The Political Limits of Compassion

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1.

Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* opens on a hopeful note: "That we often derive sorrow from the sorrows of others, is a matter of fact too obvious to require any instances to prove it" (1795/2002, 11). Even the "greatest ruffian, the most hardened violator of the laws of society", he says, is "not altogether without" compassion (ibid). A capacity for compassion seems to be part of our common human lot. And not ours alone; plenty of non-human animals exhibit pain at the suffering of others. It is little surprise then that moral and political philosophers in search of hope often turn, as Smith did, to compassion. Universal and atavistic, compassion promises to breathe motivating fire into abstract moral considerations and to bridge the chasm from principle to particular.

In *Political Emotions* (2013), Martha Nussbaum attempts to articulate a set of political emotions appropriate to, and compatible with, the aspirations of the liberal state. Compassion lies at the centre of her project. To bolster and protect the institutions of liberal justice – particularly those that require income redistribution, like social welfare, public education and public healthcare – the state must inculcate in its citizenry a capacity for deeper and more expansive compassion. This, on Nussbaum's view, it should do through the use of public artwork and political rhetoric. Here I will offer a brief overview of Nussbaum's understanding of the nature of compassion and its proper place in a liberal democracy, and then offer some observations about what I see as the limits of this understanding. To anticipate, I will suggest that, while the inculcation of compassion might be pragmatically useful for the ends of liberalism, compassion is often the wrong answer to the question of what we owe each other, morally speaking, in an aspiring (but failing) liberal society like the U.S. In such a society, I want to suggest, the privileged ought feel not

compassion, but instead a moral emotion that registers their own complicity in the suffering of the oppressed. This will lead me to some more general comments about what I take to be the psychic and moral limits of compassion – limits left, to my mind, unlimned by Nussbaum. I will conclude by saying something about where I take my fundamental disagreement with Nussbaum's account of political emotions to lie: not in a conflict over which emotions are appropriate to a society that is genuinely aspiring to ideals of equality and freedom, but rather in a conflict over whether the U.S. is such a society.

2.

Nussbaum is a cognitivist about the emotions, meaning that she believes that emotions are characterised (at least in part) by their propositional content.[1] Compassion in her view is a feeling of pain at the suffering of another person or another creature that necessarily involves (at least in humans) three thoughts: first, that the suffering is serious; second, that the suffering is not entirely the victim's fault; and third, what Nussbaum calls the *eudaimonistic* thought, the thought that the suffering person is among one's most important goals and projects, and thus that their suffering *matters* to oneself. Nussbaum also thinks that compassion often, though not necessarily, involves the thought that the suffering person is relevantly similar to oneself, and thus that one is susceptible to the same sort of suffering. Where compassion is appropriate but absent, it is because one of these thoughts is missing. Thus one can fail to be compassionate when compassion would be apt because one fails to recognise the seriousness of the suffering, or falsely believes that the suffering is entirely the subject's fault, or fails to see that the subject lies within one's circle of concern. In this connection Nussbaum discusses the work of sociologist Candace Clark, who suggests that the lack of compassion that Americans feel toward the poor is correlated with the belief that the poor are *responsible* for their poverty.

In our capacity to feel compassion, we are not alone in the animal kingdom. Nussbaum speaks movingly about the compassion exhibited by mice, by pet dogs

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[1] In *Upheavals of Thought* (2001), Nussbaum argues that the cognitive elements of emotions (whether or not emotions have non-cognitive elements) are sufficient conditions of the emotions. That is, she believes that either the emotions are entirely constituted by their cognitive elements, or that the cognitive elements of emotions reliably produce the non-cognitive elements. If one fails to have an emotion where the emotion is appropriate, it's necessarily the case that one is exhibiting some sort of cognitive failure.

and most of all (because she is particularly fond of them) by elephants. She discusses a case described by the American conservationist Cynthia Moss, in which a young female elephant is shot by a poacher. Moss writes of the elephants in the herd that they:

> became frantic and knelt down and tried to lift her up. They worked their tusks under her back and under her head. At one point they succeeded in lifting her into a sitting position but her body flopped back down. Her family tried everything to rouse her, kicking and tusking her, and Tallulah even went off and collected a trunkful of grass and tried to stuff it into her mouth" (150). The elephants then sprinkled earth over the dead elephant's corpse, covering it before moving off.

