this Case Analysis I argued how the tool Ethics of Care showed us that Manning the Whistleblower that gave us insight on incidents in Baghdad did not act out of loyalty for her country, however her actions were morally appropriate because it was for the greater good. I believe Manning acted out of loyalty towards the innocent lives that were lost and the citizens at that could not fathom what sort of things take place in “battles”. She also set a tone for what should be allowed and sparked some change in how/when to engage. I went on to relate other examples of whistle blowing and the cause for ‘loyalty’ specifically in the workplace. In those conclusions, I believe that blowing the whistle for a moral cause and the overall protection of many is not a disloyal act. It can be argued that loyalty *is* being upheld and loyalty is owed to the majority and not to a company. Ethics of care in the workplace it an appropriate characterization for ‘loyalty’ because loyalty, by definition, cannot ethically be contractually mandated.