"The Sense and Sensibility of Philanthropy as a Moral Citizenship of Care"

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The leading question of this chapter is how to understand the moral dimensions of philanthropy as a spiritual sense and sensibility. My purpose is to elaborate a modestly integrated analysis of several aspects of philanthropy that make it a morally oriented behavior in the lives of individual donors. My general approach is akin to what Anthony Giddens calls the double hermeneutic of social analysis: to interpret how others interpret their lives. Here, this means providing an analytic interpretation of how donors interpret their giving as a morally oriented or spiritual matter. By the term *spiritual* I mean the ensemble of deeply seated moral sentiments, inclinations, and duties that people recognize and live out in relation to their ultimate purpose. An ultimate purpose, explains Aristotle, is that self-determined end or final cause that people identify as the goal of life. It is known implicitly or explicitly, says Aristotle, as that end which cannot be identified as an intermediate goal or instrument for attaining another end.²

Max Weber calls such morally oriented behavior connected to ultimate purpose *wertrational*, or value-rational action, as opposed to *zweckrational*, or instrumentally rational action. While instrumentally rational action involves choice about the "relative importance of different possible ends," value-rational action is "motivated by the fulfillment of . . . unconditional demands," such as those "required by duty, honor, the pursuit of beauty, a religious call, personal loyalty or the importance of some 'cause.'"³ There are numerous formulations of what people consider to be their ultimate purpose or value-rational goal. For Aristotle it is an educated happiness, for Heidegger it is participation in Being, and for Aquinas it is the unity of love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self. The general term I will use for a life implicitly or explicitly directed toward an ultimate end is moral biography or "gospel," that is, a life with the ultimate goal of exercising capacity in the service of doing what is needed.

This essay is empirical, theoretical, and partially normative. It is empirical in that I formulate a general understanding of the meaning and motives of caring behavior by drawing on what I have learned over the years from intensive in-
terviews and surveys with wealth-holders and middle-income individuals. It is theoretical in that I pull together several strands of my thinking about the morally oriented behavior of donors under a loosely defined theory that I call the moral citizenship of care. The essay is normative in that I consciously invite others to consider whether, and in what way, my notions of moral biography, care, and the moral citizenship of care contribute to a more theoretically integrated, emotionally rich, and practically consequential understanding of philanthropy and philanthropists.

Throughout the chapter, I use the term moral in a way similar to how Philip Selznick uses it in his book, Moral Commonwealth. His seminal work offers a nondualistic understanding of the natural convergence between self and community—a convergence John Langan also emphasizes in his discussion of the communal nature of the individual and the inviolable individual as a communal being (see his chapter in this volume). Concurring with Émile Durkheim and John Dewey, Selznick maintains that the "moral" dimension of social relations is rooted in the actual value-associated organization of individual agents through which they forge social bonds and construct a self through the very same daily practices:

[H]uman values are rooted in the troubles and strivings of organic life, especially in the transition from immediate impulse to enduring satisfaction. They arise out of the continuities of social existence, including the need to nurture what is immature and unstable... Friendship, responsibility, leadership, love, and justice are not elements of an external ethic... They are generated by mundane needs, practical opportunities, and felt satisfactions.

It is within this framework of "mundane needs, practical opportunities, and felt satisfactions" that I will discuss several aspects of the moral foundations of philanthropy, particularly in regard to the donor. These moral foundations revolve around the nature of human inclination toward happiness, the meaning of "care" as meeting the true needs of others and oneself simultaneously, the motivational matrix of identification that generates care, and the distinguishing characteristic of philanthropy as a form of direct care.

In what follows, I address five aspects of the moral sense and sensibility surrounding philanthropy as a spiritual exercise. In the first section, I discuss moral life in general as a moral biography or "gospel" that combines material capacity and moral compass with the goal of fulfilling the ultimate end, for example, happiness, for oneself and others. Second, I describe the moral content of a moral biography as engaging in practices of care aimed at meeting the true needs of others. In the third section, I discuss the motivating inclination of care as residing in the ethics of identification and gratitude. The social relations of care are a single fabric extending from heart and home to the world, and are practices not of a selfless agent, but of one who embraces the unity of love of God, love of neighbor, and love of self. In the fourth section, I offer a positive definition of philanthropy as a social relation of care in which individuals respond directly to people in need rather than to the medium by which needs are expressed, as is the case in commercial and political relations. Fifth, I extend my argument from the personal to the communal level by indicating how the moral biography of individuals serves as the foundation for the social and cultural dispensation of a moral citizenship of care. In the conclusion, I describe discernment as the condition of possibility for all of the preceding considerations. Discernment is a process of conscientious decision making by which individuals clarify their capacity and moral purpose and how the two are to be connected in the conduct of life and philanthropy. I also discuss the broader general implication that the sense and sensibility of philanthropy which I have set forth is a particularly formative element of what is required if we are to animate cultural and spiritual life in an age of burgeoning affluence.

