

5.4 Case Analysis

Introduction

On April 5, 2010, Manning released a video on Wikileaks titled “Collateral Murder”. The footage depicts U.S. military personnel in one of the Apache helicopters engaging on “suspected” insurgents. The Apache crew suspected the “insurgents” were armed and one of them was carrying a RPG (Rocket-Propelled grenade). There were no immediate signs of gunshots or hostile intentions. Without must debate, the Apache crew fired on the insurgents, and the footage shows recordings of the Apache crew saying, “oh yeah look at those dead bastards”, and “Hahaha. I hit ‘em”. The footage also showed a van pulling up to one of the wounded “insurgents” in attempts to help. The Apache eagerly awaited orders to engage and fired once orders were given to engage them. After investigation, it was reported that children were inside the van. The footage recorded the Apache crew seemingly having no remorse of the situation by saying “Well it’s their fault for bringing kids into a battle”. Furthermore, the Apache crew were treating the engagement as if it were a video game.

After releasing the video, Manning was charged for leaking and mishandling classified information and sentenced 35 years at Maximum security. Though in January 17, 2017, Obama commuted Manning sentence to seven years. The prompt for this case analysis is “Did Manning act out of loyalty to the United States when she released the footage in the video? Do her actions constitute a moral or immoral case of whistleblowing? In this case analysis, I will argue that deontology shows us that Manning did act loyalty to the United States, and her actions were an moral case of whistleblowing.

Case 1

One of Vandekerckhove's concepts in "Whistle Blowing and Rational Loyalty" is the idea of rational loyalty. The concept of rational loyalty empathizes with the balance between an individual's loyalty to their organization or agency, and their moral duty to report wrongdoings/whistleblowing. Vandekerckhove states that loyalty should not be blind but should be rational. What Vandekerckhove means is loyalty is justified only when the organization's intentions and actions align with moral principles, and pursue common good. When an organization engages in unethical practices, an employee's rational loyalty obligates them to whistle blow to prevent injustice. Vandekerckhove empathizes that whistleblowing is an expression of rational loyalty. Vandekerckhove views that whistleblowing aims to protect an organization's long-term interests by pointing out unethical behavior and fixing them.

Using Vandekerckhove's concept of rational loyalty, it would side in favor of Manning's actions. In Vandekerckhove's view, Manning is loyal to the United States by whistleblowing the wrongdoing in Iraq. In Vandekerckhove's concept of rational loyalty, an employee's loyalty is justified only if organization actions are aligned with moral principles and pursue common good. In the government's view, Manning illegally obtained confidential information and compared that to being unloyal. However, using Vandekerckhove's concept, Manning is loyal, because she saw that the U.S. military is engaging in unethical practices in Iraq. Using rational loyalty, Manning is morally obligated to expose the wrongdoings of the U.S. military, in benefit from them. Meaning, that she is indeed loyal to the United States. This is because, in Vandekerckhove's view, Manning pointed out the wrong doings of the U.S. military not only because of the immoral practices, but to protect them in the long run.

Looking into the lens of deontology the philosophy would also be in favor of Manning's actions. Furthermore, it would practically be immoral if Manning were not a whistleblower on the issue like what happened in Iraq. Deontology is an ethical theory that judges the actions of an individual and intentions, not the consequences of those actions. Also, deontology strongly emphasizes respect of others, and that everyone is to be treated as ends. No individual should be treated as just a casualty or a means to an end. Unfortunately, this is how the soldiers in the Apache treated the people they shoot at. In deontologist view, Mannings intention behind whistleblowing was the moral thing to do.

Under deontology, I view that what Manning did was in the best interest for the United States. Publicly leaking the unethical engagements in Iraq, Manning sparked change in terms of laws and policies which saved lives in foreign countries. I recalled a story that I wrote for this course that discusses the philosophy of deontology. It was about Superman setting aside personal feelings and beliefs of others to do what was right. Like Superman, Manning set aside personal beliefs and ignored the potential consequences of her actions and pursued moral intentions to expose the wrongdoings in Iraq to the American public. This caused new foreign and warfare regulations to be formed. It is fair to say that the actions Manning took were a moral case of whistleblowing, and deontology would support her actions.

