

Pacifism and Virtue Ethics

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The most common formulations of the pacifist position are built from a perspective of act-based ethics. Yet when confined to these moral systems, the doctrine of pacifism faces substantial difficulties. However, the alternative moral theory of virtue ethics provides a groundwork upon which a stronger version of pacifism may be developed. In this paper I will consider various forms of pacifism that rely on an act-based perspective, with a focus on absolute pacifism as the most consistent of these forms, and present major arguments against pacifism within this traditional structure. I will then explore the nature and advantages of a pacifism based on virtue ethics, along with specific relevant virtues and vices, possible objections, and social implications of a theory of virtue pacifism.

Act-based Versions of Pacifism

Pacifism can be generally defined as an ethical theory that holds the use of force to be morally impermissible. A “use of force” can be further described as an act that inflicts a particular outcome upon another being against his or her will (Narveson, 1965, p. 266). The concept of force is often used in close connection with that of violence, which I understand as a type of force that causes direct harm to another human being. These terms are frequently used vaguely, relying on common sense understanding, and I will not try to define them more clearly here.

It is important to specify that pacifism is not simply the belief that violence is evil or that killing should be avoided, which are views that most moral people hold. Pacifism is distinguished by the belief that it is morally wrong to use force even in response to violence. At the heart of traditional pacifism is a high valuation of human life, which pacifists uphold so absolutely that they deny that any end could sufficiently justify treating another human with violence (Kelley, 2006). The theory that most consistently applies this concept—absolute

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pacifism—rules all uses of force morally wrong. Yet the doctrine of pacifism has been expressed in a variety of versions that offer different answers to key questions. Many rule-based views that have been understood to carry the pacifist spirit must be put in a separate class from absolute pacifism.

One issue that pacifist positions must address is the question of to whom their doctrine applies. A specific stream of pacifism states that only people who hold to the pacifist doctrine have a duty not to respond to violence with force. One major problem with this view is that it does not present the rejection of force as a universal moral principle but leaves it as a matter of personal choice. Jan Narveson points out that this preference for nonviolence could be held just as well by non-pacifists (1965).

In response to these arguments Craig Ihara defends a version of pacifism based on the belief that while it is not morally wrong to not live as a pacifist, “a life of nonviolence is a morally preferable way of life” (1978, p. 369). Thus pacifists fulfill a supererogatory role, doing good that goes beyond the requirements of universal duty. It is significant that, as Ihara recognizes and as will be addressed below, this view highlights the inadequacy of traditional ethical theories which find it difficult to account for acts of supererogation.

The main consideration in classifying versions of pacifism is the degree to which they prohibit the use of force. Different views on this issue can be roughly located along a continuum that places absolute pacifism at one extreme and just war theory at the other. According to Duane Cady in *From Warism to Pacifism*, these two extremes also differ fundamentally in how they relate means and end when considering the value of human life (Kelley, 2006). Just war theory holds that the use of force as a means may be necessary when there is a goal that is more important than individual life or well-being. Absolute pacifism denies that any goal can justify the use of force that threatens human life.

The first step away from absolute pacifism on Cady’s continuum is the theory that force is permissible if it is not lethal (Kelley, 2006). While this view recognizes both the value of human life and practical challenges to absolute pacifism, it opens up a slippery slope that may justify a variety of violent actions

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(Kelley, 2006). In a rule-based ethics this theory would likely require a detailed system of guidelines for application.

Andrew Kelley argues that every other view along the continuum falls under the same teleological principle as just war theory. All versions apart from absolute pacifism and the “non-lethal” view allow that “there are certain conditions under which respect for the value of a single human life may be overridden by other concerns,” and every view except absolute pacifism justifies force in some situations (Kelley, 2006, p. 220).

One theory that has been identified with pacifism permits the use violence only when necessary to defend other people, thus prohibiting force in self-defense. This view requires an explanation as to what differentiates oneself from all other people and how a threat to others is enough to justify the evil of using force while a threat to self is not (Narveson, 1965). A modification of this view, the assertion that force may be used only in defense of people who cannot defend themselves, is still inconsistent because it simultaneously declares that “everyone ought to put himself in the position of people who are defenseless by refusing to defend himself” (Narveson, 1965, p. 265). If this rule was universally applied, its outcome would be equivalent to the previously-mentioned view: everyone should by duty be unable to defend himself, yet obligated to defend everyone else. Narveson argues that if the denouncement of force leads to the denial of an individual right to self-defense in principle, then the general use of force for defense must also be denied. The difficulties of each of these less-than-absolute theories leads to the conclusion, shared by both Narveson and Kelley, that absolute pacifism is the most coherent and philosophically relevant expression of the pacifist ideal.

