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Compassion as a Virtue of Love

PIETER VOS

COMPASSION FOR THOSE WHO suffer seems to be a self-evident moral absolute. The conviction that being compassionate belongs to the heart of morality has been part of the history of thought, from antiquity until late modernity. According to Aristotle, what we fear for ourselves excites our compassion when it happens to others.[75] In Buddhism, compassion is the great virtue, and Christian faith presupposes compassion when it commands us to even more demanding charity.[76] In modernity, Rousseau argued that pity or compassion is the mother of all virtues—a natural sentiment that makes any suffering being a fellow creature.[77] Schopenhauer too considered compassion as the motivational force behind morality, the origin of its value, and as holding for our relations with animals as well.[78] According to Nussbaum, compassion is the basic social emotion, which includes a kind of reasoning and involves a move away from egocentric needs toward a concern about the well-being of others, which is necessary to ethics in modern societies.[79]

Yet, in the history of thought, compassion has been a highly contested concept as well. The anti-compassion tradition lists Socrates and Plato, the Stoics, Spinoza, Kant, and it culminated in Nietzsche. According to Socrates and the Stoics, compassion is a moral sentiment unworthy of the dignity of both giver and recipient, based on false beliefs about the value of external goods. To Seneca, compassion or pity (*misericordia*) is "a weakness of the mind."[80] Spinoza considered *commiseratio* or pity as useless, since love and generosity should drive us to help our fellow people, not pity.[81] Like the Stoics, Nietzsche argued that compassion multiplies misery: the pain of the one who feels compassion with the sufferer is added to the pain of the sufferer.[82] Moreover, Nietzsche criticized compassion as "disguised egoism" shaped by resentment: "If one does good merely out of pity (*Mitleid*), it is oneself one really does good to."[83] Compassion turns out to be self-deceived egoism of an oppressed self that wants to vent its power where it can, instead of something flowing from authentic motivations of a self-dispossessing self. It is a gratification of egoistic desire, a conservator of misery, and as such a perverted will to power. To the *recipient* compassion brings shame; a damage more significant than the alleviation of other sufferings. Great indebtedness does not make men grateful but vengeful, as Nietzsche puts it.[84] Furthermore, Dostoevsky's "Grand Inquisitor" expresses the possibility of a totalitarian wielding of power which explicitly invokes compassion for suffering humankind as its justification.[85] And Foucault showed how the bureaucratic apparatus of institutionalized compassion is aimed at the disciplining of their patients.[86]

In order to prevent compassion from becoming a naive, idealistic concept, these criticisms must serve as a litmus test in the conceptualization and application of the concept. Hence, the central question of this essay is whether it is possible to think of compassion as not self-serving, as not an expression of power over someone in need. To put it in the words of Bruce K. Ward: Can the mechanism which turns compassion into domination on the one hand and offense that desires revenge on the other hand be broken apart?[87] In trying to find an answer to these questions, I propose to interpret compassion as a virtue of love. I start with Nussbaum's response to the anti-compassion tradition, showing that her response falls short when it comes to Nietzsche's criticism.

Compassion and the Value of External Goods

Nussbaum has offered one of the most impressive defenses for the political and societal importance of compassion. She not only provides a clear account of the cognitive dimension of compassion (over against Kant), arguing that it involves thoughtful judgments about the sufferings of others,[88] but also defends the concept against the Stoic anti-compassion philosophers and their arguments. These thinkers do not reject compassion for its lack of thoughtful judgment—they accept that compassion involves such judgments, but yet reject these judgments as resting on false beliefs. The crux of this rejection is the affirmation of the fundamental dignity of the human being that cannot be destroyed by any suffering stemming from the loss of external goods.[89] Socrates inaugurated a tradition in which compassion is considered as a moral sentiment unworthy of the dignity of both giver and recipient, based on false beliefs about the value of external goods. The Stoics continued this line of thought, which was, according to Nussbaum, taken over by Spinoza, Kant, and Nietzsche.[90] Since compassion is basically viewed as sympathy with the suffering, the pain, or the sadness of someone who suffers, compassion is based on the false judgment that the fundamental inner virtue, a human being's dignity, is dependent on external goods of life.

