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Moral judgment and virtue in the early period of Philippa Foot

Tatsuhiko GOMI

This paper examines important arguments by Philippa Foot (1920-2009) in her early period, to clarify their theoretical features and purpose. Although Foot is known as a philosopher who advocated the importance of the concepts of virtue in contemporary moral philosophy, it is not easy to understand why she did so, since, especially in her early writings, the theoretical relationship between virtuous terms and moral terms seems to be complicated and unclear.

Thus, the present study begins with Foot's linguistic analysis of moral terms, to examine why she emphasized the role of concepts of virtue in moral judgment. The discussion then turns to the theory about moral argument, in which she tried to prove that factual premises are valid evidence for evaluative conclusions. The analysis then leads to an explanation of how the concept of virtue makes each moral judgment understandable, providing evidence upon which they can be based. In conclusion, one can see the theoretical connection of virtue, moral judgment, and self-interest in Foot's early theory, thereby understanding its features.