A final theory to consider before critiquing absolute pacifism is one that replaces the deontological approach of the views already considered with a consequentialist ethic. This theory considers pacifism to be “desirable as a tactic” and promotes nonviolence as a means to bring about the best possible results (Narveson, 1965, p. 263). This view faces the clear difficulty that the refusal to use force does not always create better results than the opposite

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option, and it shares the classic utilitarian difficulty of the unpredictability of consequences. The claim that a pacifist approach is significantly effective also does not necessarily establish an absolute principle or basis for judging right and wrong (Narveson, 1965). People who espouse a just war principle may also recognize that nonviolent methods are desirable in many cases.

Among all the act-based theories that have been identified with pacifism, absolute pacifism is the most consistent because it holds simply and without qualification to the view that the use of force is morally wrong. According to Kelley, this view “represents the true spirit of pacifism” (2006, p. 221). Absolute pacifism also offers a unique understanding of the world, challenging the assumption that violence and force are a necessary part of human interactions. It sets an ideal for individual and communal morality, making nonviolence a goal that must be pursued (Kelley, 2006).

Despite its attractiveness, the traditional version of absolute pacifism faces several fundamental difficulties. A simple argument against traditional absolute pacifism has been laid out by Narveson, who criticizes the doctrine as fundamentally inconsistent. The basic point is that pacifism depends on an objection to violence, but there may be some cases in which the use of force is the only means possible of preventing an act of violence. Central to Narveson’s argument is the issue of personal rights: “In saying that violence is wrong, one is at the same time saying that people have a right to its prevention, by force if necessary” (1965, p. 269). The concept of having a right entails the ability to prevent that right from being infringed upon, regardless of a person’s willingness to use that ability. Narveson’s objective is to show that even if a person believes violence is wrong, the use of force is not unjustifiable for that person. A person may still choose to reject her own right to self-defense, but if she is truly opposed to violence she cannot consistently refuse to defend the rights of others (Narveson, 1965).

A major weakness in Narveson’s argument is his idea that a refusal to use force to prevent violence effectively justifies the initial violence. Yet an absolute pacifist could claim that by refusing to respond with force they are

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condemning the initial violence on principle: All uses of force are wrong, and it is never justifiable to respond in kind to a wrong action. This view follows the spirit of the biblical command not to repay evil for evil (Romans 12:17).

However, the absolute claim that it is always wrong to use force is problematic in itself. A different criticism of pacifism argues that the use of force cannot be recognized as inherently morally right or wrong. Kelley offers an example of someone who uses force to prevent a friend from killing herself. Most people would recognize that while it would be preferable not to have to use force in a given situation, it would also not necessarily be morally wrong (Kelley, 2006). If we alter the argument by prohibiting only the use of force that causes harm or threatens the life of another, we face complex questions of how intentions relate to actual consequences.

The argument that absolute pacifism is inconsistent can be restructured based not on individual rights or rules about the use of force but on the inherent value of human beings. Kelley states that there are cases when the use of force “may be more in tune with the spirit of pacifism,” meaning that in practice the application of absolute pacifism may not always be the best way to express a respect for human life (2006, p. 223). Simone Weil makes a similar argument with her claim that nonviolence should not be used unless it would more effectively counter violence than the use of force. Weil qualifies this view, however, with the idea that humans must work towards a world where nonviolence is in fact predominately effective (1952, p. 137).

According to Kelley, the main problem with absolute pacifism is that upholds the “duty not to use force” as absolute, even when it conflicts with other duties such as the well-being of a friend. This difficulty for pacifism, however, “stems from the failure of the moral theory on which it rests to be able to address adequately the problem of how to resolve conflicts between duties.” Thus the weakness is found in act-based theories in general, not in the ideal of pacifism (Kelley, 2006, p. 222).

In the context of act-based ethics, pacifism can be understood as one extreme that goes too far in the opposite direction from just war theory. Cady

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points out that a balanced ethical theory must not focus on duty without any respect for consequences, as absolute pacifism has been accused of, nor elevate an end so as to justify any means (Kelley, 2006).