This anecdote is instructive not only because it reminds us that compassion is part of our animal nature, but also because it reminds us of how good we are at feeling compassion when asked to engage imaginatively, as Moss' story does, with someone else's or some other creature's suffering.

Although we are very good at feeling pain at the suffering of others, at least when it is presented to us forcefully (and bad ideology doesn't get in the way), Nussbaum reminds us that human compassion, like animal compassion, has a tendency toward narrowness – preferring those nearby and similar over those far away and different – and also a tendency to be fickle and fleeting. Compassion can also lead to favouritism and the trumping of general moral principle, and can all too easily be inhibited by a desire to conform and obey authority. But most importantly for Nussbaum, human compassion faces a severe limitation that does not seem to be shared by animals, and to which we must be particularly alert: that is, our tendency to see certain others as disgusting, ugly reminders of our animal nature. It is the tendency toward disgust that produces social stigma and exclusion, doctrines of contamination and, at worst, acts of radical evil – subordination, humiliation and enslavement. Disgust, Nussbaum thinks, has its roots in the particularly human phenomenon of narcissism, the infantile drive to overcome helplessness through the subordination of others. Thus compassion by itself can be no guide to justice; it requires the stabilising and focussing structures of reason and principle, and most of all safeguards against our tendencies toward narcissism and disgust.

To help illustrate the spirit of political compassion, Nussbaum turns often to Walt Whitman, a poet whom I also dearly love. She is right to characterise Whitman as the great American poet of compassion and imaginative identification, the only poet capable of (straight-facedly) opening a poem with the lines:

> I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
> And what I assume you shall assume,
> For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.
>
> (1892, 11)

But Nussbaum neglects the fact that Whitman is also the poet of disgust and recoil, constantly battling against his own tendency toward revulsion and revolt from the other. Thus he is also the poet who writes, in section 27 of the same poem:

> To touch my person to some one else's is about as
> much as I can stand.
>
> (ibid, 52)

Whitman, though sometimes disparaged as a poet of naïve sentiment and hysterical inclusion, could not be a better illustration of the complexities and limits of human compassion that Nussbaum seeks to bring into our view.

How then, according to Nussbaum, shall liberal societies inculcate a spirit of compassion in its citizenry? To answer this question Nussbaum turns to Ancient Greek tragedy. Tragic spectatorship, she tells us, focuses on common human vulnerability – especially bodily vulnerability – and thus reminds even those in privileged positions of their susceptibility to universal human plights. Tragic spectatorship thus encourages compassion while also universalising it beyond the particular. Meanwhile, tragedy's twin, comedy, with its emphasis on the joys and foibles of the human body, is a model for how we can dispel disgust, compassion's great enemy. Nussbaum thinks that tragic spectatorship can take suitably modern forms. Thus she praises the speeches of Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Franklin D. Roosevelt's depression-era photography campaign in support of the New Deal, the films of Japanese animator Miyazaki, the children's novels of Laura Ingalls Wilder, the Vietnam War Memorial by Maya Lin, and public book conversations like the "One Book, One Chicago" initiative, in which all Chicagoans are invited to collectively read novels like Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* or James Baldwin's *Go tell it to the Mountain.* Such creative acts, Nussbaum argues, can

foster a spirit of compassion by showing us the faultless and serious suffering of others, and reminding us of our common susceptibility to such suffering. In turn, compassion can lead us to root out the causes of such suffering, and better structure our political arrangements to minimise and assuage it.

3.

At the very end of *Political Emotions*, Nussbaum poses the following question: is her proposal merely a *pragmatic* one, a proposal for what is in fact useful for a liberal society, or is it also a moral proposal, a proposal about what sort of citizens it is good to be? She answers, somewhat tentatively, that her proposal is not meant to be merely pragmatic. It is an intrinsically good thing, Nussbaum suggests, for our political culture to be characterised by a spirit of love and compassion.

And it is this claim that I would like to push against. I want to suggest that morally speaking, there is something problematic about the idea that compassion is the appropriate response to the kind of widespread and systematic injustice that characterises what Nussbaum calls 'aspiring' liberal societies like the one we find in the United States. To see why, simply ask how someone like myself – someone who enjoys tremendous, unearned privilege because of my birth into the socioeconomic elite – should feel when I see a fellow citizen, say a poor black person, suffering because of institutionalised racism, state-sponsored ghettoisation, or poverty wrought by state-sanctified economic exploitation? I should feel pain at her suffering, no doubt; and also recognise that she is not to blame for her suffering, that her suffering is serious, and that this suffering falls squarely within my own circle of concern. Thus, according to Nussbaum, I should feel compassion for her.