Against these objections, Nussbaum argues that a Stoic-inspired conception presupposes a problematic ideal of self-sufficient virtue; i.e., that dependency upon people or things beyond one's control is necessarily a manifestation of weakness and lack of

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dignity. While being indifferent to the external goods, the Stoic agent resembles a kind of narcissism "in her inability to mourn, her rage of control, her unwillingness to allow that other people may make demands that compromise the equanimity of the self."[91] This ideal conceals a profound fear of contingency. According to Nussbaum, the Stoic fearfully tries to prevent himself from any risk, even at the cost of the value of love.

Nussbaum's positive argument in favor of compassion is based on the acceptance of human vulnerability and the conditions of human existence; i.e., that we are exposed to being seriously damaged in our flourishing by suffering losses that are not the result of our own choices. For there is nothing wrong with acknowledging that human beings have certain needs to flourish and are vulnerable. This is not to say that the needs of the compassionate are boundless. Compassion is to be directed to fundamental external human needs without which human beings cannot lead human lives, such as water, food, and shelter, and basic freedom of movement, action, expression, and belief, as well as protection from harm and government oppression. If people are devoid of such fundamental needs, it makes sense that we practice compassion. Compassion is both a justified human response to such needs and positively beneficial in its effects in the world. As a social emotion it helps people to cement together in societies and it reduces human suffering by motivating people to make available external goods of food, shelter, health care, and so on, to vulnerable people.[92]

These arguments make perfect sense in response to the Stoic anti-compassion tradition, but Nussbaum's clear and philosophically sophisticated account of compassion is limited as a response to Nietzsche's criticism. Although Nussbaum pays attention to Nietzsche several times,[93] she does not really respond to his claim that compassion is shaped by resentment. Her presupposition is that Nietzsche's critique does not differ very much from the Stoics: "like the Stoics, he is quick to point out that the interest in taking revenge is a product of weakness and lack of power—of that excessive dependence on others and on the goods of the world is the mark of a weak, not of a strong and self-sufficient, human being or society. The compassionate person is as such a weak person."[94] According to Nussbaum, Nietzsche refuses to accept "that human beings need worldly goods in order to function" and "repeatedly asserts the false romantic view that suffering, including basic physical suffering, ennobles and strengthens the spirit," but "his romanticism and his materialism are fundamentally at odds."[95]

However, different from what Nussbaum suggests, Nietzsche's criticism does not only echo the Stoic critique of dependency on external goods and moral weakness. The main problem is that compassion has resentful envy both as its source and as its outcome. Compassion is a conservator of everything miserable, since pity for "the lower and suffering" becomes a "measure of the height of the soul."[96] In effect, this exaltation of compassion not only promotes the weak and weakness, but also functions as a motivation and conservation of envious resentment to those well favored by nature. Resentful envy is a frustrated will to power, and compassion offers it an outlet. Moreover, upon the recipient of compassion it will bring shame, which causes much more damage than other sufferings. For compassion makes the other indebted and great indebtedness does not lead to gratitude but to vengefulness.[97] Nussbaum does not provide us with an adequate response, since her argument is basically restricted to the Stoic anti-compassion tradition and neglects Nietzsche's argument of compassion as resentment and disguised egoism.[98]

How can we respond to Nietzschean criticism more adequately? To start, I will join those accounts of compassion that emphasize the elements of sympathy, love, and even joy for the other as inherent to the virtue of compassion, and continue by asking what love actually means when showing compassion.