An Alternative Approach to Pacifism

The contemporary field of ethics is characterized by a diversity of moral theories and systems. Alasdair MacIntyre declares that “each premise employs some quite different normative or evaluative concept from the others, so that the claims made upon us are of quite different kinds” (1993, p. 279). John H. Yoder concludes that when people critique a variety of pacifist views, they tend to stray from the true issue by “simply talking past one another out of logically incompatible prior assumptions” (1971, p. 129). Yoder advises the evaluation of each version of pacifism in its own system. As this paper has attempted to demonstrate, when judged on their own terms, pacifist theories founded on act-based systems display major weaknesses.

Virtue ethics offers an ancient alternative approach that has been revived within the past century. Instead of focusing on individual actions, virtue ethics addresses individual character; it emphasizes “being” instead of “doing.” A moral system based on virtue holds the potential to be more holistic than act-based systems. The purpose of virtues relates to the good of specific practices, individual lives, societies, and the traditions that provide context for individual lives (MacIntyre, 1993). By avoiding becoming bogged-down in detailed considerations of rules and consequences, an ethics centered on personal character also sheds a different light on what it means to be pacifistic and may allow us to come closer to the heart of the pacifist doctrine.

The major advantages of virtue ethics can now be applied to formulate a stronger version of pacifism. The most significant consideration is that since individual character shapes every facet of a person’s life, a virtue pacifism must do likewise. Such a pacifism would also rely on positive standards instead of on entirely negative prohibitions. Kelley distinguishes between “negative peace,” a

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lack of external conflict, and “positive peace,” a state of harmony that includes a “conscious attempt” to preserve such harmony for the future (2006, p. 219). Kelley’s version of pacifism makes positive peace or harmony the “goal of life” at both the individual and societal levels (p. 225). This goal may also be expressed in terms of the biblical concept of *shalom*, which Nicholas Wolterstorff identifies with a society entirely characterized by peaceful relationships and the enjoyment of life (1980, p. 79). André Comte-Sponville similarly differentiates between traditional “*pacifists*” who oppose all war, and what he calls the “*peaceable*, who are prepared to defend peace even with the use of force” (1996, p. 191).

In Aristotelian terms, positive peace could be understood as a component of *eudemonia* or living well, or as an element that contributes to the fulfillment of the natural human *telos* or proper end. Thus the virtues that a person must live in accordance with in order to achieve a good life necessarily include those that promote a state of harmony or peace.

Kelley points out that while act-based theories tend to relate only to cases that directly involve some use of force, a positive pacifism would address both the motives and effects of each decision with consideration of how an individual lifestyle contributes to a larger goal of peacefulness in society (2006). In other words, “peace is something that we must work at continually and in all aspects of our lives” (Kelley, 2006, p. 224).

Virtue ethics has also been applauded for recognizing the complexity of many moral decisions and offering flexibility in evaluating particular cases. Just as the less-than-absolute varieties of pacifism previously discussed attempt to take specific circumstances into account, in each case virtue pacifism would weigh all the relevant factors of behavior in relation to personal character. When peace is made the goal of every action, the individual could be justified in using force when necessary to pursue ultimate peace, yet she would be extremely cautious in doing so (Kelley, 2006, p. 225).

Another strength of virtue ethics is that it emphasizes the development of personal character through the teaching and practice of virtues. A key

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component of this process is the imitation of individuals who are recognized as examples of virtuous character. A pacifist would thus emphasize studying the lives of figures recognized for their peace-promoting standards in order to develop the same positive traits as those people. Different individuals may be upheld as examples of different virtues, and the same may be true for vices. According to William Frankena, the recognition of a moral ideal is critical in motivating one to be a certain kind of person (1993). One interesting implication of these concepts is a high valuation of history, art, and other disciplines that offer insight into human character. Considerations of particular people and whole societies may lead to an understanding of how actions are shaped by character and values, knowledge that is valuable in making practical decisions.

Related to the issue of individual examples is that of supererogatory acts. As previously mentioned, virtue ethics more readily accounts for such acts than duty-based or consequentialist ethics does. This allows for the argument that there may be some cases in which the use of force is not morally wrong, yet it is morally better not to use force, regardless of rights or consequences. In the version of pacifism defended by Ihara, a pacifist is one more radically committed to a standard of nonviolence than average people. Because a pacifist has made a specific decision to set the principle of not doing harm to another person as her highest ideal, she may not be morally obligated to violate that ideal even in cases where the use of force would be the right choice for most people (Ihara, 1978).

