

Knowledge carries an ethical responsibility philosophy essay



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We began collecting new information from the day we were born through various ways of knowing such as emotion and perception. This is because we want to learn about life and we do this by interpreting the knowledge that we possessed and possession is the state of owning something. At first we may not know or care what the knowledge that we possess carries and we continue to live our lives without knowing what they are. But as we grow in age, we may begin to question ourselves are we free to own this knowledge? Then questions may appear in our brains about the duties of carrying such knowledge and are we obligated to act upon the things we know? Does the possession of any type of knowledge carry an ethical responsibility? I agree on the claim to be reasonable that the possession of knowledge carries an ethical responsibility. Knowledge carries an ethical responsibility. My thesis is that our "knowledge" is interpreted from things that are representative of our social values, therefore knowledge comes with a certain level of responsibility accordingly to the social values.

I believe ethics and moral are quite different, ethics is the standard behavior expected by a group for example the society. According to Albert Schweitzer, "The first step in the evolution of ethics is a sense of solidarity with other human beings", solidarity is the bond shown by a society with people and those around them. We act because there is integration between us and those around us. If one holds the knowledge to another person's life, he/she is obligated to act upon it because of our social values. It is not ethical to watch the world burn if knowing you have the ability to stop it. But I will go into the knowledge issues that derive from this claim, in order to evaluate

the ethical responsibility of knowledge in different Ways of knowing and Areas of knowledge.

If one should take their own ethical responsibility for their knowledge then would a primary educated person measure the same standard of ethical responsibility as a professor? Should these ethical responsibilities be a fixed standard value or a scale standard value? The measurement of ethical responsibility should not be a fixed standard value because we perceive the values of the society differently but as soon as the "knowledge" is directly affecting someone else, regardless of it is positively or negatively, there should be a scale standard value. I am 18 years old and I am a heart transplant recipient. I am very thankful for organ donors. 4 years ago, I was diagnosed with a heart failure and in 2008 I was put on to the heart donation waiting list and for the whole year I was on the brink of death. But a family unknown to me agreed to donate an organ of their family member who had been in a very deep coma. That person has a small chance to wake up from the coma and reunite with his/her family. However, the family decided to give the patient a peaceful death and they "pulled the plug". The family had the choice of donating the organs or not. Looking back at the knowledge question, does the possession of knowledge that can save lives of many people carry an ethical responsibility? In this case, the claim depends on the nature of the knower, they donated the organs to those who are in need because they think they are ethically responsible to help the society. They placed social value higher than the small chance of their family member waking up. They acted as a utilitarian, maximizing the happiness in the society on the consequences of their actions; therefore the family believed it

is the right thing to do. However, if we are to look at this case with divine command theory where all morality is dependent on the will of God, the whole stand point in this case changes. Because at the very beginning, “pulling the plug” is an act of murder and it is against Gods’ will, therefore it is morally incorrect to do so, even though you know the result could save lives and the knower will not see the need of ethical responsibility.

At the center of this questions lies the different ways of knowing. As we learn in life, we also start to identify and distinguish that what is ethical and what is not in our society. Some we accept without doubt, just as we did when we our parent told us that stealing things which do not belong to us is wrong or teachers telling us that cheating in an exam or test is not acceptable. We learn what knowledge carries ethical responsibility from authority figures because these authority figures are respected as we believe they are more experience and “ knowledgeable” than us. But do these authority figures like scientist or a literature writer carry a higher responsibility than a normal person? I would argue that everyone should take their ethical responsibility of what they know or have done, therefore scientist or literature writer should take a higher responsibility because they are doing something that is influencing the society. But there is independence between knowledge and ethics. It is more of what ethics relies on. It can be argue that the responsibility of ethics relies on the ethical principle. For example if killing people in any situation must be wrong, then why do countries still have death penalty?

What is the ethical responsibility in natural science? There was a very interesting movie released in the year of 2005 called “ The Island” where <https://assignbuster.com/knowledge-carries-an-ethical-responsibility-philosophy-essay/>

groups of cloned humans are held captive in an isolated compound and they were told that the outer world is too contaminated for human to settle in. Every week the compound staffs will harvest the clones' organs for the people in the outer world who are willing to pay for the organs. If this scenario was real life, where would the ethics in this natural science of cloning in this scenario be? The buyer is of course suffering from an organ failure and is in need of an organ, the buyer knows the organ is harvested from his clone, what is the ethical decision and responsibility in this? If we are to look at this at a social stand point, it is definitely wrong to do such thing, although it is a clone, our social value sees that killing another human for your own needs is unacceptable and should be punished but the knower, the buyer may not see the same because his ways of knowing is different to the society and the way he/she see the ethical responsibility will be different. The biggest WOK in this is the emotion, the person is buying organs because of his strong emotion to live on and he would reason that the clone is a clone of himself and he may not see the responsibility in this case of action. I believe that in natural science, the need of ethical responsibility is more significant than in other area of knowledge.

Ethical responsibility in other Areas of knowledge can be a “ must” have, such as business in human science where ethical responsibility is equally needed. If a business knows chemical wastes are being produced during the production of their products, do they have the responsibility to clean up the waste caused by them? There are responsibilities when it is directly affecting the society, this is why there are laws and restriction restraining how much pollution the business can cause, but it does not force the business to clean

it up completely due to economic issues, but the business holds the final decision whether it should act ethically and clean everything. Again this depends on the owner of the business, the knower, to decide where he/she should act upon this. If he does, people may view the business as an ethical company, thus increasing the business image. Therefore, the business must have the ethical responsibility to not over pollute the environment but after that, the responsibility helping the environment depends on the knower.

To bring in some conclusions from the above arguments, should the possession of knowledge carries an ethical responsibility? Ethics is the standard behavior expected by the society and it makes our moral principle. Ethical responsibility is the principle that is restraining us from doing a certain things that would affect the order of the human society as a whole. So I agree on this claim to be reasonable that the possession of knowledge carries an ethical responsibility but there should not be a fixed standard to measurement these responsibilities.