Compassion: Sympathy, Joy, and Neighborly Love

In his treatment of the virtue of compassion, the French philosopher André Comte-Sponville acknowledges that compassion may not be very attractive: "[W]e don't like to be the object of compassion, and we don't particularly like to feel compassion either."[99] Yet, compassion is not very different from sympathy, which refers precisely to the Greek origin for the Latin *compassio*. Although in modern usage these words are no longer synonymous, in a certain sense, compassion is a form of sympathy, albeit in a qualified way: "[I]t is sympathy in pain or sadness—in other words, participation in the suffering of others."[100]

Comte-Sponville acknowledges that in this respect compassion only seems to increase the quantity of suffering in the world and in itself is not effective in taking suffering away. Therefore, he takes up Spinoza's treatment of compassion or pity. As I have already remarked, Spinoza considers compassion that is driven by sadness as useless. It is love and generosity, not pity that should drive us to help our fellow human beings. Contrary to Nietzsche, Spinoza does not aim at a complete *Umwertung aller Werte* ("transvaluation of values"), but rather at learning to practice charity out of love and joy, like the Aristotelian "prudent man" would do it, instead of out of sadness, pity, or duty. Nevertheless, pity or compassion is still better than cruelty or egoism. The different dispositions of joyful love and pitiful compassion even may lead to similar charitable actions.

From this perspective, Comte-Sponville develops a more positive account of compassion; not in terms of pity and sadness, but as an attentive openness, solicitude, patience, and listening. He makes a helpful distinction between *commiseratio*, pity or *Mitleid* on

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the one hand, and *misericordia* or compassion as a more positive and open attitude on the other hand. In that case it is possible to define compassion as related to joy, rooted in the joy about the other's good fortune. When we rejoice in someone's existence, i.e., when we love that person, we are sad to see him or her suffer. Compassion is a saddened love.[101] A similar conception of *misericordia* in terms of the heart that is directed toward the well-being of the other is already present in Augustine—he even uses the word *compassio* in this respect—defending Cicero's conception of *misericordia* as a true virtue over against the Stoics.[102]

In my view, connecting compassion to joy and love offers a first step to overcome Nietzsche's argument that compassion is rooted in resentment and egoism. Not sadness about unfortunate circumstances as such is the driving force of compassion, but love and joy that unite us with our fellow people. Now, if *love* is decisive in a more positive and open definition of compassion, then the question is: how should we understand love? On the one hand, Comte-Sponville suggests that compassion may be the principal content of *agape* or neighborly love, its truest affect. In that respect, the Buddhist emphasis on compassion is more realistic than Christian neighborly love, since compassion is felt more easily than a truthful charitable impulse. On the other hand, neighborly love surpasses compassion in so far that the latter needs the suffering or misfortune of the other in order to give love, whereas neighborly love does not even need the love of the other in order to give love. Neighborly love is compassion freed from suffering and freed from the ego.[103] In this interpretation, articulated here by a non-Christian philosopher, compassion may be able to counter Nietzschean criticism. Compassion in terms of neighborly love may neither multiply misery—since it does not have suffering but love as its driving force—nor appear to be a disguised egoism, since love does not compete at all.

From this perspective, it is important that the virtue of love be freed from the paradigmatic approach of neighborly love as essentially consisting of "helping the needy," as the Louvain philosopher Paul Moyaert has observed. In this paradigmatic approach, neighborly love is wrongly regarded as an extension of an altruistic disposition: the things we are prepared to do for family, friends, and colleagues, we ought to extend to those outside the immediate circle.[104] This altruistic disposition is not *per se* opposed to self-interest. In the long run we may benefit from the well-being of others. Furthermore, in helping others in need, we often expect results from our willingness to help. We have, for instance, few problems with giving money to the poor if we have the guarantee that it will be put to good use and invested in a worthwhile and efficient way. Contributing to the well-being of the other? Yes, but on the condition that there will be some results. This approach would reaffirm the dialectic of pity, *commiseratio* or *Mitleid* as invoking ingratitude, even hostility and envy in those who receive compassion. Therefore, the conception of a compassionate neighborly love defined as helping those in need falls short.