Particular Virtues and Vices

A pacifistic theory grounded in virtue ethics should include the consideration of specific virtues and vices. Such an exploration offers additional insight into how positive pacifism can be pursued; it also raises issues about the strengths and weaknesses of both pacifism and virtue ethics in general.

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First we will address one of the major vices that stands in opposition to the spirit of pacifism: cruelty. This term is generally used to describe behaviors that show little consideration for the rights, well-being, or inherent value of other living beings. It is closely tied to the vice of malice, which is more directly “the *pointless* but deliberate infliction of suffering” (Taylor, 1993, p. 336). Like all virtues and vices, the nature of cruelty goes deeper than specific acts or expressions. Richard Taylor argues that when confronted with cruelty, humans have a natural moral revulsion that does not derive from considerations of either the rationality or the consequences of malicious actions. Instead, we look at the motives and character of the people who perform cruel actions and denounce them as vicious individuals (Taylor, 1993). Taylor goes so far as to say that the principle which makes acts of violence morally evil is not based on the fact that the loss of human life is itself an evil, because such loss is a necessary part of reality; death often results from human actions that are not considered morally wrong, such as in auto accidents. Instead, malice is repugnant because of what is in the hearts of those who act heartlessly (Taylor, 1993).

The virtue commonly recognized as the opposite of cruelty is compassion, which shares in the sufferings of others instead of gaining pleasure from suffering (Comte-Sponville, 1996). Taylor argues that both cruelty and compassion transcend rationality: cruelty because it is unjustifiable, and compassion because it is driven by a deep impulse that goes beyond logical reasoning (1993). The only satisfactory motivation for people to act morally for the benefit of the common good, Taylor concludes, is an innate capacity for compassion (1993, p. 339).

Other prominent thinkers such as Rousseau have upheld the belief that compassion or pity is a natural part of what makes us human (Comte-Sponville, 1996). In *The Ethics*, Spinoza identifies compassion (*miser cordia*) with the capacity of love to value another human enough to take joy in his successes and to be saddened by his sufferings. This virtue leaves no room for the hatred of people, only of unhappiness itself (Comte-Sponville, 1996, p. 109). Spinoza’s view distinguishes compassion from mere pity (*commiseration*), which can only

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apply in cases of suffering. Another possible distinction is that unlike pity, compassion also requires respect and excludes contempt for the other person. Hannah Arendt further proposes that compassion recognizes only individuals and particulars, while pity can be abstract and generalized (Comte-Sponville, 1996, p. 114).

Even if compassion and pity are understood as natural human capacities primarily experienced as emotion, the role of reason and principles need not be excluded. A major weakness of pure virtue theory, such as that advocated by Taylor, is that it does not provide adequate explanation for why virtues are good and it allows too much subjectivity in judgments about right or wrong actions. As illustrated in Kelley's theory of positive peace, virtue ethics requires an ultimate goal or good with which virtues may align and from which principles for action may be derived (MacIntyre, 1993).

In response to multiple weaknesses of virtue ethics, a variety of ethicists have attempted to combine a focus on virtue with the strengths of act-based or principle ethics. Comte-Sponville proposes that both virtue and duty are essential and complementary, though duty is a "constraint" while virtue is a "freedom" (1996, p. 222). Frankena likewise states that every virtue or disposition to act in a certain way corresponds with a principle that defines how that virtue should be expressed (1993).

In defining the specific virtue of compassion, Comte-Sponville offers a principle based on the inherent value of living creatures: Sharing in another person's pain "means that one refuses to regard any suffering as a matter of indifference or any living being as a thing" (1996, p. 106). Compassion thus entails a deliberate commitment, not simply a natural reaction in an immediate situation. In *The Metaphysical Principles of Virtue*, Kant, the greatest proponent of deontological ethics, also recognizes the relation between virtue and duty. Kant states, "But though it is not in itself a duty to feel pity and so likewise to rejoice with others, active sympathizing with their lot is a duty. To this end it accordingly is an indirect duty to cultivate our natural (sensitive) feelings for others" (Kant, 1797/1964, p. 122).