But surely there is something missing here. For should I not also feel that distinctive sting of recognition and self-indictment that is the proper response to my complicity in the political structures that have caused and perpetuate this woman's suffering, that have bought my privilege at the expense of her oppression? If I do not feel this sting of complicity, then I have failed to respond, I want to suggest, as morality or justice demands. I think this is generally true of how we should feel, as privileged citizens of aspiring but failing liberal societies: not just pain at the undeserved suffering of others, but that particular pain that comes with recognising our own implication in the system that produces such suffering. I think this is true whether

we are talking about how white Americans should feel toward black Americans, or how descendents of British colonists should feel toward the immigrant children of those they colonised, how men should feel about women suffering under patriarchal oppression, or how the rich should feel toward the poor and emiserated. In each case, to feel only compassion is to fail to have a fully moral response to the observed injustice. Compassion is too distancing, representing the suffering as not having anything to do with our own actions or position. Or rather, insofar as it implicates the self – as Nussbaum says, by affectively speaking of one's own susceptibility to the observed suffering, or placing the suffering subject within one's sphere of concern – compassion often misrepresents the true nature of such implication. To feel only compassion in such cases – cases where suffering is a determination of socially oppressive system that benefit some at the cost of others -- is to affectively misrepresent the world.

Now, Nussbaum is not committed to the thesis that one cannot feel compassionate while also feeling the sting or horror of complicity; nothing in her account of compassion entails that. So I have only shown at best that compassion is not by itself a fully moral response to the suffering of the politically oppressed and marginalised. Nonetheless, I worry that paradigmatic cases of compassion, including the cases that Nussbaum discusses, do exclude the kind of emotional recognition and self-indictment that I think is required for a fully moral response to paradigm cases of political suffering. And thus I worry that insisting on the importance of compassion in liberal politics can dangerously obscure the extent of our complicity in injustice.

Consider Nussbaum's discussion of tragic spectatorship. Tragedy, she says, usually teaches us to feel pain when someone falls victim to sheer bad luck or a natural human affliction like illness or death. Here, the appropriate feeling is pain, but not self-indictment, for we cannot be held responsible for bad luck, or the miseries that afflict all humans. We might of course be prompted, as a matter of fellow-feeling, to shift arrangements to mitigate the forces of bad luck, or to ease the suffering of illness and death, but doing so would not be a remedy to our own past moral failures. But much of the suffering that is experienced in 'aspiring' liberal societies like the U.S. is neither a function of bad luck nor the product of natural human affliction. One can say of course that it's bad luck to be born black in the U.S., but once born black, it is hardly a matter of bad luck that one is systematically excluded from healthcare, education, voting and jobs, or that one is likely to face harassment

from the police and be treated unfairly by the judicial system. Nor are these kinds of suffering just instances of general human affliction; they are forms of political suffering, produced by particular political arrangements that do not afflict all citizens equally.

Relevant here is Hegel's understanding of tragedy. As Nussbaum notes, Hegel saw tragedy as having a distinctively *political* purpose, showing us how current political arrangements produce the suffering we see represented on the stage. Thus, Sophocles' *Antigone* shows us how the demand for absolute loyalty to the state conflicts with natural familial duty, and thus produces unnecessary suffering. Nussbaum agrees that tragedy can have this particularly political function, revealing to us the ways in which current arrangements produce suffering, and prompting us to think about ways of avoiding such tragedy in the future. But even on this Hegelian vision of tragedy, there is no central place made for self-indictment, no room for the emotional recognition that *we* are the ones who have caused and sustain injustice. Thus while compassion might be theoretically compatible with, as I'm calling it, the sting of complicity or self-indictment, I worry nonetheless that compassion is a misleading paradigm for how we should respond to political suffering. Compassion, at least as we usually think of it, is too distanced and too un-self-implicating to be the emotion appropriate to our current political realities.

