

In the 2019 Al Jazeera YouTube Video, we meet Julian Assange, editor of WikiLeaks.org, and Ivan Eland, U.S. Defense Analyst. Both have important views on a video depicting troops from a helicopter completing a mission. On one end, it can be said there was a battle as a gunner in the helicopter mentions, "Well, it is their fault for bringing their kids into a battle" (17:25), and on the other, Julian Assange inserts [we] did not see any battle at all (17:29). A moment worth noting is Ivan Eland, U.S. Defense Analyst mentions "they have really been desensitized to warfare I think uh under combat when your adrenaline is high and that sort of thing and you think there may be a potential threat uh you are going to air on the side of uh of um saving your own life" (09:03 – 09:14). Followed by an acknowledgment of some shortcomings "the United States made some pretty serious mistakes in Iraq and Afghanistan early on and I think uh part of the problem that we are seeing with the people in the helicopter is they may be blamed for Rules of Engagement uh that uh you know were too were too loose" (16:01- 16:21).

In this Case Analysis, I will argue that Kantian Deontology shows us that Manning acted out of loyalty to the United States and that her actions were a moral case of whistleblowing. Manning acted out of rational loyalty to the United States, grounded in a moral duty to uphold the country's stated values rather than simply adhering to its operational norms or loose Rules of Engagement.

In Wim Vanderkerckhove and Ronal Commer's 2004 article "Whistle Blowing and Rational Loyalty," "rational loyalty, "[the] object of rational loyalty, is not the physical aspects of the company... [However], the explicit set of mission statement, goals, value statement and code of conduct of the organization is judged as legitimate." (229). Rational loyalty centers on

commitment to an organization's explicit mission, values, and goals. Rather than a physical structure, or in this case, a chain of command. Manning's decision to release classified information, such as the video, aligns with loyalty, preserving life for future missions, and paying importance to transparency and justice, which is foundational in the US value system. Manning's whistleblowing is not a breach of loyalty to the chain of command but a higher form of loyalty to the moral principle of transparency and justice central to the US mission. The morality of an action is determined by its adherence to universal moral laws rather than its consequences. Manning's release of the video aligns with the value of transparency. Furthermore, it embodies a moral duty to promote a just and humane society where we can view loose Rules of Engagement and decide how to act in future events as a collective.

Additionally, "the adjective rationale and irrational loyalty indicate the need for the individual to make a deliberation, whether or not her acts contribute to the explicit mission, values, and goals of the organization she is loyal to" (230). In other words, individuals should consider whether their actions genuinely support the organization's mission, values, and goals. Rational loyalty requires individuals to reflect on whether their actions contribute to an organization's values. Manning believed specific military actions were depicted in the released footage and contradicted American values. Manning believes releasing the footage supported the country's stated mission involving justice and human rights for all. It can be said that Manning's actions reflect a contradiction between the military's actions and their values. Manning acted to expose this contradiction. Her decision was not irrational or disloyal but rather a deliberate choice to align her actions with the higher moral duties of justice and transparency in pursuing human rights and a just society.

It is also important to note that if "[a person] finds [themselves] in a situation where organizational behavior diverts from its explicit mission, goals, and values, then rational loyalty, loyalty to the explicit mission, goals, and values would demand [said person] to blow the whistle" (230). If someone finds their organization's actions deviating from its values, rational loyalty might require whistleblowing. Manning's decision to release video footage to WikiLeaks can be interpreted as whistleblower-blowing intended to realign US actions with its core values. Although controversial, releasing the footage is a form of rational loyalty to the United States.

In the 2011 article, Julinna Oxley and D.E. Wittkower's "Care and Loyalty in the Workplace," in *Applying Care Ethics to Business*, "from the perspective of care ethics, while loyalty is an expression of care for another, not all expressions of loyalty are appropriate" (236). Loyalty that aligns or supports actions opposed to universal moral laws, such as those that harm or disrespect the dignity of others. It cannot be morally justified. If an individual's loyalty leads them to support actions that violate ethical principles, like in Manning's case, one could say Manning had a moral obligation to release the footage to WikiLeaks. It is quite possible, in Manning's case, the actions depicted by the military. Persons the footage violated human dignity, and Manning is then loyal to the moral principles of justice and human rights, and this would, in turn, force action, even if it means going against institutional loyalty.

In some cases, "loyalty can motivate an employee to blow the whistle when the corporation is engaging in uncaring activities..." (236). In the case of Manning, getting to disclose information about the military's behavior was motivated by a higher loyalty to transparency, justice, and respect for human rights, reflecting a care for others that transcends organizational loyalty. In the case of Manning, her decision to disclose information about the military's behavior depicted in the video was motivated by a higher loyalty to the principles of

transparency, justice, and respect for human rights. By acting on these moral duties, Manning's actions reflect a commitment to universal ethical principles that promote peace and the dignity of all individuals. Manning's whistleblowing can be seen as a contribution. It seeks to realign the state's actions with its state ideals and ensure a more just and transparent society.

Manning's decision to disclose classified information was not driven by a desire to undermine the organization but by a commitment to universal ethical principles, including justice, transparency, and human rights. By aligning her actions with higher moral duties, she demonstrated a profound commitment to the core values that the United States stands for. These values are fundamentally aimed at promoting dignity, respect, and justice for all individuals, regardless of their background. Her decision to blow the whistle goes beyond mere personal conviction; it represents a moral responsibility to advocate for greater accountability and transparency within the military. In doing so, she is taking a stand to ensure that U.S. military actions not only reflect national interests but also align more closely with universal principles of justice and peace. This whistleblowing serves as a crucial reminder that ethical considerations should guide military operations and that the pursuit of peace must not be sacrificed in the name of national security. By acting on her beliefs, she calls for a reevaluation of priorities, urging that the United States not only aspire to uphold its values but also embody them in practice.

Al Jazeera English. (2010, April 19). *Collateral murder?* [Video].

YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zok8yMxXEwk>.

Grammarly. (2024). Grammarly Handbook. <https://www.grammarly.com/handbook/>.

Oxley, J., & Wittkower, D.E. (2011). Care and loyalty in the workplace. In M. Sander-Staudt & M. Hamington (Eds.), *Applying care ethics to business* (pp. 221-244). New York: Springer.

Vandekerckhove, Wim, and M. S. Ronald Commers. "Whistle Blowing and Rational Loyalty." *Journal of Business Ethics*, vol. 53, no. 1/2, 2004, pp. 225–33. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25123295>.