**Moral Biography as a Gospel of Capacity and Character**

The starting point for understanding philanthropy as a moral enterprise is to understand how life is a moral biography or what I call a gospel. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle says that the goal of life is happiness and that happiness is achieved by closing the gap between where one is and where one wants to be. This gap is closed by a life of virtue, that is, by making wise choices. A moral biography, then, is the perpetual migration from genesis to telesis, from history to aspiration by the exercise of wise choices. Wise choices, insists Aristotle, require both the freedom to act voluntarily and the virtue of wisdom. There can be no virtue without freedom and no true freedom without virtue. Without capacity there is no possibility of choice, just as without virtue there is no possibility of directing capacity. Making wise choices is thus the practice of moral agency, the combination of capacity and character.

Given this, a life is a moral biography or a gospel to the extent that it combines empowerment and moral compass, capacity and character, choice and wisdom, and freedom and purpose. Empowerment is the capacity to effect outcomes for oneself and others. It is the array of personal and material resources one can command as an agent. Moral compass is the strength of character or virtue that gives moral direction to the use of capacity.

An example of a life portrayed as a gospel is that of Moses as told in the Book of Exodus. As the story unfolds, we can see that it is the convergence of capacity and moral heading that matters. Moses is born a powerless son of Israelite slaves, yet soon becomes the adopted heir of the Pharaoh. Despite his princely empowerment and anticipated ascendancy to the throne, Moses learns that the capacity he has come to wield lacks moral heading, and so he takes flight to the mountains. Empowerment without moral compass, he recognizes, spawns arbitrary domination. There, with no greater capacity than that of a stout shepherd and faithful spouse, he receives a mandate of moral direction from God manifested in the burning bush. Moses protests that he has been given moral compass but is bereft of empowerment. God tells Moses he will grant him an arsenal of miraculous powers to face down the Pharaoh, and that his brother Aaron will help him speak. In the end, Moses, imbued with a confluence of material ca-

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pacity and moral purpose, breaks the resolve of the Pharaoh, parts the waters of the Red Sea, and, with moral compass becoming geographical bearing, leads his people through the desert from the clay towers of slavery to the land flowing with milk and honey. Nearing the final chapter of his gospel, Moses falters in trust and obedience. As punishment for the lapse in character, God arrests Moses’s geographical progress at the outskirts of the promised land.

My purpose in citing the example of Moses is to indicate that in my thinking the ethics of doing good are rooted in a way of life revolving around how individuals tie together their capacity and character. Capacity is the array of resources, both personal and material, over which people exercise command, and is the foundation for choice. The greater the capacity, the greater the quantity and range of choice. In Gospels of Wealth, I described three interrelated components of capacity as (1) psychological empowerment—the disposition of great expectations, the legitimacy of those expectations, and the confidence to achieve them; (2) spatial empowerment—the capacity to establish a protective wall from intrusion and to extend one’s influence geographically beyond one’s immediate personal presence; and (3) temporal empowerment—the ability to reshape the past, forge the present, and bind the future. Clearly, freedom of choice does not guarantee that individuals will make wise decisions and generate an offspring of happiness. It does, however, guarantee that such individuals will have a broad horizon of choice, that their choices will have the capacity to fashion the choices of others, and that they will harbor the potential to advance or impede the ultimate ends of themselves and others.

In addition to possessing the empowerment of a productive agency, a moral biography must include normative bearings. In Gospels of Wealth, I also described three interrelated aspects of moral compass: (1) the daily exercise of virtue or strength of character by individuals as they work through the opportunities and obstacles of the hand that life has dealt them; (2) the development of character that occurs from tests of moral fiber as individuals move through formative life-course transitions from one social status and personal identity to another; and (3) the impulse to make the big and small events of biography a redemptive process of life, death, and rebirth in the quest for healing, learning, forgiveness, and union. The quotidian exercise of virtue, dutiful commitment during transitions, and the quest for transformation are the aspects of character that, when married to psychological, spatial, and temporal empowerment, comprise the general framework of the sense and sensibility of a moral biography. The next question is, what constitutes the quintessential spiritual and moral content of such a moral biography? My answer: participating in the social relations of care.

The Content of a Gospel: The Social Relationships of Care

If the intersection of capacity and character constitutes the general nature of a personal gospel, carrying out social relations of care constitutes the moral sentiments and behaviors of that gospel in practice. In charitable giving, the capacity for choice takes the form of financial wherewithal, and moral compass takes the form of an orientation to care. The notion of financial or material wherewithal is straightforward enough, and does not require further discussion here. The notion of care, however, is not so clear-cut and needs further elucidation.

The first consideration concerns the nature of the moral sensibility of care. What rudimentary bearing, I ask, is substantial enough to be the basis for duty and yet familiar enough to be a natural inclination? It is the disposition of care. The term derives from the Latin cura and is an etymological cousin of caritas or interpersonal love.

