

Encountering Others through Compassion: Tough Values, Moral Challenges, and Religious Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to propose a pedagogy of compassion based on a reinterpretation of historical and contemporary understandings of compassion and on critical dialogues between three education philosophers and a practical theologian: John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Henry A. Giroux, and Mary Elizabeth Moore. This article is composed of four sections. The first two parts build upon the critical dialogue between historical works of compassion and contemporary perspectives on the ethics of compassion and present five ways of defining compassion: as suffering with, as resistance, as reconciliation, as forgiveness, and as peaceful co-existence. The third part provides concepts from critical pedagogy by engaging three education philosophers: Henry A. Giroux, John Dewey, and Paulo Freire. The fourth section provides pedagogical wisdom to embody such critical pedagogical concepts by introducing Mary Elizabeth Moore's process-relational insights. Based on the critical dialogue between these three education philosophers and a practical theologian, I conclude that a pedagogy of compassion is about cultivating a way of being in the world with critical awareness of power-differential, unique histories, and political differences.

Through the cultivation of compassion, religious education can contribute to resolving conflicts caused by differences.¹ Historically, the scholarly literature on compassion tends to take a compartmentalized approach by characterizing compassion as either a virtue, an emotion, or a duty/obligation.² Although each concept is grounded in historical, philosophical, and theological metaphors,

no individual concept adequately addresses the issues that emerge in intercultural encounters with the Other, such as those that occur through transnational migration.³ A compartmentalized approach limits the embodiment of compassion in the classroom. Contemporary studies on compassion tend to resist monolithic descriptions and instead view compassion as a holistic process that encompasses emotional, behavioral, psychological, social, ethical, physical, and religious components.⁴ In this article, I redefine compassion as a *holistic way of being in the world and participating in others' suffering through an ongoing process of openness and mindfulness towards the other—socially, psychologically, spiritually, and ethically*. Based on this revised definition of compassion, I propose two key issues in the pedagogy of compassion: (i) how we expand the circle of compassion and (ii) how we embody compassion by integrating its psychological and behavioral aspects.

The primary purpose of this article is to propose a pedagogy of compassion based on a reinterpretation of historical and contemporary understandings of compassion and on critical dialogues between three education philosophers and a practical theologian: John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Henry A. Giroux, and Mary Elizabeth Moore. This article is composed of four sections. The first two parts build upon the critical dialogue between historical works of compassion and contemporary perspectives on the ethics of compassion and present five ways of defining compassion: as suffering with, as resistance, as reconciliation, as forgiveness, and as peaceful co-existence. The third part provides concepts from critical pedagogy by engaging three education philosophers: Henry A. Giroux, John Dewey, and Paulo Freire. In particular, I draw on three theoretical concepts developed by educators: Henry A. Giroux's border pedagogy, John Dewey's intersubjective transformation in learning, Paulo Freire's understanding of Conscientization. The fourth section provides pedagogical wisdom to embody such critical pedagogical concepts by introducing Mary Elizabeth Moore's process-relational insights. Based on the critical dialogue between these three education philosophers and a practical theologian, I conclude that a pedagogy of compassion is about cultivating a way of being in the world with critical awareness of power-differential, unique histories, and political differences.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL VIEWS ON COMPASSION

Although compassion is at the heart of the Christian tradition, the ways Christians have articulated compassion throughout history differ and contain some ambiguity.⁵ *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines compassion as “suffering together with another, participation in suffering.”⁶ The linguistic root of compassion is *cum-passio*. *Passio* means “to suffer” and *cum* means “with.” Put together, compassion means “to suffer with.” The early Christians viewed compassion as morally ambiguous because many of them believed that relating compassionately to the suffering of others required feeling emotion *passionately*.⁷ This emotional aspect of compassion was considered a serious threat to the ascetic ideal exemplified by the “monks, nuns, and spiritual elite” who dedicated themselves to the pursuit of “emotional tranquility,” whether in isolation or in religious communities.⁸ The idealization of their emotional tranquility therefore produced a tension between the virtue of compassion and Christian life. Among those influenced by this view of the passions was Augustine (d. 430).⁹ Ambivalence between

