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**MED 425 Final Paper**

The following paper is a manifesto written in defense of a hypothetical subject called “Eva”, who, in response to an anonymous Nazi sympathizer tweeting racist comments, proceeds to find the real identity of said sympathizer but decides not to share it with anyone, anywhere. Taking the point of view of right based ethical theories, I hope to sufficiently argue that Eva’s actions where those of the ethical kind, as hers are the actions that respect the individual-ness of the individual. I have structured this manifesto into three acts. Act I, where I elucidate the weight and importance that the discussion at hand carries, Act II, where I explain my argument and the ethical theory upon which it relies and finally Act III, where I provide potential counterpoints to my argument.

ACT I

The given theoretical situation is loaded, Eva, having gotten the information of the Nazi sympathizer, could as well have provided his information to the relevant authorities or leaked it to every social media account possible. Let’s say that Eva decided to opt for the alternative where-in she would leak the Nazi sympathizer’s information online(we will call this alternative 1), with this decision she would be defining the limits of her understanding of the ethical battlefield. Her understanding being that, firstly, the tweets of the Nazi sympathizer(who we will now call John) fall within a specific subset of actions, thoughts or opinions which she classifies as racist or racism.

Secondly, she would be taking as a given that publicly revealing previously private information about John is the right thing to do, in other words she takes doxing to be ethical and therefore is comfortable with taking justice into her own hands. Now let’s imagine that she opts for the alternative where-in she provided John’s information to the relevant authorities(we will call this alternative 2), here too she takes the same things for granted as she did in alternative 1 except that she is no longer comfortable with taking justice into her own hands but instead surrenders this issue to an authority she believes to be higher than hers, the authority of society at large, the authority of the legislative body of the state to be exact. Notice that both alternative one and two are utilitarian solutions to the problem, both alternatives take the convictions of the community at large to be greater than that of the individual.

Finally, let’s imagine that Eva opts for the alternative where-in she does nothing with the information she has at hand(which we will call alternative 3), here she does not take any action to reprimand John but she also doesn’t draw any line in the sand of the ethical battlefield, in other words, she does something, namely nothing. Tony Doyle in his paper *Privacy and perfect voyeurism*, describes her voyeurism to be of the perfect, undetected and unpublicized kind.

These topics have wide ranging importance in our daily lives but in particular they allow us to elucidate our current ethical epoch, it’s internal mechanism and it’s shortcomings. Take for example the case of Andrew Dodson, a man who in 2016 attended a “Unite the right” rally in Virginia USA. In the days after the rally he would be doxed and consequently would then lose his job and would eventually die the following year. The ethical enquiry here is of what ought to have been done? , one could make the argument for the dox, if as a society we agree to classify a set of specific actions, thoughts or opinions as racist/racism or hate speech and an individual is found openly disseminating this hate material, then why shouldn’t he/she be sanctioned? Hell, Mr Dodson was so enthusiastic about his views that he decided to attend a public rally and stand shoulder to shoulder with other Nazi’s and far right extremists, what is the dox doing that Mr Dodson is not already doing?. But Then again why couldn’t he and his cohorts be reported to the police? , his speech is clearly hateful and racist, are they not the appropriate authorities in this case?. The problem with both alternatives is that firstly, they depend on local interpretations(subjective, ground level) of what it means to be racist and not universal ones(subjective, big picture), meaning definitions of racist and non-racist may differ from person to person and from society to society. Secondly and even more pungent, they cannot be done without an inherent violation of Mr Dodson’s rights.

ACT II

My point of view is that the most ethical of the three alternatives is that in which Eva does nothing with the information she has about John, that which is ethical for me tends to lean towards right based theories of good, Of course it is difficult to venture into modern libertarian thought without running into John Rawls in one way or the other, mainly because most of everything that has been written post his work on the theory of justice contains discourses that relate to his work in one way or the other. In his book on political philosophy, Adam Swift elucidates Rawls’ famous thought experiment which involves a group of people who are amnesic to their talents, social backgrounds, economic background, political affiliations and their initial notions of the good who have to come together and agree on how a society to be should function, he(Swift) argues that this veil of ignorance will help shape the necessary pre-conditions for individuals to reach fair terms of social cooperation, particularly he posits that Rawls believed that people under these conditions would agree on the following principals:

1)Each individual will have an equal right to an extensive total system of basic liberties analogous to a system of liberty for all.

2)Social and Economic inequalities are to be structured such that:-

(a)They are both to the greatest benefit of the least well off.