Essentially, neighborly love may also require giving even when there seems to be no advantage at all. I agree with Moyaert that neighborly love should not be understood from the perspective of "the advantageous effects of helping."[105] Rather, neighborly love is defined by two commandments which make it something absolute for the "giver": "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39) and "you shall love your enemies" (Matthew 5:45). In this sense, neighborly love is an "impossible commandment," because it is without a measure and seemingly against human nature. The commandment speaks not of helping but of *loving* the other. It appears to be irreconcilable with the natural limits of common sense; it asks for exaggerated unselfishness. Nevertheless, the commandment forbids nothing. There is only one way to fail, namely, by not going far enough, since neighborly love even extends to the enemy.[106]

Moyaert points out that the fact that the other is my friend, father, or wife in no way excludes the possibility that in certain circumstances they might likewise become my neighbor. The question is: when does someone become my neighbor? Personal relationships are marked by reciprocity and the interchangeability of the good: what is mine is yours. This reciprocity is interrupted when the other no longer goes along with what I do, say, and desire, and when the other remains indifferent to my way of responding. The most telling example is when a person is no longer someone who knows what he/she is doing, and seems no longer responsible for his/her life and his/her traumatic history. He/she becomes the person about whom we say: he/she cannot help it. Precisely at this point the other becomes the neighbor, becomes a stranger, someone I can no longer understand and with whom I am no longer able to identify. According to Moyaert, neighborly love, on the other hand, is not possible without some process of identification. What touches me is the naked fact that the other is a human being. As Moyaert explains, there is a depersonalizing aspect of neighborly love: the other as neighbor is detached from the frame of meaning provided by personal reactive attitudes, as if the other could be just anyone.[107] This makes clear that neighborly love in principle is not dependent on the response of the other. Neighborly love does not aim for gratitude, since it is also required even when the other is not at all able to respond.

Very importantly, Moyaert points out the meaning of neighborly love as not primarily concerned with helping or giving (with the expectation of gratitude), but with loving. If we interpret compassion in this way, this may counter Nietzsche's argument that compassion is disguised egoism. For neighborly love is in principle not concerned with the results or the effects of charitable actions. As love, it expects nothing in return.

Moyaert explains his view from the traditional works of mercy or charity. In Christianity, it is indeed the works of mercy—seven corporal and seven spiritual works[108]—rather than compassion which function as the paradigm of charity. What is

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the meaning of these works of mercy? According to Moyaert, burying the dead or clothing another person, for instance, are symbolic activities and not strictly utilitarian. By clothing another I confirm the difference between human persons and animals at the very moment when that difference is on the verge of disappearing. The same holds for burying a dead body. The gravestone signifies the difference at the moment when no visible difference remains. The necessity of reaffirming the separation between human beings and animals, between the sacred and the profane, culture and nature, the symbolic and the utilitarian, is compelling once the other is overwhelmed by natural violence of the vital order: sickness, suffering, hunger and thirst, fragility and death—in short: external goods. By helping people who suffer from these evils and alleviating their needs we remove them from the anonymity of nature and reconfirm their value at the moment when they themselves can no longer assume that value.[109]

But what about the recipient of compassionate neighborly love? Is compassion interpreted in terms of neighborly love still a one-way movement from giver toward receiver, still with the risk of inciting resentment and ingratitude? In order to meet this aspect of Nietzschean criticism, another aspect of neighborly love, which is helpful in thinking through the nature of compassion as a virtue of love, must be elaborated.

No Compassion without Mercy

In a conception of compassion as a one-way movement from giver to recipient the needy one would be excluded from being compassionate himself/herself. Therefore, compassion must be seen as “a work of love even if it can give nothing and is able to do nothing,” as the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard puts it in his book on neighborly love.[110] Kierkegaard asks our attention for the fact that all emphasis on charitable donations and gifts may be merciless. In our practices we may not only emphasize the need of the poor but also exclude them from being able to practice neighborly love themselves, since they possess nothing by which they may be generous or charitable. In the name of charity, or mercifulness as Kierkegaard calls it, the poor are mercilessly excluded from being merciful. Therefore, Christian discourse should not primarily be about generosity but about the inner quality of love, “then generosity will follow of itself and come to itself accordingly as the individual is capable of it.”[111] One can be merciful without having the least thing to give. Using the virtue-ethical language of perfection, Kierkegaard concludes: “This is of great importance, since *being able* to be merciful certainly is a far greater perfection than to have money and then *to be able* to give.”[112]