asceticism and compassion, passion and Christian life, and emotion and action is reflected in his early writings in the *Confessions*.¹⁰ After 40 years of grappling with the tension, however, he came to believe that because Christians feel the passions in the context of God, they are not distracted by the passions as pagans are.¹¹ The passions in Christian contexts lead to the practice of virtue and should be cherished for their ethical purpose.¹² Augustine writes: “Because such a Christian morality was inherently different from that of the Stoics; the emotions the Christian experienced served a specific ethical purpose.”¹³ These emotions allow us to be responsible to Christian life as long as they arise in the context of Christian love.¹⁴ How, then, did Augustine turn from avoiding emotions to acknowledging the key role emotions play in compassion and Christian life? Scholars believe that this shift occurred after he made peace with his grief over the deaths of his friend and his mother.¹⁵ This grief, he concluded, had shaped him in an essential way. In contrast to the ideal of the passionless wise man who was unaffected by grief, Augustine had learned to embrace emotion.¹⁶ Augustine’s turn from emotionless tranquility to affective compassion can be viewed as an “affective transformation.”¹⁷ The definition of compassion we see in the *City of God*—“a kind of sympathy in our heart for the suffering of another that surely compels us to help as much as we can”—was the next development of compassion after Augustine’s “affective transformation.”¹⁸ The Stoic ideal of the emotional tranquilly no longer seemed desirable or even possible to attain. Specifically, the idea of the impassive wise man failed because “[h]is refusal to engage emotionally signaled his unwillingness to offer aid to the afflicted.”¹⁹ Feelings in the Christian life should be “the virtuous motivation for ethical deeds.”²⁰ Therefore, in the *City of God*, Augustine suggests that “[t]he sympathy (‘compassio’) we feel for another human being motivates us to act compassionately to alleviate suffering.”²¹

Augustine’s affective turn, as I have described above, parallels a contemporary movement toward holistic approaches to compassion. Augustine’s effort to consolidate feelings and actions (i.e., to produce compassionate behavior) have moral implications for education today because the kind of compassion we need does not involve a separation between how we feel and how we act, but is an *embodied* compassion, or a *praxis* that connects the emotional aspect of compassion (i.e., feeling other people’s suffering) and the behavioral component (the action that follows the feeling). This affective turn is also expanded by contemporary scholars who strive to find ways to enlarge the scope of compassion to include cultural, geographic, and religious others. In the following section, I discuss how contemporary scholars express this continuing effort to (i) embody compassion and (ii) expand compassion.

FIVE CONTEMPORARY THEMES OF COMPASSION

Despite differences in nuance, the Christian theological vocabulary of compassion has five recurring themes: compassion as suffering with, compassion as resistance, compassion as reconciliation, compassion as forgiveness, and compassion as peaceful co-existence. First, many contemporary theologians, including feminist, process, and Latin American liberation theologians, describe compassion as *suffering with*.²² In this understanding, God is portrayed as a loving God who suffers with humans and is moved by their suffering, as opposed to what Aristotle calls an “unmoved mover.” For example, Elizabeth A. Johnson depicts the Creator Spirit as participating in the creation’s suffering:

Love who is the Creator Spirit participates in the world's destiny. She can be grieved (Eph 4:30); she can even be quenched (1 Thes 5:19). When creation groans in labor pains and we do too (Rom 8:22-23), the Spirit is in the groaning and in the midwifing that breathes rhythmically along and cooperates in the birth. In other words, in the midst of the agony and delight of the world the Creator Spirit has the character of compassion.²³

The theme of *compassion as suffering with* is explored in the description of the divine-human relationship. In his investigation of the Hebrew words and etymologies related to compassion in the Old Testament, Oliver Davies argues that “compassion as a unified concept, unequivocally implying ‘suffering with,’ is more modern in kind.”²⁴ Building upon Davies’ analysis, Sung-jin Yang explains that “the meaning of *compassion* in the OT is also associated with the present meaning of the word ‘compassion,’ meaning ‘to suffer with.’”²⁵ Yang expands the analysis to show that references to God in the Old Testament reveal the compassionate and merciful attributes of God, whose compassion resembles that of “a father or mother for his or her children.”²⁶

