

**Virtue Ethics**

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Virtue ethics refers to theories that in them emphasize the role of character and virtues in moral philosophy rather focusing on one doing his duty or doing something to bring out a real moral consequence (Statman, 1997). It was propounded by two greatest philosophers Plato and more so Aristotle and at one point persisted as in the Western Moral philosophy until the Enlightenment period (Annas, 2009). The theory has three main directions which include the *Eudaimonism*, agent-based theories as well as the ethics of care. *Eudaimonism* places virtues in human as flourishing. Flourishing in this context refers to people performing their roles and functions at their best. According to Aristotle, our purpose as human beings is to reason and reason properly and therefore for us to have a life worth living, then we must have the full capability and ability to reason correctly (Shammer, 1989). Agent-based theories claim that virtues are supposed to be determined by our intuitions that come from our judgments we as observers of other people's admirable traits and characters. The last line of thought on virtue ethics is the ethics of care which was developed by feminists. It challenges the notion that ethics should just focus on the idea justice and autonomy and proposes that more feminist traits such as caring and nurturing should be much considered.

According to the scenario provided about Jill and Jake, the concept of virtue ethics can apply. The first thing that needs to put into consideration is the happiness for all the victims in this case, as the concept of *Eudaimonia* must be given priority. *Eudaimonia* is an Aristotelian term that means or translates to happiness. According to Aristotle's argument, any action is never pointless as it must always have an aim and every action must aim at some good (McDowell, 1995). This, therefore, means that before arriving at any action to be taken, there must be a consideration of whether the action can amount to some good to the victims or not. If not, then it follows without saying that the action should not be taken to a further step. According to this principle of

happiness what should be done is first to get to hear from both sides. According to the facts provided, we have been given on the one hand only thus from Jill. It will be crucial to get to hear what Jake says about the situation. After which there must be a reconciliation of the two parties. The two should be brought together in order to allow them continue interacting positively in school. It is also essential since the wise settlement of the issue will not allow many people to know what the problem was all about.

The reconciliation process must consider what Aristotle terms as our function as human beings. The function he mentions is that of reasoning. Reasoning properly will be a very important aspect of the bid for reconciling the parties. The parties must be given facts right with the intention of using the social media for academic purposes and be allowed to reason in that line after which determine whether their actions of using the social media outside class was a good option. If not, then it means that they should be remorseful of their personal action actions and reasoning and therefore should be encouraged to change their actions and stick to what would amount to maximum happiness to both of them. They should be made to understand that what they were doing was not going to grant them any happiness as it had already started giving them a stressful life. This is because their conduct had led to Jill blocking Jake that means that Jill did not want any form of interaction with Jake and yet they were in the same class. Jill was also unhappy with the fact that Jake was now sharing her pictures and personal information with other people. This was now amounting to a violation of the principles of virtue ethics where happiness and proper reasoning are the key factors.

Among the strengths of this theory is that it encourages human beings to be more virtuous. This, therefore, underscores the need for any ethical theory to make our decisions (Fukuyama, 1995).

It must also be appreciated that it focus and emphasizes much on the character in that if a person helps the poor out of compassion, then the person will be considered morally superior to that person who will do it out of duty (Nussbaum, 1999). If we do things out of duty, then it follows that at times even when we are not in the mood of doing it there is an obligation to do so, and there is no otherwise. It is like we conduct the actions out of our will which is against the virtue ethics. Virtue ethics considers having virtues within ourselves and using them as a driving force when doing our actions.

The critics of this theory have held that it is more self-centered. According to this criticism, morality is supposed to be about other people. It majorly deals with actions and to the extent of which they affect others within our society (Harman, 1999). This theory focuses much on the agent's character. It emphasizes much on the acquisition of virtues that which is an integral part of the development of one's character. Morality is supposed to focus on the interests of the others even when they are not in any way going to benefit us. We should consider much taking care of others than ourselves since even the happiness being talked about by the developers of this theory is to be general and should extend to everyone (Merritt, 2000). It is, therefore, wrong for people to struggle so much aiming at behaving kindly, compassionately, and honestly only because it will make us happy at the cost of others. It should be the other way round in that if the behavior is directed at gaining happiness to most of the people around us, then it would a positive gain in ethics. This objection fails to appreciate the importance of virtues within the theory especially about the virtue of kindness which is very essential in our coexistence. This makes this theory a stronger one compared to other morality theories.

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