To explain his argument, Kierkegaard retells the story of the Good Samaritan. Suppose that the Good Samaritan would have been a poor man who had nothing at all, no donkey to transport the unfortunate man, nothing to bind him, no money to help him. Then, would he not have been equally as merciful as that merciful Samaritan of which the Bible tells us? Or take the story about the woman who laid two pennies in the temple box (Luke 21:1–4). Christ says about her that she gave more than all the rich people gave. Why? We are inclined to say: because the sacrifice made by the poor widow extends that of the rich person who still has money. But in that case we would still be focused on the *what*. Kierkegaard turns our attention to the *how*. Usually the rich one who gives a huge amount is considered as the one who gives the most, because we think in terms of *what* one gives. Christianity teaches that money in itself is not what counts. Hence, the exhortation is: have mercy; then money can be given.[113]

The gospel teaches us that even the poor can practice neighborly love, even if they have nothing to give or are not able to do anything. For they can still have sympathy for the misery of the other; i.e., be compassionate. Kierkegaard even goes one step further. The poor person can be merciful toward the rich who have money and mercilessly keep it for themselves, or give a stingy gift. The merciful poor can make a stingy gift into a large sum if they mercifully do not upbraid the rich for it, i.e., by forgiving them.[114]

In this argument, Kierkegaard does not only distinguish mercy as a deed of love from the practice of giving material goods, but also points to the meaning of mercy as going beyond mere compassion. Whereas compassion is sympathy for the misery of the other, mercy is basically a quality by which one can endure evil. It is a virtue of forgiveness. Moreover, Kierkegaard turns around the relationship between giver and recipient. It may be the recipient of compassion rather than the giver who will turn out to be the one who is really merciful.

Mercy understood as a virtue of forgiveness is relevant to the Nietzschean problem of resentment and rancor. With Comte-Sponville, mercy can be defined as

> the virtue that triumphs over rancor, over justified hatred (in this respect mercy goes beyond justice), over resentment, over the desire for revenge or punishment; the virtue that forgives not by expunging the wrong—an impossible charge, in any case—but by stilling the grudge we bear against a person who offended or harmed us.[115]

Of course, this does not mean that by being merciful we can erase evil or that the wrong is now considered null and void. Mercy is not opposed to justice, but to resentment, which is a form of hatred. Hence, mercy is different from compassion. Because it is directed to the wrongdoers to whom I probably do not feel any compassion, it is a difficult virtue. The liar and the thief, even the

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rapist and the torturer are the very ones who ask for my mercy, i.e., for my forgiveness. This seems impossible; but as Comte-Sponville points out, there is some reasonableness in this. Mercy is not based on passion or emotion like compassion, but it is, like prudence, an intellectual virtue. It requires that we understand that the other person is wicked or misguided or ruled by passion or fanaticism. "To forgive is to accept. Not in order to stop fighting, of course, but in order to stop hating."[116] Forgiveness expresses freedom; it is an overabundance of freedom.

I think that this interpretation of mercy makes sense, but I also think that something should be added to explain how mercy is connected to compassion. To get a proper view on this connection, I will again turn to Moyaert. He proposes to define mercy as "patient love."[117] He derives this interpretation from 1 Corinthians 13:4, where Paul says that "love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant. . ." Interpreted as patient love, mercy means to indulge, to endure, to tolerate evil. It is a virtue on the border of active and passive, of doing something and being no longer able to do anything.[118] From this perspective it also becomes clear what loving the enemy may mean. Who is the enemy? The enemy may be a stranger but may also be a member of my family. Moyaert proposes to define the enemy as "someone who wants to wrong me."[119] The love commandment requires that I should not oppose evil, but embrace it. Mercy then comes to mean that we endure the evil in the awareness that not everything can be recognized as good and that the good is sometimes beyond what we are able to realize. In the end, mercy is the virtue of forgiveness, i.e., of acceptance and endurance of what is wrong. In a more general sense, mercy teaches us that our own ability to realize the good is limited. As such, mercy is the virtue we need at the moment in which charitable actions can no longer achieve anything.

