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MACS 410

16 December 2012

<div align="center">Human Dignity in the Media</div>

The theory that resonates the most with media ethics is the Sacredness of Life

ethics. All three principles, Truth, Human Dignity, and Non-Violence, are essential, but

Human Dignity is most important to be promoted in the media world. Truth is a principle

that should always be searched for, but it is assumed to be present in media related issues.

If Human Dignity is upheld, the principle of Non-Violence will fall suit. Human Dignity

can be found as a key feature of all five communitarian theories.

Communalism seeks supremacy of the community. In Communalism, complete

truth in all circumstances is emphasized. This is shown through the respect of the elders,

because of their known integrity. Those who follow Communalism remove their

personal interests from situations and focus on the mutuality. Mutuality dictates that if

anyone in the community suffers, everyone else does as well. Mutuality also includes

everyone speaking together; their voice speaks for all of them. In addition to upholding

the truth, Communalists view non-violence as their strategy towards other people. If one

upholds the truth and pursues non-violence as a community, then peace is achieved.

Communalistic Ethics dictates that people should not only live in non-violence with other

human beings, but with *all* living communities. This includes nature. Rachel Carson and

Aldo Leopold taught and defined many environmental philosophies related to

Communitarian ethics. Carson and Leopold explained the human-nature relationship by

stating that, "[h]umans were to conserve nature, not merely consume it" (Christians, Fackler, and Ferre 120). Aidan Msafirir describes his Communitarian views towards nature to resemble, "the indigenous African vision of the interdependence between humanity, nature and the Supreme being" (Christians, Fackler, and Ferre 125).   Msafirir shows that Communalism expands past just human beings and it incorporates all living life. These communal ideas are rooted in the southern African philosophy of *Ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* states that, "I am because you are, and you are because we are" (Christians, Fackler, and Ferre 125). Ubuntu ethics argues that one cannot protect human life, pursuit of non-violence, without protecting all of life.

The coverage of the murders of Amish of Nickel Mine can be viewed through Communalist ethics lenses. The coverage started out as focusing on the life, intentions, and many other aspects of the murderer. However, when the Amish responded in a peaceful manner, the coverage soon changed to their reaction: the *community's* response. It was an amazing reaction by the Amish people, because although they were deeply hurt, they absolutely refused to condemn the shooter. This is an example of the Amish Grace, their form of Communalism. They displayed how forgiveness is able to transcend tragedy. They used non-violence as their principle, which is promoted by Communalism. Their non-violence was strong enough to change the reporting. The Amish became the story, as the coverage focused on their non-violent, communal life.

Islamic ethics centers on the promotion of good character, by the help of the teachings from the Qur'an. The understanding and application of the teachings in the Qur'an are essential to perfecting Islamic ethics. Islamic ethics teaches that all human beings must pursue what is good, and forbid those that are evil, in every sphere of life.

Muhammad, and Islamic prophet from God, is seen as an ideal follower to the commandments of following the good, who Muslims strive to imitate. Muhammad helped develop the Islamic ethics ideas based on the Qur'an and other Islamic holy writings. Those who follow Islamic ethics believe that they are called to fulfill the moral responsibility of following God's will.   The Qur'an dictates a set of standards to live by, which are the main teachings of Islamic ethics. Their commandments resemble the Christian Bible's Ten Commandments. The set of commandments from the Qur'an resemble ideas like only worshiping God, being kind, virtuous, and respectful, and always pursuing the good in life.   The actions of individuals must be with sincerity and for the right intention to be considered morally pure. Those who pursue Islamic ethics strive for absoluteness in their ethical journey, in anticipation for their judgment before God. This ethical journey is seen as always happening, because Islamic ethics teaches that every action in one's life has moral value to it. In order for an action to be moral, it must create justice. Like Aristotle's ethics, Islamic ethics wishes to find the middle path, between the two extremes.

Abortion is a modern issue that has long been debated. Using Islamic ethics as a framework, the ethics of abortion can be examined. There are many different reasons someone may wish to get an abortion. Islamic ethics teaches that every action in an individual's life has moral value to it, including an abortion. According to Islamic ethics, it is not just the action that determines the moral value, but mainly the intention of the action. Using Islamic ethics as the framework, the different intentions of an abortion determine the ethical value of the decision. If a woman becomes pregnant do to a rape, the abortion is ethical, according to Islamic ethics, since there was unwarranted violence

that caused the pregnancy. However, if the woman becomes pregnant due to premarital sex, the abortion would not be ethical because she was aware of the possible consequence of premarital sex. Intentions of the pregnancy determine the ethics of the abortion according to Islamic ethics.