Second, contemporary theologians understand *compassion as resistance*.²⁷ Wendy Farley, for example, argues that God is present and active through divine compassion that empowers human beings to resist radical suffering. Participating in the compassion of God, humans experience God’s love as a power or a force that empowers people to resist injustice.²⁸ Compassion is manifested as an active resistance to evil and suffering that strives for healing and God’s communion with the world. Attesting to the power of compassion in history, Farley points out the moments of effective compassion in history—occasions of redemption, healing, and empowerment: “Compassion is love as it encounters suffering.”²⁹ Divine compassion is to be found wherever compassion resists radical suffering. In this sense, interhuman compassion is intimately related to divine compassion because it is the source of interhuman compassion.

Third, the theme of *compassion as reconciliation for communal healing* is promoted by many contemporary theologians, including Latin American liberation theologians and Asian feminist theologians. By arguing that God is a compassionate liberator of the oppressed, Gustavo Gutiérrez perceives Christ as the one who brings liberation from the sin of all kinds of injustice and oppression.³⁰ The Asian feminist theologian Kwok Pui-lan argues that in Asia, “where many people are struggling to acquire basic necessities and human dignity, God is often seen as the compassionate one, listening to the people’s cries and empowering them to face life’s adversities.”³¹ God’s love is shown in the embrace of human beings for who they are regardless of their location, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, or originality.

Fourth, contemporary theologians understand *compassion as forgiveness*. Marjorie Suchocki maintains that forgiveness is “willing the well-being of victim(s) and violator(s) in the context of the fullest possible knowledge of the nature of the violation.”³² Forgiveness is an essential form of compassion because “forgiveness holds the possibility of breaking the chain of violence.”³³ Defining compassion as a wish for the well-being of the other, Suchocki connects it to the Christian interpretation of passion:

This is compassion, a “feeling with” that at the same time longs and works for the well-being of the other and therefore the self. Such a dynamic may well underlie the Christian interpretation of Christ on the cross identifying with all sin and sinners, and therefore able to redeem all sinners from sin. Conformity with the sin is an essential step in transformation.³⁴

For Suchoki, the notion of forgiveness as compassion corresponds to the Christian understanding of sin.

Lastly, Christian theologians also understand *compassion as a peaceful co-existence* that incorporates a radical inclusion of the marginalized, including the natural world. Citing Albert Einstein, Frank R. Ascione and Phil Arkow emphasize the task of widening the circle of compassion to all living beings: “Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our *circle of compassion* to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”³⁵ Johnson also argues that the Creator Spirit encourages humans to be “co-creators” of compassion.³⁶ “Moved by this Spirit [of compassion],” Johnson writes, “human beings are similarly configured to compassion, taught to be co-creators who enter the lists on behalf of those who suffer, to resist and creatively transform the powers that destroy.”³⁷ Expanding the circle of compassion would “rejoin us to the cosmic covenant made after the biblical flood ‘between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth,’ and whose sign is the rainbow (Gen 9:8-17).”³⁸ Widening the circle of compassion to all creatures is one of our responsibilities as co-partners with the Creator Spirit. Likewise, Carter Heyward connects the themes of sexuality, love, and justice: “Our passion as lovers is what fuels both our rage at injustice—including that which is done to us—and our compassion, or our passion, which is on behalf of/in empathy with those who violate us and hurt us and would even destroy us.”³⁹

These five themes of compassion not only describe the human finitude and vulnerability (compassion as suffering with) but also promote the sense of justice and moral obligation by describing compassion as resistance and reconciliation. They also underline the task of forgiveness and present a social vision of peaceful co-existence. Such tasks of compassion are particularly urgent in context of transnational migration where there are increasing contact with social, religious, and cultural *others*. In the following section, I make a transition to further explore compassion from pedagogical perspectives.