Mercy teaches us that all our good works of care and aid, solidarity, and justice, as practiced in or outside institutions of charity and resulting from our compassion and neighborly love, are in the end limited. We should always stay open to the good as something that in the final instance is not in our possession. Moreover, this awareness may prevent compassion from deteriorating into exercising power over someone in need, turning compassion into offense which desires revenge. Only if we practice compassion in a merciful way we keep openness toward the other, as someone who is able to be compassionate, merciful, and loving himself/herself. As Kierkegaard pointed out, the fixed positions of giver and recipient are broken apart as soon as we realize that not only the giver but also the recipient is able to be merciful.

Respect, Self-Dispossession, Belief

The latter argument is promising in relation to the anti-compassion argument that, in helping someone through our compassion, we "transgress grievously against his pride," as Nietzsche puts it;[120] i.e., the problem that compassion invokes shame and offense from the side of the recipient on the one hand and thereby reveals that resentment may be at the root of compassionate acts on the other hand. Is compassion that is not self-serving possible, beyond the pleasure of control and power over the one to which it is offered?

First, *discerning respect for the other* should always be included in compassion. To explain this, it is helpful to elaborate more on the distinction between compassion and pity. On this issue, Hannah Arendt's distinction is a good starting point. In her view, pity is an abstract concern about the unfortunate in general, and precisely because of its abstract character even proves to be open to cruelty and violence, as Arendt demonstrates. Unlike pity, compassion comprehends the particular, without any generalization. Whereas pity is abstract, loquacious, and generalizing, compassion is concrete, silent, and specific. It does not reach out farther than what is suffered by one particular person.[121] Comte-Sponville adds some other elements to this distinction: "Pity always entails . . . some degree of contempt, or at least a feeling of superiority on the part of the person who experiences it . . . There is a self-satisfaction in pity that underscores the deficiency of its object."[122] "Pitiful" is a term of depreciation, somewhat similar with "inferior," "pathetic," or "contemptible." In pity, the self can indeed secretly be pleased that it has been spared.[123] Compassion, on the other hand, always entails a measure of respect. Whereas pity comes from the top down, compassion is a horizontal feeling; it realizes equality between giver and receiver by sharing the latter's suffering. There can be no compassion without respect.[124] For compassion is loving without getting paid back, and without respect one ceases to love. This includes the possibility of the reversal of the relationship between giver and recipient, as demonstrated in the way Kierkegaard describes: how one can be merciful even when one has nothing to give. To put it differently: respectful compassion asks for discernment in regard to oneself and the suffering person. Such discerning is not a matter of Nietzschean noble distancing; rather it is a clarity required by a compassion which wants to help through the capacity that imagines oneself as the other.[125]

Second, compassion flows from *self-dispossession and not from self-love*. Compassion out of self-love wants to help because what has happened to others could happen to oneself. Self-dispossessed love means that one is capable of seeing oneself really *as* the other; it is an other-centered intentionality, a manifestation of kenotic love.[126] Almsgiving, taking care of the sick, visiting those in prison, bringing comfort to the distressed, releasing others from their debts to us, protecting the vulnerable, are all visible acts of compassion in the world. But they can be judged to be truly virtuous and compassionate only on the grounds of the intentionality at

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work in them.[127] Other-centered intentionality may include that the self is ready to put itself at risk for the sake of the other, but self-sacrifice in itself is no litmus test of self-dispossessed love of others, since self-sacrifice can also be a matter of self-love.[128] What counts is self-dispossessed love. Theologically, this self-dispossessed act is revealed in "the extreme of human truth," where "we encounter Jesus Christ—the Compassion of God—as the one who goes before and who is already present to us, if unfathomably, in the compassionate act," as Davies puts it.[129]