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Closely related to compassion is the virtue of gentleness. Comte-Sponville makes the distinction that “compassion suffers at the suffering of others; gentleness refuses to produce or increase suffering” (1996, p. 186). Directly opposed to aggressiveness and violence, gentleness combines both love and strength expressed in a peaceful manner. It entails the controlled use of power shaped by a commitment to avoid harming others (Comte-Sponville, 1996). Aristotle describes gentleness in relation to the appropriate use of anger, as the mean between being hot-tempered and spineless (Comte-Sponville, 1996, p. 190).

Comte-Sponville argues that absolute pacifism is problematic because it upholds the principle of gentleness as an absolute, while in fact no specific virtue can be absolute or adequate in itself. In its proper role, gentleness does not reject all possibility of using violence, since this would prevent people from doing whatever is necessary to defend the goal of peace that gentleness aims for (Comte-Sponville, 1996). A key problem for Comte-Sponville, I believe, is his denial of any absolute values and his rejection of the concept of good as *telos*. Yet he does make a valuable argument that the various virtues must complement each other. He states that even the preservation of human life cannot be unconditionally upheld, since choices must be made in relation to particular circumstances. Still, gentleness requires the avoidance of violence as much as possible (Comte-Sponville, 1996).

In *Gravity and Grace* Simone Weil offers a principle for the application of gentleness that determines when the use of violence may be justified. She states, “to keep the love of life within us; we never have to inflict death without accepting it for ourselves” (Weil, 1952, p. 138). Thus a person can only take the life of another when she would still be willing to do so even if the action required the loss of her own life. Weil is specifically addressing the motivations for war, but her principle can be applied in individual cases. Strictly followed, this rule would not justify force used in self-defense and sets the standard of gentleness very high.

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Ultimately, virtues such as compassion and gentleness may be brought together under the more comprehensive virtue of love. According to Weil, love is the affirmation of the existence of another human being (1952, p. 113). Drawing upon Weil, Comte-Sponville describes *agape*, the form of love traditionally understood to be shown by God, as the opposite of violence. Such love does not seek its own good or use force to gain control, but expresses itself through generous respect for others (Comte-Sponville, 1996). Kant recognizes that in its pure sense, love, like compassion, is a disposition that cannot be made obligatory. Yet Kant proposes that all duties are based on an obligation of “practical love,” which acts according to the ideal of love; as Comte-Sponville states, “Act as though you loved” (1996, p. 224).

In Andrew Kelley’s version of pacifism, love is established as the foundational virtue. The ideal character trait of *agape* is the means for pursuing the goal of peace or harmony and offers a guiding standard in difficult decisions (Kelley, 2006). When making a judgment about whether violence is justified to promote peace in a particular situation, a person should consider whether the action reflects what a “truly loving person” would do. In this view, emphasis on the virtue of love could complement a commitment to avoid using force. One of history’s most prominent pacifists, Gandhi, expressed this concept when he stated, “Non-violence is a dormant state. In the waking state it is love” (Kelley, 2006, p. 226).

Other virtues especially pertinent to a doctrine of pacifism may include tolerance, temperance or self-control, and patience. Selflessness and generosity must be recognized, since the strongest expressions of pacifism have been historically tied to a willingness to sacrifice for a higher good. Also critical is the virtue of forgiveness, which Comte-Sponville identifies with mercy as the opposite of resentment (1996). This virtue deserves particular attention in light of the fact that much of the violence committed throughout history, from the individual to the national level, is tied to long-standing grudges and bitterness. Forgiveness or mercy is generally more difficult than compassion; it requires a deliberate choice to overcome hatred and accept the wrong-doer as a fellow

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human being (Comte-Sponville, 1996). Another essential complement to love and gentleness is justice, which includes respect for all human beings and which is necessary to create a harmonious society where a commitment to nonviolence can be effective.

Further Considerations

Most people would likely recognize these and related virtues as desirable. What would distinguish the role of such virtues in a virtue-based pacifism is that each person would cultivate them with the clear goals of becoming someone who lives according to the spirit of pacifism, and of promoting harmony in society. The individual and social *telos* to which virtues align—the good life, human flourishing, or however it is described—must include the ideal of positive peace as a primary component. As Wolterstorff suggests, the ideal of shalom is comprehensive enough to provide a goal towards which all responsible human action properly aims (1980). One issue that deserves further attention may be specific virtues that focus entirely on this goal. For example, Jesus proclaimed a blessing for “those who make peace” (*eirenopoioi*; Matthew 5:9), and the New Testament uses a different Greek term to recognize the virtue of being peaceable or peace-loving (*eirenikos*; James 3:17). However, since virtue ethics addresses overall character, none of the human virtues is irrelevant to this discussion. Ideally, a holistically virtuous person and a positive pacifist should be one and the same.