BORDER PEDAGOGY, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Border pedagogy, according to Giroux, aims to develop a public pedagogy that “respects the notion of difference as part of a common struggle to extend the quality of public life.”⁴⁰ Giroux believes that the concept of border “signals a recognition of those epistemological, political, cultural, and social margins that structure the language of history, power, and difference.”⁴¹ Such recognition implies that “existing borders forged in domination can be challenged and redefined.”⁴² The notion of border, in this sense, indicates pedagogical processes in a society where members of a community become “border crossers” to understand each other’s differences and embrace otherness. For example, a Muslim refugee

who is a lower class, religious and racial minority can become a cultural worker who expands the existing values of an individual from a middle class, suburban neighborhood. In this context, the strengths and limitations of socially constructed values become visible.⁴³ Citing Richard Kearney, Giroux argues: “[Border pedagogy] highlights the ethical by examining how the shifting relations of knowing, acting, and subjectivity are constructed in spaces and social relationships based on judgments that demand and frame “different modes of response to the other.”⁴⁴ Students, as border-crossers, engage in knowledge “as people moving in and out of borders constructed around coordinates of difference and power.”⁴⁵

Emphasizing the task of challenging “mystifying ideologies that separate culture from power,” Giroux presents three tasks of “critical educators.”⁴⁶ The first task of critical educators is to uncover the political implications of cultural differences. By doing so, critical educators challenge belief systems that confuse convenient racial and ethnic categories. The second task of critical educators is to resist the view that considers education as taking place in a “decontextualized site free from social, political, and racial tensions.”⁴⁷ Interpreting issues of voice, language and culture in education requires the awareness of the political power at work. The third task of critical educators is to critically evaluate theories of education that “smother the relationship between difference and power/empowerment under the call for harmony and joyful learning.”⁴⁸ Critical educators need to facilitate the advancement of theories on difference that considers the issues of struggle, domination, and power. Giroux argues that in addition to reconceptualizing “the political and pedagogical struggle over race, ethnicity, and difference as merely part of the language of critique,” an anti-racist pedagogy needs to “retrieve and reconstruct possibilities for establishing the basis for a progressive vision that makes schooling for democracy and critical citizenship an unrealized yet possible reality.”⁴⁹ Such task makes it possible to develop foundational principles for an anti-racist pedagogy.

As a prominent philosopher in critical pedagogy, Giroux is influenced by John Dewey and Paulo Freire, among many others. As a pragmatist, Dewey was keen in reading the reality that influences educational processes in his own time. In his 1934 article, he writes:

The world is being rapidly industrialized. Individual groups, tribes and races, once living completely untouched by the economic regime of modern capitalistic industry, now find almost every phase of their lives affected by its expansion . . . The other especially urgent need is connected with the present unprecedented wave of nationalistic sentiment, of racial and national prejudice, of readiness to resort to force of arms.⁵⁰

In the context of rapidly growing industrialization, war, nationalism and prevalent racial and social prejudices, Dewey believes that reconstructing “the spirit of common understanding, of mutual sympathy and goodwill among all peoples and races” and “exorcise[ing] the demon of prejudice, isolation and hatred” are primary goals of education.⁵¹ In order to address the pedagogical task, Dewey gives special attention to the importance of cultivating virtues, calling it “the social aim of education.”⁵² Dewey writes:

The school must make ceaseless and intelligently organized effort to develop above all else the will for cooperation and the spirit which sees in every other individual an equal right to share in the cultural and material fruits of collective human invention, industry, skill and knowledge.⁵³

For Dewey, democratic virtues such as “intelligent sympathy” play essential roles in an individual’s life. He writes: “Sympathy as a desirable quality is something more than feeling. It is a cultivated imagination for what men [*sic*] have in common and a rebellion at whatever unnecessarily divided them.”⁵⁴ Intelligent sympathy prepares individuals to respond to the social responsibility by equipping them with inner potential. Although Dewey did not suggest that such democratic virtues, by themselves, are sufficient in promoting the social aim of education, he saw the potential that such virtues contribute to moral responsibility and benevolence.⁵⁵

Despite some controversies of Dewey’s philosophies of education, scholars uphold Dewey’s educational theory and find it relevant to today’s educational context.⁵⁶ Dewey’s concept of educational experience contributes to what Javier Sáenz Obregón calls “inter-subjective transformation” for teachers, which invites both teachers *and* students to the educational experience. As he argues that the goal of education is realizing individuals’ “utmost potentialities,” Dewey implies that this goal could be applied to teachers as well as students. Teachers, like students, are the “subjects of educational experience,” and that we must learn to apply to teachers the same aspirations we have for students.⁵⁷ In particular, pedagogical practices should promote “inter-subjective transformation” for teachers and students alike.⁵⁸ Dewey’s emphases on “self-reflection and self-creation” could be applied to teachers who are also participants of the learning processes.⁵⁹