Finally, compassion *cannot do without belief*. I am not trying to end with an apologetic Christian claim. On the contrary; it is Nietzsche who insists on the inevitable failure of compassion that strives to be humanly self-sufficient. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he states: "To love humanity *for God's sake*: this has so far been the noblest and remotest sentiment to which mankind has attained . . . That love to mankind . . . is only an *addition* folly and brutishness, that the inclination to this love has first to get its proportion, its delicacy, its grain of salt and sprinkling of ambergris from a higher inclination."[130] According to Nietzsche, this ulterior motive is the highest, although it is at the same time the greatest mistake. We could add Ivan Karamazov's well-known formulation: "There is no virtue [including compassion] if there is no God or immortality."[131] Both agree that the death of God is also the death of compassion. Yet it is Dostoevsky, as Ward points out, who brings in another voice that reverses the relation between God and compassion as presupposed by both Nietzsche and Karamazov, namely Zozima's, who advises a woman "of little faith": "Try to love your neighbors actively and tirelessly. The more you succeed in loving, the more you'll be convinced of the existence of God and the immortality of your soul. And if you reach complete selflessness in the love of your neighbor, then undoubtedly you will believe."[132] If this movement toward God through active love is possible, the consequence is that such love must have real presence in the world already. What counts is to love the person one sees. As Ward concludes, the real difference between Dostoevsky and Nietzsche is less about belief or unbelief in the existence of God than about the reality or unreality of compassionate love.[133] Compassion cannot do without the belief that self-dispossessed love is indeed possible.

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75. Aristotle, *Retorica* II, III, 8, 1386a28.

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76. Comte-Sponville, *A Short Treatise*, 116.

77. Rousseau, "Discourse," 160–63.

78. Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 67. See Comte-Sponville, *A Short Treatise*, 110.

79. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 297–454.

80. Seneca, *De Clementia* 2.4.4: "Et haec vitium animae est."

81. Spinoza, *Ethica* 4.prop. 50: "Commiseratio in homine, qui ex ductu rationis vivit, per se mala, et inutilis est," see prop. 37, prop. 46–47.

82. Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist*, § 7: "Durch das Mitleiden vermehrt und verfielfältigt sich die Einbuße an Kraft noch, die an sich schon das Leiden dem Leben bringt." It is a "*Multiplikator* des Elends."

83. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 199, quoted in Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, 174.

84. Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, II.3 (Von den Mitleidigen): "Große Verbindlichkeiten machen nicht dankbar, sondern rachsüchtig" (trans. Kaufmann, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 89).

85. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*.

86. Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*. See Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, 161.

87. Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, 189.

88. As Nussbaum puts it: "Compassion takes up the onlooker's point of view, making the best judgment the onlooker can make about what is really happening to the person, even when that may differ from the judgment of the person herself"; *Upheavals*, 306.

89. Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 369–70.

90. Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 356–58.

91. Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 373.

92. Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 321, 368–86.

93. Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 362–63, 367, 372, 383–86.

94. Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 363.

95. Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 384–85.

96. Nietzsche, *Der Antichrist*, § 7; Nietzsche, *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, 150, quoted from Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, 175.

97. See for this analysis of Nietzsche and the inadequacy of Nussbaum's response Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, 173–78.

98. An exception is her remark about the problematic nature of anger and hatred in Augustine: "It was not without reason that Nietzsche stressed the vengeful elements in Christianity. Although it was surely hasty of him to conclude that these elements reveal the essential goal of Christian ethics to be revenge by the weak against the strong, and thus revenge on the very conditions of human life itself, nonetheless there is a disturbing emphasis on anger in Augustine . . .," Nussbaum, *Upheavals*, 548. However, as an argument against Nietzsche this is not sufficient. Moreover, I think her evaluation of Augustine on this point is limited, since Augustine's notion of anger is precisely related to his valuation of external goods as a matter of both compassion and justice. See Wolterstorff, *Justice*, 180–206.