In response to my criticism of Nussbaum's focus on compassion, one may well worry that there is something problematic with my talk of self-indictment and complicity. I have suggested that compassion is insufficiently self-implicating (or better, inaccurately self-implicating) to be the apt response to paradigm cases of political suffering. And yet one might worry that the person who responds to political suffering by obsessing over his own complicity or guilt is not much better than the person who feels mere compassion for suffering that results from a system created and sustained for his benefit. Most of us are acquainted with the person who loves to obsess over the state of his own conscience, who draw a narcissistic pleasure from confronting and confessing the extent of his wrongdoing. I concede that this response is little better than the 'mere compassion' response to political suffering. Indeed perhaps it is worse. But I think it is fair to say that most of us are also acquainted with a recognition of complicity that is not narcissistic, that begins in horror at one's own involvement in another's suffering, and that is followed swiftly

by the desire to make reparation and find a better way forward. It is this sort of attitude that I am proposing as the apt response to political suffering.

None of that is to say that Nussbaum's pragmatic proposal is wrong. Indeed, I think that as a matter of human psychology, simple compassion – compassion without the sting of self-indictment – is probably a better motivation for getting privileged people to do things like pay their taxes and support welfare programmes. People on the whole do not like being told that they are complicit or guilt. Far better then, pragmatically speaking, to tap into people's desires to save others from misfortune, to be (and be seen to be) beneficent. The kind of self-indictment that I think is the morally apt response to political suffering might be too psychologically debilitating to do the work that Nussbaum envisions. If so, then there is perhaps a kind of tragic conflict here: between those emotions that justice demands, and those emotions that are most practically useful for the project of liberalism.

4.

Nussbaum is hardly a simple-minded defender of compassion; as I have already said, she thinks it is vital that we recognise the ways in which compassion is limited, in its moral and political usefulness, by its tendencies towards narrowness and fickleness. But I want to suggest two additional ways in which compassion is limited as political tool, which to my mind further circumscribe compassion's value as a political emotion. Both limits have to do with our finite ability to put ourselves in another's shoes, to see and feel things from a perspective that is not our own.

First, I want to suggest that there are serious limits to our ability to project ourselves into another person's psyche, especially across divides of political and social power, and a corresponding limit to the usefulness of such an empathetic procedure when it comes to the implementation of general political values like equality and freedom. This is related to a point that Thomas Nagel makes in his "Personal Rights and Public Space" (1995). Often we cannot, Nagel argues, empathise our way into understanding why people have the right to engage in non-harmful activities they find pleasurable but that holds no similar charm for us – for example, sadomasochistic sex. Many of us cannot see why such activity is sexually gratifying, and why a legal prohibition against such activity cuts to the core of certain people's sexual identities – at least in the empathetic, first-personal sense of

'see'. Instead we must simply, Nagel argues, take it for granted that other people's sexual preferences matter to them in the same way that our sexual preferences matter to us, and defend their rights to non-harmfully satisfy those preferences in accordance with our general commitment to the protection of liberty. Similarly (and this is a point familiar from decades of feminist and anti-racist theory) there are significant psychic limits to men's ability to empathise with the feelings of degradation and threat that women experience when they are catcalled or objectified, or to white people's ability to empathise with the horror of being the object of racist hate speech, or to rich people's ability to empathise with the feelings of worthlessness and desperation bred by economic precarity. Here what is needed, it seems, is not a 'widening' of compassion, as Nussbaum would have it – or, even if such a widening is needed, it is unlikely to be forthcoming. For it is hard to think that more fervent, projective imagining – even aided by narrative fiction – would be sufficient to bring the full awfulness of the relevant suffering into first-personal view. What I think such cases call for, rather, is a kind of epistemic and ethical deference: trust that the values of equality and liberty call for protections against these horrors, in the absence of a first-personal appreciation of precisely why.

Moreover – and this is my second point – we might worry that there is sometimes not only a psychic but a *moral* limit to our placing ourselves in another person's shoes. Is there not something ethically untoward in the suggestion that oppressors, with enough hard imaginative work, can see things from the perspective of those they oppress? Might not the very attempt to empathise across a gulf of oppression constitute a second act of oppression – an epistemic arrogance that fails to recognise the depth and extent of the primary oppression? Nussbaum anticipates this sort worry in her discussion of Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940/1991), a novel, she says (echoing Wright), that "deliberately…repels…a facile sympathy, a sympathy that assumes that the mind of a person who has suffered terrible deprivation and racism is easily accessible to the white reader" (2013, 290). Thus Wright's protagonist, Bigger Thomas, is "hostile, angry, scary", and ultimately goes on to commit two homicides; his lawyer, a communist named Max, argues in court that Bigger's violence was the inevitable result of his lifelong experience of racial oppression. In one scene, Bigger drives two young white people, Mary Dalton and her boyfriend Jan, past the tenements where he lives. Mary voices a fantasy of white compassion and understanding:

> "You know, Bigger, I've long wanted to go into these houses," she said, pointing to the tall, dark apartment buildings looming to either side of them, "and just *see* how your people live. You know what I mean? I've been to England, France and Mexico, but I don't know how people live ten blocks from me. We know so *little* about each other. I just want to *see*. I want to *know* these people. Never in my life have I been inside of a Negro home. Yet they *must* live like we live. They're *human*. . . . There are twelve million of them. . . . They live in our country....In the same city with us...," her voice trailed off wistfully (Wright 1940/1991, 79-80).

Bigger responds with silent rage:

> Bigger knew that they were thinking of his life and the life of his people. Suddenly he wanted to seize some heavy object in his hand and grip it with all the strength of his body and in some strange way rise up and stand in naked space above the speeding car and with one final blow blot it out—with himself and them in it (ibid, 80).

Nussbaum registers the infuriating cluelessness of Mary Dalton's little speech, and sees Bigger's anger at it as understandable. But she insists nonetheless that "beneath the facile kind of sympathy expressed by Mary…lies the possibility of a deeper sympathy", a sympathy that says: "[t]his is a human being, with the equipment to lead a productive life. See how not only his choices but also his emotional and intellectual capacities have been deformed by racial hatred and its institutional expression" (292). But it is not clear to me that this more third-personal understanding of Bigger – seeing him merely as a psychological symptom of a racist society – is much of an improvement on the maudlin, first-personal understanding for which Mary Dalton yearns. After all, even through his rage, there is much that Bigger sees more clearly than the white people around him. Perhaps what is really demanded by Bigger is not understanding at all, but a willingness to accept that things are unimaginably, incomprehensibly awful for some people, and that this state of affairs is a blight on justice.

5.

Nussbaum concludes her book by asking whether her proposal that the liberal state inculcate compassion in its citizenry is simply a pragmatic recommendation – what

is useful to the ends of the liberal state – or also a proposal about what is intrinsically valuable for the liberal state. Her tentative answer is that it is an intrinsically and not merely instrumentally good thing for the liberal citizenry to be compassionate. Her implicit focus in so saying are on those who must sacrifice their own material interests in order to secure the perfection of liberal institutions of justice: such people, she argues, should feel compassion so that they will be willing to secure a state that benefits the worst off. By contrast, I want now to ask the same question – about the moral appropriateness of compassion as a response to political suffering – from the other side. That is, is it right for the state to try to inculcate in the victims of political injustice a spirit of compassion toward their oppressors?[2]

Two heroes of Nussbaum's book are Gandhi and Martin Luther King, both political leaders who encouraged love and compassion even as they revolted against injustice. Nussbaum thinks that theirs is a morally admirable way of doing politics, and hopes that their model can be emulated by others facing similar battles. But even if we grant that this is so – and many black and feminist writers have argued for the importance of more 'negative' emotions such as anger in the fight for justice[3] -- I think we should be troubled by the idea of the *state* encouraging victims of political injustice to follow the models of Gandhi or King. The liberal state of course can ask that all its citizens, privileged or oppressed, respect its foundational principles, and obey the laws of the land. But can the liberal state also ask of its marginalised and disenfranchised citizens that they love those very principles that are selectively applied to all but them, and feel compassion towards those who, under the cloak of those principles, oppress them? Indeed, isn't there something coercive (and thus illiberal) about so doing?

Nussbaum wants to insist that state-sponsored inculcation of emotion is only coercive when those who don't feel the intended emotions are punished. The political culture should invite people to feel compassion, she says, not force people to do so. This is why, she argues, the protection of dissent and disagreement is so important for a liberal state. But we might worry that legal protections of dissent and disagreement aren't enough, when even Barack Obama is commonly accused of being a rage-fuelled black man, and when critics of an immoral war are branded

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[2] Employing categories of the 'oppressed' and 'oppressors' is of course an oversimplification, since many people are at once oppressed and oppressors, e.g. those who are economically oppressed but racially privileged, or gender-oppressed but economically privileged, and so on.
[3] See e.g. Lorde (1981/1984), Frye (1983), Narayan (1988), Jaggar (1989) and Tessman (2005).

enemies of the state. We should be suspicious, I think, of any top-down programme that encourages those who have greatest reason to be angry to transform that anger into compassionate love. I want to stress that this worry is compatible with the thought that there is something deeply morally admirable about Gandhi or Martin Luther King. For there is a vital difference between someone from within an oppressed community encouraging compassion, and compassion sponsored by the state. The latter tips dangerously toward authoritarianism, and should be met with cynicism and suspicion by those whom the state has most interest in controlling.