Overall, Dewey’s goal to develop a peaceful and democratic culture is still an enduring task in our present time. As Andres English argues, Dewey’s concept of “struggle in learning” has influenced definitions of learning and of learning’s beginning point in contemporary education. The condition of “in-between of learning”⁶⁰—being beyond ignorance but not yet in possession of full knowledge—is uncomfortable and difficult, but it offers rich possibilities for reflective thinking for learners and teachers who are willing to undertake the “daunting task of pedagogical reconstruction in the face of changing realities.”⁶¹

Among the educational philosophers who are influenced by Dewey is Paulo Freire who also emphasizes the importance of co-learning and co-creating of knowledge. The traditional “banking” education—where learners are regarded as passive recipients of knowledge—inhibits the “emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality” which is required for cultivating compassion.⁶² In “banking education,” learners are “docile listeners” who mechanically memorize and reproduce information.⁶³ Therefore, Freire promotes the co-creation of knowledge where learners are “critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher.”⁶⁴ In this Conscientization process, “the teacher presents the material to the students for their consideration, and re-considers her earlier considerations as the students express their own.”⁶⁵ Students begin to recognize social, political, or economic oppression and act to eliminate it. In this sense, both teachers and learners are active co-participants of the learning process.

Freire's movement toward the process of Conscientization—a process in which learners become aware of socio-political and economic oppressions and act to transform it—provides profound insights to critical pedagogy aimed at social transformation. First, Freire maintains that action and reflection should occur at the same time. For him, critical reflection is also action, and vice versa. This is because Conscientization is a continuous process that begins with the *recognition* of oppressive situation which is followed by *an action* to transform the oppressive situation. Conscientization requires facing one's deep-seated prejudice, stereotype, and traumatic memories that hinders one from practicing compassion. Second, Freire emphasizes the “situationality” of learners and teachers where they are placed in a particular situation: “Human beings *are* because they *are* in a situation. And they *will be more* [who they are], the more they not only critically reflect upon their existence but critically act upon it.”⁶⁶ The fact that teachers and learners are situated in a particular social historical context does not mean that the relationship between the two is stagnant. Consequentially, Freire believes both teachers and learners should constantly examine their realities. “In order for the oppressed to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation,” Freire writes, “they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform.”⁶⁷ The critical analyses of realities should motivate individuals to resist oppression and create an avenue to participate in social transformation.

Third, Freire recognizes the value of creative energy to name the wrong and change the world. Freire believe that inculcation of knowledge “anesthetizes and inhibits creative power” whereas “problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality.”⁶⁸ This “creative power” enables learners to critically intervene in reality. This is why Freire believes “to the oppressor consciousness, the humanization of the ‘others,’ of the people, appears not as the pursuit of full humanity, but as subversion.”⁶⁹ For Freire, the essential part of the Conscientization process is learners equipping the ability to decode their situations and see themselves as the subject of the learning process.

Freire introduces three elements of critical pedagogies: critical reflection, dialogue and action. Freire believes that the goal of critical pedagogy is to encourage learners to challenge social inequalities and ultimately transform the oppression. In order to achieve these goals, Freire believes that dialogue and subsequent action should be rooted in critical reflection, which involves active participation, ethical passion toward common human flourishing, critical insight that penetrates surface meanings, and compassion towards humanity. “Dialogue with the people is radically necessary to every authentic revolution. This is what makes it a revolution, as distinguished from a military *coup*.”⁷⁰ Ira Shor aptly summarizes critical pedagogy as “Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organization, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse.”⁷¹

Essentially, Freire's contribution to the contemporary education can be summarized in the following concepts: *praxis* and *radical love*. According to Freire, *praxis* is a “reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it” and *radical love* is a “commitment to others.”⁷² In order to resist oppression,

the “act of love” is essential because it is a “commitment to their cause— the cause of liberation.”⁷³ Through this process of intervention and re-intervention, human beings can participate in the betterment of the world through education.

