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Preview Response

HOW TO RECONCILE AN ETHICS OF JUSTICE WITH AN ETHICS OF CARE?

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In recent decades, at least in certain philosophical circles, justice has lost some of its lustre as a virtue for establishing and sustaining good relationships in a society. In the view of some feminist philosophers, for example, ethics based on justice needs to be supplemented, or even supplanted, by an “ethics of care”. One of the problems faced by those who think an ethics of care should supplant, rather than supplement, an ethics of justice is that it is not immediately apparent how to ward off certain sorts of exploitation on an ethics of care alone, without reference to justice. The problem for ethical theorists regarding the apparently competing claims of an ethics of care and an ethics of justice has a certain resemblance to the problem for political theorists regarding the difficulty of “reconciling the standpoint of the collectivity with the standpoint of the individual”. I think Aquinas’s account of justice has the resources for dealing with the problem.

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