The connection between personal virtue and a well-ordered society is a crucial element of virtue ethics. MacIntyre points out how individual identity and well-being is shaped by social context, so that moral development must be pursued as part of membership in a community (1993). From a distinctly Christian perspective, Yoder speaks of the “messianic community” which together lives out pacifism as “a foretaste of God’s kingdom. The pacifistic experience is communal in that it is not a life alone for heroic personalities but for a society” (1971, p. 124). Drawing on biblical visions of shalom expressed

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in harmonious and joyous communities, Wolterstorff also stresses that at the heart of Christianity lies a “promise of peace in all dimensions,” both personal and social (1980, p. 79-80).

Kelley argues that the value of peace or harmony for democracy should make pacifism a realistic and desirable approach even in the political arena. A commitment to peacefulness should be cultivated at all levels of society, resulting in greater harmony both internally and in relation to the outside world (Kelley, 2006). The implications of any form of pacifism would have to be worked out differently in regard to issues of international relations and warfare versus individual and social concerns; yet the same principles are relevant in every sphere.

Some of the strongest objections to this version of pacifism, as already mentioned, involve the inadequacies of virtue ethics as a foundational moral theory. While I believe that virtue ethics has many advantages over alternative theories and offers great potential for moral philosophy, I agree with critics such as Frankena that this approach should be complemented with insights from act-based ethics. Within this more comprehensive perspective, the strongest version of pacifism would be a “positive pacifism” that focuses not on prohibitions but on individual and social character defined by both actions and traits in line with a goal of stable, comprehensive peace.

This description invites a final weighty question: Is this version of the theory truly pacifism? By recognizing that the use of force may sometimes be permissible or even necessary as part of the pursuit of peace, the positive pacifism described above departs from the consistent ideal of absolute pacifism and may be identified with a cautious version of the just war theory. It might be argued that the ideal of harmony is one upheld by most sensible people, and that the positive pacifist perspective may be claimed by those who occasionally resort to violence at either the individual or international level.

In response to this question, we may return to the idea of a continuum that includes varying degrees of pacifism. A foundation of virtue ethics could be used to support different views along this spectrum, and each person who

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subscribes to virtue pacifism must decide what degrees of force she believes to be permissible. However, by focusing on character and motivation, virtue ethics relies less on hypothetical cases or precise rules for behavior that pinpoint one position out of many. The positive pacifism I have described may be identified as several degrees removed from the extreme of absolute pacifism. Yet it is still distinct from the opposite end of the spectrum because it is based on the spirit of pacifism, with a strong presumption in favor of peace.

Perhaps the strongest message of any theory that identifies itself as pacifistic is that the majority of individuals and societies have not done and are not doing enough to promote the goals of peace and harmony. Ultimately, positive pacifism seeks to affirm both the high idealism of absolute pacifism and a more realistically consistent understanding of the world. A pacifism that stresses virtue ethics offers comprehensible, attractive goals that relate to each person as a complete moral being. Such a view argues that those who desire peace cannot rely on mere humane inclination but must actively seek the cultivation of virtuous motivation, behavior, and character in each individual and in society as a whole. This is a pursuit that also requires a willingness to make personal sacrifices and even to risk erring on the side of the gentler virtues. Any generally successful effort may require a significant change in perspective for an entire culture. Yet one of the strengths of virtue ethics is the understanding that moral formation begins with the individual, in the formation of one virtuous human life.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued that traditional versions of pacifism that rely on principle-based ethics are unsatisfactory. Absolute pacifism, the view that most consistently upholds the ideal of nonviolence, is in itself inconsistent and takes the pacifist principle to an unbalanced extreme. In response to these problems, I have attempted to elaborate a stronger version of pacifism based on the perspective of virtue ethics. Such a positive pacifism would focus on

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comprehensive peace as the goal of human action and would promote the cultivation of personal virtues such as gentleness and compassion. This endeavor opens up further questions, particularly regarding technical categorization, practical application, and the need to supplement virtue ethics with principles of action. Yet overall, I believe that the combination of virtue ethics and pacifism offers rich potential for the field of ethics and for the future of human society.

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