EMBODYING COMPASSION: TOWARDS PEDAGOGY OF COMPASSION

The three figures in critical pedagogy—John Dewey, Paulo Freire, and Henry A. Giroux—contribute to expand pedagogical wisdom to the social and public realm outside the classroom. This section further explores the theme of social justice and education, focusing on the practical ways to embody the pedagogical concepts proposed by the three philosophers of education. Maxine Greene argues that teaching for social justice entails teaching “enhanced perception and imaginative explorations” that enables recognizing social wrongs and sufferings.⁷⁴ It is to teach a way of being in the world with an increased sense of “the joy of working for transformation in the smallest places, so that they [students] may become healers and change their world.”⁷⁵ As a practical theologian and a religious educator, Mary Elizabeth Moore provides practical and concrete ways to embody the critical pedagogical concepts of social justice teaching. Throughout her scholarship, Moore shows the praxis of compassion based on the process-relational assumption that people are always in process. Moore proposes imagination as one essential way to cultivate compassion.⁷⁶ In her essay “Imagination at the Center,” Moore provides five ways to cultivate imagination: Seeking Goodness, Seeking Transcendence—Seeking Goodness, Touching the Unknown, Intimate Knowing, Knowing the Stranger and the Unfamiliar, and Imagining and Responding to the Possible.⁷⁷ With “seeking goodness,” Moore refers to the teleological direction of educational practices that “enable people to discover and analyze forces of goodness and evil, and those practices that stir vision and equip people with skills to enhance the common good.”⁷⁸ Moore’s search for goodness in education resonates with the work of Paulo Freire, which I explore in more detail later. By “seeking transcendence—touching the unknown,” Moore refers to “transcending limits of an evil social system, transcending narrow understandings of humanity (and ‘we-ness’), and transcending one way of living in order to dwell in transition and emerge in a new way.”⁷⁹ Practices of “intimate knowing” refers to practices that lead people to “engage deeply with the fullness of other individuals and communities, other parts of the cosmos, empirical data, and complex ideas.”⁸⁰ “Knowing the stranger and the unfamiliar” refers to “encouraging people to know the stranger and the unfamiliar.”⁸¹ Finally, “imagining and responding to the possible,” refers to the educators’ duty to “engage students in envisioning alternate futures.”⁸² For the purposes of this article, I discuss the practices of “intimate knowing” and “knowing the stranger and the unfamiliar” in detail. These two ways to cultivate imagination will ground my discussion of Moore’s process-relational theology of compassion.

When Moore argues that “intimate knowing” is a requirement for cultivating imagination, she understands that intimate knowing requires “attendances to particularity, to relationships within the web of life, and to the cultivation of appreciative consciousness.”⁸³ This definition of “intimate knowing” shows practical and concrete ways to embody the praxis of compassion. Moore believes that traditional educational methods tend to “neglect to strengthen habits of concrete appreciation of the individual

facts in their full interplay of emergent values” as well as “engagement with particular people, beings, observations, and ideas.”⁸⁴ These emphases on particularity and local contexts are discussed in her essays “Imagine Peace: Knowing the Real-Imagining the Impossible” and “Ethnic Diversity and Biodiversity: Richness at the Center of Education.”⁸⁵ In “Imagine Peace,” Moore expands Whitehead’s emphases on the balance between “intellectual analysis” and argues that “[intimate knowing] includes relating with others from the deep marrow of human experience.”⁸⁶ Moore explains that “the creation of safe spaces” is necessary for people to experiment with new relationships and new ideas within small communities so that these new way of being can be embodied in larger communities.⁸⁷

Practices of “knowing the stranger and the unfamiliar” help to enlarge the circle of compassion in practice.⁸⁸ This practice presupposes “crossing cultural, geographic, religious, and age boundaries.”⁸⁹ Encounters with the neighbor and stranger, the familiar and unfamiliar, according to Moore, are an essential part of education because such encounters “stir imagination by opening new windows of experience from which people can draw as they face the particularities of their own lives and their participation in the larger world day by day.”⁹⁰

