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“The possession of knowledge carries an ethical responsibility.”

For centuries, people have dwelled upon the idea of knowledge carrying an ethical responsibility and many may claim that, “The possession of knowledge carries an ethical responsibility”. Even though this claim may seem straightforward and direct, there are different aspects in which we need to take into consideration so we can determine what this claim actually means. Therefore, we must evaluate this claim and speculate all of its aspects. Before we can evaluate this claim, we must first determine what the term knowledge means. Although knowledge has no real definition, it can be described as the work done by many people. One of the ways in which we are capable of evaluating this claim, is through the Ways of Knowing and the Areas of Knowledge. Within Theory of Knowledge, there are many Ways of Knowing and Areas of Knowledge that can be applied when evaluating this claim like Perception, Reason, Memory, Human Sciences, Ethics and History. Using these specific Ways of Knowing and Areas of Knowledge, I believe that the statement “the possession of knowledge carries an ethical responsibility” means that you have a moral duty to preserve the knowledge in its absolute form without causing uncertainties or creating falsified information.

One of the ways we are capable of evaluating this claim, is through perception, for perception allows us to have different perspectives. By using Perception, we are able to view this claim’s ethical aspect, which allows us the opportunity to determine whether or not knowledge actually carries an ethical responsibility. One concept of perception which allows us to see how our sense of perception is able to be manipulated, is through seeing and believing. According to the Theory of Knowledge textbook, it states that believing is seeing, for our expectations can affect our perception. For example, when I show you a series of dots and tell you that all of them are going to be green you immediately expect that all of them must be green. However, when I show you a random orange dot within the series, your expectations, due to me telling you that all the dots will be green, will tell you that it’s a mistake and that the dot is actually green. This relates to the concept of seeing is believing, for you perceived the orange dot as if it was green. Thus, this states that people have a tendency to create images based on what they think is there, rather than what is actually there. This connects back to my thesis statement, for through perception, we are able to see how information may become falsified. Therefore this Way of Knowing, Perception, helps extinguish the factors that may cause falsified information when we possess knowledge.

Another Area of Knowledge that will help us further evaluate this claim and allow us to grasp the moral concept of our responsibility that knowledge carries, stated in the claim, is ethics. When we apply the ethical concept of our moral principles, which is the morals we believe are good and bad, we are able to see how our morals play a role in the responsibility. According to the Theory of Knowledge textbook, it states that our moral principles take form through our perception of what we believe is right and wrong. For example, if you believe that it is morally wrong to lie to your parents and one of your friends lies to their parents because they believe that it is morally okay to do so, then we can see the shift in acceptable moral behavior, for everyone has different morals. This leads us to assume that if everyone’s moral principles are different and that there is no ultimate set of moral principles that applies to everyone. Therefore, when stating that knowledge has an ethical responsibility, someone may make the claim that since we have different morals, good and bad, it is nearly impossible to determine exactly what our moral responsibility is in terms of possessing knowledge. In response, I would say that regardless of the state your morals are in, you still have a moral duty when you possess knowledge. You just need to factor out the good and bad to determine which morals you should follow. Therefore with the usage of ethics, we are able to grasp a better understanding of our moral responsibility that knowledge may carry.

Although perception and ethics may help us view different aspects of our moral responsibility, reason helps establish a better moral understanding of the responsibility that we have when processing knowledge. One concept we can apply is inductive reasoning. According to the Theory of Knowledge textbook, inductive reasoning is when reasoning goes from particular to general. An example of someone’s reasoning being inductive is when a kid cheats on a test. This would be considered inductive reasoning because they feel that it would benefit them because they would receive an A, which is making reason in a particular sense, but in general reasoning, cheating is bad and morally unacceptable. Therefore this Way of Knowing, Reason, helps extinguish a better moral understanding as we come to an understanding of how we make decisions through the type of reasoning that we do.

Another Area of Knowledge, human sciences, we are able to evaluate our moral responsibility that knowledge brings, and make sense of all its aspects. One concept that regards human sciences is the observer effect. The observer effect states that a person will change their behavior when one is being observed. When observing someone, according to the Theory of Knowledge textbook, they will act in a different manner than they normally would behave. An example of this would be if the President of the United States came to your home. Odds are, you would not behave in the typical manner in which you would normally behave because the presence alone of the President of the United States would make you feel that you’re obligated to behave in a different manner in which you normally would. All in all, you would behave the way you think the President would want you to behave. We can connect this concept of Human Sciences to the claim we are evaluating because we can evaluate other aspects in this particular claim. Through the observer effect, we are able to get a glimpse of how our morals can be manipulated and how we may act differently due to the situation that were in. Therefore with the usage of Human Sciences, we are able to evaluate our moral responsibility and make sense of its aspects.

Another Way of Knowing, Memory, helps us decipher what is falsified information and what is not when evaluating this claim. One concept of memory in which we are able to decipher specific information is through the change of memory over time. Our memory changes over time due to multiple reasons. One reason in which it changes over time is age. While getting older, we are less likely to remember every single detail that has occurred within our lives since the begging of time. This brings caution when considering the reliability of memory. As established earlier in this paragraph, our memory is not constant. Therefore with the usage of memory we are able to decipher falsified information because we can use our memory to remember knowledge in its original form without the creation of falsified information.

Along with the information stated previously, another Area of Knowledge that will help us evaluate this claim and see the importance of keeping this moral responsibility is History. History allows us to make sense of past events which furthermore helps us determine which correct path we should take in the future. For example, when knowledge becomes falsified by someone, manipulating the power that knowledge brings, it creates chaos. Through the chaos that one creates, we are able to readjust to reality and determine how important the moral responsibility is. Therefore through this example, we are able to see how important the moral responsibility is. If knowledge is left in the wrong hands, knowledge can be distorted and will no longer with hold the same information as it once did. However, one May see things differently and claim that even though knowledge may carry an ethical responsibility, we are not obligated to withhold it. In response, I would say that yes, even though we are not obligated to withhold the moral responsibility, in a broader way of thinking, knowledge is the key to the future. Therefore when the key to the future is in your hands, you do have a moral responsibility, for you want the world to succeed and improve as a civilization as a whole.

In conclusion, I believe that the claim, “the possession of knowledge carries an ethical responsibility”, means that you have a moral duty to preserve the knowledge in its absolute form without causing uncertainties or creating falsified information. While evaluating this claim, perception allowed us to have different perspectives, and reason helped establish a better moral understanding of the responsibility that we have. Also, through the process of evaluating this claim, memory helps us decipher what is falsified information with the help of history which will allow us to see the importance of keeping this moral responsibility. With human sciences, we are able to make sense of all claims aspects and with ethics, we were able to grasp the moral responsibility that knowledge carries.