99. Comte-Sponville, *A Short Treatise*, 103.

100. Comte-Sponville, *A Short Treatise*, 105.

101. Comte-Sponville, *A Short Treatise*, 107–8. Note that the distinction between the terms is not absolute. Schopenhauer, for instance, uses the word *Mitleid*, which in this case may be translated as "sympathy" or "compassion", since in his view *Mitleid* is indeed rooted in joy about the other (*Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, 67).

102. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* 9.5: "Quid est autem misericordia nisi alienae miseriae quaedam in nostro corde compassio." He speaks of mourning with the afflicted in order that they will be liberated from the affliction ("contristari pro adflicto ut liberetur").

103. Comte-Sponville, *A Short Treatise*, 116–17, 289.

104. Moyaert, "On Love of Neighbour," 174–75.

105. Moyaert, "On Love of Neighbour," 175.

106. Moyaert, "On Love of Neighbour," 176.

107. Moyaert, "On Love of Neighbour," 177–80.

108. The seven corporal works of mercy are: to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to shelter the stranger, to cloth the naked, to comfort the sick, and to visit the imprisoned, all derived from Matt 25:31–46, and complemented by the seventh work: to bury the dead. Just as the corporal works of mercy are directed toward relieving corporal suffering, the even more important aim of the spiritual works of mercy is to relieve spiritual suffering. The latter works are less known but an important part of the Christian tradition: to instruct the ignorant, to counsel the doubtful, to admonish sinners, to bear wrongs patiently, to forgive offences willingly, to comfort the afflicted, and to pray for the living and the dead.

109. Moyaert, "On Love of Neighbour," 181. See his *De Mateloosheid van het Christendom*, 15–96, for an extensive elaboration of Moyaert's

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view on neighborly love.

110. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 315–30. Actually, Kierkegaard speaks of mercifulness. I will explain the relationship between compassion and mercy in this section.

111. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 315.

112. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 317.

113. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 317.

114. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 322–23.

115. Comte-Sponville, *A Small Treatise*, 119.

116. Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 122. Also see "Mercy does not nullify this evil will, nor does it give up the fight against it; what mercy does do is refuse to partake of it, to add hatred to hatred, selfishness to selfishness, anger to violence"; Kierkegaard, *Works of Love*, 125.

117. Moyaert, "Barmhartigheid," 61–67.

118. Moyaert, "Barmhartigheid," 64.

119. Moyaert, "On Love of Neighbour," 174.

120. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 89.

121. Arendt, *On Revolution*, 80, quoted by Comte-Sponville, *A Small Treatise*, 114.

122. Comte-Sponville, *A Small Treatise*, 114.

123. Davies, *A Theology of Compassion*, 18, 233–34.

124. Comte-Sponville, *A Small Treatise*, 115.

125. Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, 188.

126. Davies, *A Theology of Compassion*, 20–21. Davies takes Edith Stein and Etty Hillesum as prime examples of self-dispossessed compassion in which one places oneself at risk for the sake of the other, and contrasts this with the forced dispossession of the Jews in the camps. In this way compassion depends on radical goodness, the assumption of another's suffering as one's own, which makes possible a compassionate re-enactment of the destructive and enforced dispossession suffered by the Jews. See Davies, *A Theology of Compassion*, 16–17.

127. Davies, *A Theology of Compassion*, 18.

128. Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, 188.

129. Davies, *A Theology of Compassion*, 23. See also 232–53 for a theological elaboration of human and divine compassion.

130. Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, III, 60: "Den Menschen zu lieben *um Gottes willen*—das war bis jetzt das vornehmste und entlegenste Gefühl, das unter Menschen erreicht worden ist. Daß die Liebe zum Menschen ohne irgendeine heiligende Hinterabsicht eine Dumheit und Tierheid *mehr* ist." Translation: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 42, quoted from Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, 190.

131. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 69, 632, quoted from Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, 190.

132. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, 56.

133. Ward, *Redeeming the Enlightenment*, 191–92.

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