(b)They are both attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

The Rawlsian veil of ignorance thought experiment is, I think, wrong in taking for granted that people are risk/ambition averse, this may not always be the case, moreover, I do not agree with the coercive welfare state that the second principle endorses. The first principle is that in which the bulk of my argument lies , the alternative where in which Eva does nothing is the alternative that respect’s the right of the individual the most, alternatives 1 and 2 are too utilitarian, too mob like and too discourse averse to be ethical, it is the fundamentally libertarian idea of the separateness of persons, this freeing of the individual from the collective, that fosters conditions within which people can perform the re-evaluation of ethical epochs that I alluded to in the previous section. Take for example, the civil rights movement in the USA during the 60s, was this movement not borne out of estrangement of the so called black Americans from American society at large?, what about the Nietzschean thesis on the meekness of the Christian religion?, where in his *Genealogy Of Morals* he ascribes Christianity’s ethics to be that of a pompous self-righteous slave morality, where-in so called justice is built on and centered around resentment. Are not the new and truly revolutionary ideas and inventions within the natural sciences, philosophy and art almost all born out of a break from how the particular ecologies within these fields say things should be done?.

Moreover, within the modern context, information and the possession of information i.e. privacy, is enveloped within the increasing datafication of our lives and is inherently linked with this debate. I argue that even in this sense Eva has not done anything wrong to John, simply because no physical or mental harm has come to him by her seeing his information. If privacy is the ability to control personal information, then Eva has de facto honored John’s privacy by not sharing it with anybody, she has spared him of having to deal with the social , emotional and/or physical repercussions of having his private information leaked which is what, I think, that people really alluding to when they reference privacy.

ACT III

They reader may have some points of contention with the arguments above, firstly with the solution utility(or lack there of) of the alternative I have chosen to fight for, all well and good but the problem at hand will not be solved if Eva chooses to do nothing. To this I reply that the other two alternatives don’t really provide a solution either, all you will do is push the problem out of sight and out of mind, neo-Nazi-ism will not simply vanish just because this one person serves jail time or has his life ruined by a dox, not only that, but by going with alternatives 1 or 2, one runs the risk of actually vindicating those who consider themselves neo-Nazi’s because then they’ll have as it were a fallen soldier of the cause who has been martyred , this will nurture a sense of righteousness and therefore would result in even greater conviction.

The one people’s project in their article called *Beautifying Andrew Dodson, The Human Reichstag,* reported an actual case of exactly this problem. In the article they write that(I’m paraphrasing here), In the wake of Andrew Dodson’s death, his fellow Neo-Nazi’s began to talk him up on far right and nationalist blogs and social networks in order to portray Dodson as a person who was lashed at and labeled a terrorist for suggesting that white people should be allowed to exist as white people. Richard Spencer, a prominent far right leader*,* would also start a hashtag online claiming that the dox of Andrew Dodson was an “act of war”. Alternative 3 in and of itself will not solve the problem, but it is a start at least, Eva thereafter ought go even further and ask(herself and John if possible) what is the reasoning behind those hurtful comments, there in is the beginning of discourse.

Secondly, the reader may disagree with Eva’s voyeurism, one may argue that sure nothing has physically or mentally(so far as we know) harmed John, but on principle Eva is in the wrong because she has robbed John of his privacy. To that I say what privacy?, if Eva was able to simply(and legally) track his digital footprints and connect the dots with a few internet searches then the information was already easily accessible in the first place, John’s information was on the internet, the internet is public space, simple as. One could go even further and say, even if the information was easily accessible, John did not consent to Eva accessing it, to this I respond that John would do himself a lot of good by reading the terms of service then, because thereafter he would find that uploading something on the internet, no matter the intent, comes with an intrinsic passing over of consent to the viewers to be of this content. Alas, it seems the only false sense of privacy here is of John’s own doing, he didn’t read the fine print as it were, he wasn’t careful with where he put his information and of what information he was putting up and is was his racist tirade that sparked Eva’s curiosity in the first place. Which then leads me to ask, a little harsh maybe, but what right really does John have to say to Eva not to view his information?. The arguments that I have posited above, I think, seem to indicate that he has none.

Conclusion

In this document I tried to present an argument for why a hypothetical subject “Eva” ought to do nothing with the information she has on a Nazi sympathizer. I have tried to show that Eva’s voyeurism does not harm and since it does not, then it is not wrong. Only if her voyeurism were to cause harm(i.e. in alternatives 1 and 2) does she have any obligation to cease and desist. I have ventured to elucidate the ethical-ness of Eva doing nothing by adopting the libertarian idea of a system of basic liberties for all, of which I used to argue for the Nazi sympathizer to be treated as an end in and of himself/herself , I tried to show that the ethics and/or justice that would’ve been administered in alternatives 1 and 2 may actually be not clearly thought out and may be shallow in nature, not only that, they also do not respect the individual-ness of individuals. I also tried to put across the importance of inspecting the internal mechanisms of our ethical convictions, by emphasizing the need for discourses between different ethical view points even(and most especially maybe) on the individual level.

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