Case 2

One of the concepts that Oxley and Wittkower discusses is the Care Ethics Framework. The care ethics framework emphasizes the ethical relevance of relational and emotional aspects within the work environment. Unlike other traditional ethical frameworks which primarily focus on rights, and justice, care ethics differs by prioritizing interpersonal, and emotional dimension in decision-making. Relational emphasis is one of the ethical relevance highlighted in the care

ethics framework. Relational emphasis' main focus is that workplace ethics should be fostering genuine relationships instead of duty-bound interactions. This focus on relational emphasis encourages empathy, and a sense of mutual responsibility. Another ethical relevance highlighted in the Care Ethics Framework is responsiveness to needs. The very core of the ethics framework is the sensitivity for other's needs. Both Oxley and Witterower argue that a workplace should not just solely be driven by productivity or efficiency but consider the personal and professional well-being of colleagues. This can foster a supportive and humane environment, allowing colleagues to act upon the needs of others. The last ethical relevance that will be highlighted for the Care Ethics Framework, integration of care and loyalty. Oxley and Wittkower make an argument that the Care Ethics Framework can refine what loyalty means in the workplace. Instead of blind loyalty, care ethics moves the term loyalty that aligns with an obligation to care. In the Care Ethics Framework loyalty means supporting an organization and colleagues that supports well-being and making care an necessity for loyal actions. This can assist in times of conflict between loyalty to the organization and care for colleagues, especially in this case analysis where whistleblowing is involved.

Similar to case 1, Oxley and Wittkower's concept of Care Ethics Framework will be in defense of Mannings whistleblowing, and she indeed act out of loyalty to the United States. Oxley and Wittkower view that loyalty (within the ethics care framework) is responsive and ethically grounded. Meaning that loyalty should not come at the price of personal or collective well-being. An example of this is what Manning did. She saw certain actions that were harmful and not ethical. If did not whistle blow such actions, then the term loyalty would be considered misaligned with care ethics. Also, Manning critically evaluated the situation and recognize the actions the U.S military had done violate ethical principles. This is the type of loyalty that Oxley

and Wittkower are pushing for. Which is in contract to blind loyalty or loyalty based in hierarchical obligation.

Under the lens of deontology, it will have a similar agreement to the first case. Mannings intentions was to expose the wrongdoings of the U.S. military, which is a moral act. It took courage what Manning felt was the right thing to do. Even though she was punished for her act. She did right by deontology, and her actions lead betterment not only in the military but lead the Untied States to pursue more ethical practices in foreign affairs. I believe that Manning did the right thing to whistle blow the things that occurred in Iraq, regardless of the consequences.

Conclusion

Overall, it was immoral what the Apache crew had done. It would have been wise for them to critical analyze the situation, and not be so eager to shoot them down. Plus treating combat engagement as if it were a video game, shows how some soldiers are desensitized to war. I remember something a friend of my father said, who is also a solider, and he said that “being on the ground is a lot more personal than being on the air.

I believe that Manning was loyal to the United States and her actions indeed constitute a mora case if whistleblowing. Manning did the right thing to expose the wrongdoings of the U.S. Military. However, though what Manning did was right, does that imply that an individual or groups of individuals should always whistle blow any military operations and missions. For example, my father was in a counterterrorism unit, though he can not tell me where he is deploying and what he has done, I can assume it is highly confidential stuff. So, my question is should certain things be keep hidden, or must the truth always be reveled? If my father just went around telling people what he did, and where he went, that would be a display of disloyalty.

Ironically the concepts from both case 1 and case 2 would then be against my father. So, in this case in terms of loyalty, how do we determine which loyalty is appropriate to choose.