Confucian ethics were created through the teaching of Confucius, a Chinese philosopher who lived in the fourth and fifth century BC. The cultures that follow Confucian ethics the most are in the East Asian countries. These ethics are well served to people in big cities. The main teachings of Confucian ethics believe that all humans are teachable and changeable through the work of the communal idea of improving ones own self. Those who follow Confucian ethics believe in perfecting their own virtue and improving their respect and care for others in the community. One should be wiling to give up their own life to uphold moral values. Relationships are a key component to Confucian ethics. Each individual has many different relationships with different types of people. For example, younger members of a society owe their older respect. However, the elders also owe the younger members their patience and benevolence that helps them become better individuals. There is a social harmony that is achieved when all members know their status and which virtues should be displayed. Humanism and character are other central beliefs of Confucian ethics. This includes the ideas that all members of a society can practice Confucian ethics, yet it does not matter if someone comes from a poor family, or is the emperor himself. The only aspect that counts is ones character. Superiority derives not from power or social status, but as ones virtue and character.   These superior individuals are known for standing firm on his or her believes, under all principles (Confucius 390). The superior individual does what is "proper" in

positions of both "wealth and honour," and "sorrow and difficulty" (Confucius 395).

Confucian ethics emphasizes non-violence by the pursuit of living in peace, civility and

equilibrium. There is also an emphasis on the enjoyment of life and live without regrets.

Those who follow Confucian ethics believe that one should rejoice and be happy because

all human beings are special and have worth.

Confucian ethics can be applied to the dilemma of journalists leaving or being

exiled. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 944 journalists have been

killed since 1992. According to Confucian ethics, their refusal to leave follows these

ethics depending on their intention for refusing to leave. A key component of Confucian

ethics is the willingness to give up one's life to uphold moral values. Although many

journalists have been killed, if they are pursuing the upholding of their moral virtues, then

it follows Confucian ethics. However, if their motives for staying are to gain income, or

something similar, their action does not uphold Confucian ethics. Although a path of

moderation is encouraged, if a journalist, who is a true follower of Confucian ethics,

believes that leaving would cause them to defy their ethics, then it is ethical for them to

stay and continue reporting. Confucius would have probably told them to go home.

However, that is looking at the issue when someone makes the choices for another

person, rather than one's own personal choice to uphold one's ethics, if deemed

necessary.

Sacredness of Life is a code of ethics that believes all life is holy and should be

protected. The Sacredness of Life should be viewed as a duty, in the same manner that

parents have a responsibility towards their children (Christians 11). Just as a parent's

duty is essential and timeless, the duty of Sacredness of Life is both essential and

timeless. Sacredness of Life applies to all cultures, and is founded on the same level of ethics towards all. Many believe that in order for ethical principles to be applicable, all life has to be respected and seen as holy. The respect and holiness of humans is rooted in human existence itself. Humans instinctively know this to be true, but are often swayed from this belief due to cultural influences. An individual may never purposely interfere with the existence of another human. This set of ethics is often viewed when looking at the two endpoints of life. The Pro-Life debate often promotes many ideas from the Sacredness of Life ethics to be pursued. Many of these issues are also raised towards the final stages of life when determining the most humane routes for those who are dying. There are also infinite instances between these two ends where life must be preserved. The physical human life is to be held in the highest respect. All life is understood to have a purpose, and all life must be kept sacred in all circumstances.

Hate speech is one type of action that can contradict the teachings of the Sacredness of Life ethics. Stormfront is a white supremacist website created by Don Black in 1996. The website was one of the first hate websites of its kind. Although the website legally is protected by free speech, it does not follow the Sacredness of Life code of ethics and beliefs. The website itself does not directly order the viewers to introduce violent; it just acknowledges the hate of non-whites. However, these statements of hate can greatly influence others to act on their own. Even though these people may act on their own, Stormfront influences them. Stormfront is aware of this phenomenon. Since they continue to promote hate, even after seeing the violent consequences, they are not upholding the ethics of the Sacredness of Life.

The ethics of Care stemmed from individuals critiquing existing ethics for not

focusing on relations and family life as much as they believed they should. In the ethics of Care, the welfare of the *other* dominates one's thinking. Unlike Utilitarian ethics, the welfare of the other is the primary step to achieving the ethics of Care. There are three main aspects to achieving this code of ethics: engrossment, motivational displacement and steadfast. Engrossment is the concept that one's own caring is preoccupied with the person who is being cared for. Motivational displacement is when an individual's motivation stems from the interest of another person. Steadfast displays that commitment towards another person does not change due to circumstances or situations. Like many other ethics, the ethics of Care acknowledges *all* humans to have sacred status. Other ethics, like Feminists ethics, are rooted in the ideas that make up the ethics of Care. Feminist ethics emphasizes the care in both private and public life. A main focus of the ethics of Care is the response to situations and how to respond. This set of ethics believes that all individuals are interdependent.   This means that one cannot successfully achieve all of their goals on their own. Ethics of Care also dictates that those who are especially vulnerable require more care. The level of their vulnerability determines the amount of additional attention that is required.

Due to the overwhelming obesity rate, filmmaker Spurlock wanted to see the effects of eating solely McDonald's for a month. He turned this research into a documentary, *Supersize Me*. *Supersize Me* can be analyzed to determine if it meets the standard for the ethics of Care. In order to determine if the documentary meets the standards of the ethics of care, Spurlock's main motive must be found. Spurlock explains that his intrigue for researching this was that two obese girls were suing McDonald's. They were blaming the Golden Arches for their weight problem. Spurlock seems to be

concerned about the obese population, but more interested in the slander of McDonald's. The audience can notice that Spurlock often becomes preoccupied with telling his own personal story, that the documentary seems to go off onto many, boring tangents. Spurlock's motivation is often displaced by his desire to be in the spotlight. There is more indication of Spurlock's desire to use this documentary to help his film career rather than seriously addressing the obesity problem. For these reasons, Spurlock does not meet the standards for the ethics of care.