6.

I want to end by saying something about where I think my fundamental disagreement with Nussbaum finds its source. As I said, I am inclined to agree with Nussbaum's main conclusion that as a matter of psychosocial fact, inculcating a spirit of compassion and love in the citizenry might well be the best way, instrumentally speaking, of advancing the institutions of liberal justice. But for me a spirit of compassionate love can never be the full story of what we owe each other emotionally. It is a best a half-story, and in many ways a false story.

When we look to a nation like the U.S., I think Nussbaum and I see different things. She sees a country with the correct foundational principles and pretty good institutions. What is needed from her perspective is a renewed commitment to those principles, and in particular a renewed commitment to social welfare programmes that ensure that no one is too badly off, and that everyone has equal opportunities for living a worthwhile human life. Insofar as the U.S. fails to meet its commitments to these ideals, it is because its citizenry does not do enough to provide opportunities for betterment or a safety net in the case of misfortune. Thus Nussbaum writes at the beginning of her book that her inquiry "presupposes that basically good institutions exist, or can be shortly realized, albeit in a form that will require ongoing work to improve and perfect" (2013, 23). She says that the ideal society she describes is "not only possible, but in many respects actual, and that something close to the whole of it has existed in some places and times" (ibid, 24). Whereas when I look to the U.S., I see a country that systematically enacts violence against its worst off, and that has actively caused their suffering through state-sponsored policies of discrimination, exploitation and disenfranchisement, often while paying lip service to

noble ideals of equality and freedom. On my view, the U.S. fails to achieve its liberal ideals not through mere inaction, but through an ongoing legacy of active, state-sponsored oppression.

Frankly, I cannot but see this when I think, for example, of the plight of black Americans, who after being emancipated from slavery, were subjected to exclusionary Jim Crow laws, legally sanctioned predatory mortgage practices and land-grabs, and systematic ghettoisation sponsored by the Federal Housing Administration. The black ghettos constructed by governmental legislation, and the purposeful exclusion of blacks from the benefits of Roosevelt's New Deal, now re-enforce a cycle of poverty, crime and racism. A black person is ten times more likely than a white person to spend time in prison for drug-related offenses, despite the fact that white people are five more times likely to use drugs.[4] 85% of those stopped as part of the New York City Policy Department's 'stop-and-frisk' policy are black and Latino, a disproportionate number even controlling for the demographics of crime-heavy neighbourhoods.[5] In 2013, only 43.8% of black Americans owned homes, compared with 73.3% of white Americans.[6] In the same year, the U.S. Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act, a piece of legislation designed to protect the enfranchisement of minorities in historically racist states. And I cannot but see the U.S. as a place of active, state-sponsored injustice when I think of the growing wealth inequality that has ravaged the U.S. in recent decades, not just through a failure to redistribute, but through federal policies of wage suppression, labour disempowerment, and corporate welfarism.

From my perspective then, a proper emotional reckoning with the injustice that pervades 'aspiring' liberal societies like the U.S. will necessarily involve much more than compassion, and indeed much more than love. But if I am right about where my disagreement with Nussbaum really lies, then it turns out, in a sense, that we do not really disagree at all. I agree with Nussbaum that a spirit of political love and compassion is appropriate to a society with the correct ideals and nearly perfect institutions of justice. But I do not recognise any societies I know by this description. For the liberal societies I do know, a proper emotional reckoning with our fellow citizens must involve a confrontation with our own bloody hands.

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[4] http://www.naacp.org/criminal-justice-fact-sheet/
[5] http://www2.nycbar.org/pdf/report/uploads/20072495-StopFriskReport.pdf
[6] http://www.jchs.harvard.edu/sites/jchs.harvard.edu/files/sonhr14-color-full_0.pdf

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