It is important to note here that Moore bases this practice on the notion of intersubjective relationship. Moore believes that knowing the unfamiliar requires “genuine, life-changing interactions and the deep knowing that emerges from them.”⁹¹ To elaborate this point, Moore provides three potential dangers of encountering the unknown. First, Moore warns of the danger of collecting otherness as an object to be accumulated, admired, laughed at, or pitied. Objectifying the other is dangerous because such encounters often ignore power differentials.⁹² This attitude can end up externalizing others and taking agency away from them. Therefore, Moore points out the danger of “boundary-crossing education” as the second potential danger in encountering others: “If knowing has to do with relating with the world in a deep and responsive way, then our relationships need to be permeated with awareness and critical response to differentials in power, as well as differentials in language, style, arts, and rituals.”⁹³ Building such relation-based knowing is possible when we ask “much of the knowers *and* the known, including a redress of inequalities and a movement toward equality and interdependence.”⁹⁴ These questions include asking about “real people” who are affected by religious and cultural traditions, worldwide political and economic patterns, and multifaceted web relationships.⁹⁵ Third, Moore warns of the danger of teaching people that encountering the stranger and the unfamiliar involves “an encounter with a radical other, which may or may not affect learners.”⁹⁶ This disengaging way of thinking otherness, according to Moore, is based on the assumption that otherness is a “substantive, nonchanging, and external” entity.⁹⁷ Instead, borrowing Carl Sterkens’ argument, Moore maintains that we should approach the other by “recognizing that diversity exists both within and beyond individuals’ experience.”⁹⁸

For Moore, these practices of cultivating imagination can contribute to igniting an imagination of global peace and justice. To this end, Moore provides four aspects of Whiteheadian cosmology: visions of peace, inheritance and novelty, open future, and overcoming dualisms—converting opposition into contrast.

[Peace] is a broadening of feeling due to the emergence of some deep metaphysical insight, unverbally and yet momentous in its coordination of values. Its first effect is the removal of the stress of acquisitive feeling arising from the soul's preoccupation with itself. Thus peace carries with it a surpassing of personality ... It results in a wider sweep of conscious interest. It enlarges the field of attention. Thus Peace is self-control at its widest—at the width where the “self” has been lost, and interest has been transferred to coordinations wider than personality.⁹⁹

Moore's Whiteheadian analysis of peace recalls our definition of compassion as a *holistic way of being in the world and participating in others' suffering with an ongoing process of openness and mindfulness towards the other—socially, psychologically, spiritually, and ethically*. First, Moore encourages teachers to cultivate “expectation and wonder” because “Peace is not a thing to be taught, but a gift to be expected and received.”¹⁰⁰ Moore implies that cultivating peace is about cultivating a way of being in the world, rather than teaching knowledge about peace. Moore in this sense resists relying on human reason and control.¹⁰¹ She believes that, and Freire would agree, the inculcation of information itself, for example on the cultural values of ethnic minorities, will not change people's attitude of racial prejudice.¹⁰² Second, Moore suggests that Peace “can be actively cultivated through active engagement with the world.”¹⁰³ When Moore describes teaching “active engagement with the world,” she does not simply mean teaching students *about justice and peace*; she demands change in “*how we teach*”¹⁰⁴: “Education thus needs another kind of commitment, namely to embrace chaos, to risk destabilization, and to teach skills for living with the instability that emerges in the natural flow of life or in the intentional disruptions aimed at reshaping a stable but destructive situation.”¹⁰⁵ Third, Moore points out the realities of tragedy and the sensitivity to other's suffering in practicing Whiteheadian Peace: “Each tragedy is the disclosure of an ideal—What might have been, and was not: What can be.”¹⁰⁶ Moore believes that the tragedy was not meaningless as long as “the inner feeling belonging to this grasp of the service of tragedy is Peace.”¹⁰⁷ Fourth, Moore suggests “discerning, analyzing, and even provoking destabilization” as concrete ways to practice peace in education.¹⁰⁸ It is important to note that Moore emphasizes the balance between “some degrees of stability” and “some degrees of social change” in order to promote global peace and flourishing.¹⁰⁹ Through the balance and tension between the visions and skills that enable social change, one can cultivate “a broadening of feeling” with the wider world.¹¹⁰