Truth is one of the primary principles for international media ethics. Without the truth, ethical judgments cannot accurately be made. One must strive to find the truth in all situations by digging below cultural differences. The word truth in Greek is alethia. Alethia is the root of many Greek phrases. Alethia Kai Logos, meaning the Truth and the Word, refers to first seeking the highest truth possible, and then finding ones own interpretation of the word. In terms of communication, all news is seen as persuasive. Since the news may sometimes be misleading or biased, the viewer must search for the truth in the story. Since communication is symbolic, and filled with meaning, a single word can be interpreted in a variety of different ways. The viewer must find the truth as a prima-facia duty. This prima-facia duty is a self-evident duty. Even though the viewer should seek to find the highest level of truth, it is also the news providers' ethical duty to strive to deliver the truth. Almost every set of ethics bases its teachings on truth as a duty or virtue.   A certain level of truth is essential for any ethics to exist. Individuals must pursue the truth is everything that they do in order to have successful communication with other individuals.

The principle of the Truth is rooted in the Confucian ethics. Confucian ethics believe that individual is able to improve him or herself to become closer to ethical perfection. As one becomes ethically higher, they are pursuing the Truth. Confucian ethics says that in order for any of their ethics to be possible to follow, one must find the truth in the statements. Confucian ethics teaches that the eternal Truth is achieved through the combination of knowledge and self-improvement. God is seen as the supreme Truth, so pursuing the teachings of God helps individuals arrive at the eternal Truth. God believes that Truth is essential to guide fellow man in the correct direction.

Human Dignity, one of the main ethical principles, acknowledges the universal human right to a fair reputation. This right is not something that needs to be earned or can be taken away. A fair reputation is not just something that everyone has the right to, but it is something that everyone needs. Individuals that wish to pursue ethical virtues must be able to have their own dignity if they wish to ethically judge the actions of others. Human Dignity is inherent in all human beings. Human Dignity is the foundation for human rights. Every human being should be recognized as a valuable member to their society, and that they are special to this world. Although different cultures have differing views on human dignity, they all believe there is an inherent dignity within every human being. Every human has this dignity regardless of gender, race, or social status. Most cultures view Human Dignity as a gift from God and that it is an intrinsic characteristic that all members of a society embody.

The Sacredness of Life ethics can help to better understand the principle of Human Dignity. Sacredness of Life fundamentally embodies the principle of Human Dignity, in that it recognizes the sanctity of all human life. Sacredness of Life

demonstrates that no matter what situation or background a human is in, they have an inherent sacredness that cannot be taken away. Human Dignity is the root of the idea. There is an intrinsic human reputation that the Sacredness of Life ethics protects for all individuals. This reputation is derived from the principle of Human Dignity that dictates all humans are born with certain values and rights that cannot be appropriated.

Violence is something that has overtaken much of civilization since the beginning of human beings. Non-Violence is one of the three main ethical principles, which strives to promote peaceful ways. Violence is seen in all different cultures and all different spheres of life.   The violence in society is often aimed towards those who cannot represent or protect themselves. Leaders of many oppressive countries use force and violence to gain more control. This total control uses violence to instill fear and gain more power. The principle of Non-Violence teaches that it is the obligation of everyone to protect the innocent. Non-Violence not only helps to preserve life but also dictates a more peaceful norm to follow to establish a higher ethical ground.   Non-Violence is a main principle because violence often leaders to more violence. The pursuit of Non-Violence brings people to achieve an ethical ground that is filled with peace. Non-Violence is often established through the realization that all life is sacred and should be treated as such. In order to successfully achieve the principle of non-violence, all individuals involved must realize the love and peace that must exist between all members.

The Communalist ethics helps one to understand the ethical principle of Non-Violence. The teachings of Ghandi, a philosopher of Non-Violence, can be used to help better understand Non-Violence.   In communalism, one looks towards the elders for

advice because they have experience. Ghandi is an example of a wise elder. Ghandi was able to use the principle of seeking the Truth to inspire Non-Violence. Ghandi demonstrated that Non-Violence must be accomplished in a strategicly peaceful way. Leadership from a communal idea or point of view, like Ghandi's, must have a point of view that encompasses the majority of the community. Ghandi demonstrated the difference between controlling a democracy in a violent versus a Non-Violent way. When one uses violence to create a democracy, then hatred and counter-violence arise. However, when Non-Violence is used, one can gradually win over those who are opposed. Ghandi helped to prove that specific individual changes could in fact lead in the direction of a utopia.

When dealing with media ethics, Truth, Human Dignity and Non-Violence should all be advocated, but Human Dignity is the most vital principle. Truth is important because without it, the other principles are meaningless. If Human Dignity is pursued in the media, more peaceful actions will result. Human Dignity is an inherent quality that must be preserved in order for a higher ethical ground to be reached.

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