



Aquinas, Feminism, and the Common Good (Moral Traditions series)

Susanne M. DeCrane

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To dismiss the work of philosophers and theologians of the past because of their limited perceptions of the whole of humankind is tantamount to tossing the tot out with the tub water. Such is the case when feminist scholars of religion and ethics confront Thomas Aquinas, whose views of women can only be described as misogynistic. Rather than dispense with him, Susanne DeCrane seeks to engage Aquinas and reflect his otherwise compelling thought through the prism of feminist theology, hermeneutics, and ethics.

Focusing on one of Aquinas's great intellectual contributions, the fundamental notion of "the common good"—in short, the human will toward peace and justice—DeCrane demonstrates the currency of that notion through a contemporary social issue: women's health care in the United States and, specifically, black women and breast cancer. In her skillful re-engagement with Aquinas, DeCrane shows that certain aspects of religious traditions heretofore understood as oppressive to women and minority groups can actually be parsed, "retrieved," and used to rectify social ills.

Aquinas, Feminism, and the Common Good is a bold and intellectually rigorous feminist retrieval of an important text by a Catholic scholar seeking to remain in the tradition, while demanding that the tradition live up to its emphasis on human equity and justice.

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