Moore's attention to process-relational thought and imagination undergirds her commitment to pedagogies concerned with justice, peace, and compassion grounded in the particulars of practice and everyday life. To be specific, Moore fundamentally believes that the person is constantly changing. Her process view of the person does not mean, however, that the person is situated outside a particular social, cultural, economic context. Rather, the fact that a person is constantly changing requires attention to the interconnectedness of contexts. She calls for educators to build compassionate relationships with learners, embodying justice, peace, and compassion in the classroom, rather than focusing on the inculcation of knowledge. Moore calls this “teaching from the heart.”¹¹¹

A critical conversation between Moore and three philosophers of education (Dewey, Freire, and Giroux) provides crucial insights for pedagogy of compassion in the context of transnational migration. First, applied to the context of transnational migration and practice of compassion, the move towards compassionate society does not begin from the policies and legal changes that are aimed at diversity; it begins from the mind-changing love. Second, practicing compassion requires revisiting the convenient value systems and cultural norms that one unconsciously use without any fundamental questioning. For example, in the context of transnational migration, dismantling the binary view of hospitality that views migrants only as passive recipients of hospitality can empower the migrants to become the agents of hospitality. One needs to realize that refugees and asylum seekers who are settling down in a country can also be the agents of compassion, not just passive recipients of it. Pedagogy of compassion in contexts of transnational migration denotes embodying the concepts of “border crossers” in order to ethically examine one’s own cultural locations, history, power and difference. It emphasizes looking at the dangers of “liberal” multiculturalist attitude that brackets the power-differential. Cultivating compassion in context of transnational migration is *not* about making differences ahistorical or apolitical. Pedagogy of compassion is about cultivating the awareness to *be* in the world as border crossers while engaging others with the deep understanding of one’s own vulnerability and locationality.

ENDNOTES

1 Various religious educators have discussed the interconnection between religious education and compassion: see Courtney T. Goto, “Teaching Love: Embodying Prophetic Imagination Through Clowning” *Religious Education* 111, no. 4 (2016): 398–414; Frank Rogers, Jr., *Practicing Compassion* (Nashville, TN: The Upper Room Books, 2014); Janet W. Parachin, “Educating for an Engaged Spirituality: Dorothy Day and Thich Nhat Hanh as Spiritual Exemplars,” *Religious Education* 95, no. 3 (June 2000): 250–68. This article expands upon the existing research on compassion in practical theology and in particular, religious education.

2 Eric J. Cassell, “Compassion,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, ed. Shane J. Lopez and C.R. Snyder (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 394.

3 This article follows Frantz Fanon’s definition of the Other. See *Black Skin, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967).

4 Despite some variations in language, researchers agree that compassion involves at least the following five aspects: cognitive (recognizing suffering), affective (a sense of concern), aspirational or motivational (a wish to relieve the suffering), attentional (focus and attention), and behavioral (an action that stems from compassion). See Paul Ekman, *Emotional Awareness: Overcoming the Obstacles to Psychological Balance and Compassion: A Conversation between the Dalai Lama and Paul Ekman* (New York: Times Books, 2008); Paul Gilbert, *Compassion: Conceptualisations, Research and Use in Psychotherapy* (London: Routledge, 2005); Kristin Neff, *Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011); C. Daniel Batson, Nadia Ahmad, and David A. Lishner, “Empathy and Altruism,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*, 417-426.

5 Susan Wessel, *Passion and Compassion in Early Christianity*, 1st ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 2.

- 6 “Compassion,” in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 1340.
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- 11 Augustine, *The City of God* 9.5, trans. Marcus Dods (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Publishing, 2009).
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- 17 *Ibid.*, 115; Wessel, *Passion and Compassion*.
- 18 Augustine, *The City of God* 9.5.
- 19 Wessel, *Passion and Compassion*, 114.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 118.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 See Swinton, *Raging with Compassion: Pastoral Responses to the Problem of Evil* (Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2007); Carter Heyward, *Our Passion for Justice: Images of Power, Sexuality, and Liberation* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1984); Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Women, Earth, and Creator Spirit* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993); John Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010).
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