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ABSTRACTS

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INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPA FOOT'S DILEMMAS ON MEDICAL ETHICS

Medical ethics is a branch of applied ethics that is deeply connected with the philosophy of medicine. Medical ethics mainly focuses on the moral issues of medicine. It also deals with the problems of euthanasia, abortion, clinical trials, health care and well-being.

There are many approaches or moral theories inside applied ethics. They give moral reasons for medic's actions, especially in difficult or controversial situations. Among the numerous contemporary ethical theories, the theory of realism by English philosopher Philippa Foot takes a particular place. Her theory of moral realism has been formed under the influence of Aristotle and Tomas Aquinas' ethics. «Moral» in this conception means those things that concern human goodness and badness. The meaning of «moral realism» is the same as moral objectivism. The main characteristic of this kind of ethics is the conception of natural goodness. Goodness and badness have universal and objective status for human nature. For example, good is what makes us healthy and bad is what brings us disease. In morality, goodness and badness are represented in virtues and vices. «Virtues, after all, are intelligent dispositions to take certain things as reasons for action and vices are defects of the will" [Voorhoeve, 2009, p. 100]. According to Aristotle, it is rational to be virtuous. For example, virtue of courage saves us in dangerous or stressful situations, it is important for our living. That is why it is rational to be courageous. In the other way, practical rationality is necessary for us because it allows us to make the correct choice in private and social life. The theory of natural virtues forms the concept of objective moral judgments. According to this theory, we describe moral situations and give evaluative judgments simultaneously.

What is important in this type of ethics: result or intention of our actions? According to Philippa Foot, our moral intentions are more

important than the results of our actions. Virtues arise only if we have good intentions of our actions even if we do not have the planned result, or we receive a bad outcome. Strictly speaking, in Aquinas's ethics, moral action is an intention and Philippa Foot continues to develop this definition in the sphere of medical ethics.

In 1967, she formulated the Trolley problem in the article «The Problem of Abortion and the Doctrine of the Double Effect» as a method to check «moral intuitions regarding the doctrine of double effect, Kantian principles and utilitarianism» [Andrade, 2019, p. 44]. Trolley problem is not a case for discussion, it is a modelling of moral dilemmas that we can find in medical ethics.

Imagine the situation that one of our patients is seriously ill, and we can help him if we give him five pills. We make a decision to do it, but suddenly five new patients with the same but lighter form of this disease come to our clinic. It is enough to give one pill to each of them for their full recovery. What should we do? We face a difficult choice: to save one life or five [Foot Ph., 1967]. Many ethical theories give an answer to save five lives. However, they differ in the type of argumentation for their decision. For example, some ethical theories claim that we have to choose the lesser evil: let one die and save five. Philippa Foot offers her explanation of this dilemma. Using Aristotle's principle of teleology, she notes we have two main duties in our practical rationality, and it is very important to make a difference between them. This is about positive and negative duties. «Foot's reasoning [...] that there is a significant difference between omissions and actions, and this corresponds with negative duties vs. positive duties» [Andrade, 2019, p. 5]. She emphasizes that telos (aim) of positive duty is to save five lives. Omission (not giving help in dilemmas) is non-moral too, but in this dilemma it will be better to let one die, but save five lives. It is our positive duty. Philippa Foot notes if we have a situation in which for saving five persons we need to kill one we must not do it. It will be an unethical action, because killing in its essence is the badness [Aristotle, 2002]. Telos (aim) of medicine is non-maleficence.

We must clearly distinguish where to apply positive or negative duties. In such a way, we develop right practical rationality.

Negative duty use in the case of the Trolley problem. We have not any chance to help or save all lives in situations of such types. The Faulty trolley runs over five persons or one person. Certainly, a very popular explanation is «killing one is not better than letting five personas die, but killing one is indeed better than killing five» [ibid].

Philippa Foot does not agree with this position. She emphasizes, we cannot put an unmoral goal to kill and follow it. It is correct to say, that our goal is not to harm the majority of people. In both alternatives, we are doing the same, but with different intentions.

The primary source of Foot's dilemmas is Tomas Aquinas conception of double effect. Doctor Angelicus wrote in his «Summa theologiae» (part II-II, q.64), that action aimed at the good is permissible, even if one of its consequences is negative, because these negative consequences are not the instruments or goal of our actions.

Theory of moral judgments demonstrates the importance of practical rationality in hard situations. It proposes two principles or duties: help to the majority of people and do not harm to the most people relying on Aristotle's and Thomas Aquinas practical ethics.

Reference

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POST NON-CLASSICAL SYNTHESIS SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ALIVE

In modern scientific discourse, alive is represented as complex holistic systems that are self-organizing and self-developing. Their research requires interdisciplinary approaches and transdisciplinary strategies, taking into account the value regulations of research and practice. This creates the conditions for a new – post non-classical synthesis of knowledge about alive.