Philosopher Jules Toner systematically formulates a notion of care grounded in a phenomenological analysis of radical love. Toner defines love as the affection by which a lover “affirms the beloved for the beloved’s self (as a radical end) . . . [and] by which the lover affectively identifies with the loved one’s personal being, by which in some sense the lover is the beloved affectively.” If love is the affection of identifying with another as a radical end, care is the practical or implemental aspect of love. Care is love directed at meeting the true needs of others. According to Toner, care

is an affirmative affection toward someone precisely as in need. It is not the need nor what is needed that is the object of radical care; radical care is of the one who has the need, under the aspect of needing. For example, I have an affection of care toward one who needs food or friendly words or a listener or instruction. As a consequence of care, I desire food for him, or friendly words and so on. If I have a care or concern for the food or words or instruction, etc., it is only . . . relative and derivative care [not radical care].

Clearly, Toner’s definition of care as meeting the true needs of others does not provide an answer to what would constitute care in any particular situation. He does, however, point us toward the proper question. First, he emphasizes that care is directed at another person as a radical end; we do not truly care for an object. Certainly people speak of caring for education or for the Boston Symphony. But for Toner, such concerns signify derivative care, and are not to be confused with, or substituted for, radical care directed toward the only worthy object—other human beings, the so-called “ultimate recipients” or “ultimate beneficiaries” of care.

Second, Toner insists that care, as the practical implementation of love, is an affective involvement in meeting others’ true needs. Again, we can never know in the abstract what another’s true needs are; nor does simply setting out to attend to someone’s true needs mean that we actually do that. Yet by emphasizing the notion of true needs, Toner places front and center the obligation not just to respond to others in their needs, but also to respond effectively. According to Toner, taking the effort to figure out how to respond in a way that accomplishes a beneficial end (even if not always viewed as such by others or even by the recipient) is a crucial indication of how much we care in the first place. With care defined as the practice of meeting the true needs of others, the next ques-
tion is to explain what animates care. The answer is that care is animated by the sense and sensibility of identifying the fate of another as linked to our own.

Thomas And Tocqueville: The Ethics of Identification and Gratitude

Along with situating philanthropy as a dimension of moral biography, and as a social relation of care, the third step in unpacking the meaning of philanthropy as a spiritual practice is to locate the natural inclinations that kindle care. I have reviewed elsewhere the primary motivations for care in the form of philanthropy. The two I want to emphasize here are identification with the fate of others and gratitude for unmerited advantages. For my discussion of identification, I draw on the Judeo-Christian and American focus on the identity between love of neighbor and love of self. I recognize that there are other religious, spiritual, and philosophical traditions that I could appropriate to make my point. But the Judeo-Christian tradition and the associational dynamics of American civil society described by Tocqueville are the ones with which I am most familiar, and from which the discourse about philanthropy and care emerge in the United States.

My primary argument is that care entails not simply meeting the needs of another, but the creation of a collaborative relationship of care that fulfills the common true need of both parties for effectiveness and significance, or happiness. Toner explicitly makes this connection: “[T]he lover affectively identifies with the loved one's personal being, by which in some sense the lover is the beloved affectively.” Notice two things about which I will say more in a moment. First, a true act of care is an act of identification with another. It is recognizing a radical affinity connecting the destinies of self and neighbor. Second, a true act of care is actually an act of self-love. We have now arrived at the point at which it is possible to specify a morality of natural inclination that is substantial and familiar enough to ground the duties and ideals of philanthropy. I call this morality the ethics of identification.

In modern discourse, self-identity revolves around the awareness of oneself as a distinctive personality. However, such a notion was not always prevalent. If our contemporary emphasis is on the notion of self-identity, the more classical emphasis of Thomas Aquinas, for instance, is on self-identity. To be clear, Aquinas did not share our modern conception of identity as a component of personality; he did not even use the word identity. But he did speak eloquently about mutual union as the basic condition of caritas—what Toner refers to as radical love implemented through care. As Aquinas puts it, “by the fact that love transforms the lover into the beloved, it makes the lover enter inside the beloved, and conversely, so that there is nothing of the beloved that is not united to the lover, just as the form attains the innermost recesses of that which it informs, and conversely.”

It is not stretching things too far to suggest that what Aquinas describes in scholastic terms as the fundamental mutuality of love is akin to what Tocqueville enunciates in civic terms as “self-interest properly understood.” As Tocqueville explains, Americans “enjoy explaining almost every act of their lives on the principle of self-interest properly understood. It gives them great pleasure to point out how an enlightened self-love continually leads them to help one another and disposposes them freely to give part of their time and wealth for the good of the state.” Harriet Martineau, a contemporary of Tocqueville who wrote six volumes on her travels in America, is equally persuaded that a sense of identification is at the heart of any situation in which “charity has gone deep as well as spread wide.” According to Martineau, the spirit of charity becomes one with “the spirit of justice” only in those societies with a full-fledged “spirit of fraternity.” Such a spirit of fraternity, she maintains, arises “from the movers feeling it their own concern that any are depressed and endangered as they would themselves refuse to be.”

It is inadequate to proffer an ethics of altruistic selflessness precisely in that area of human dedication in which the self is most involved. When it comes to caritas, what matters is the quality of the self not the absence of self; the quality of what we do in the name of identification not the absence of identification; the sensitivity of our interests not the absence of interests. This is congruent with David Craig’s (see his essay in this volume) insistence that we should focus not only on what donors give to beneficiaries but also on the benefits that donors take from their giving. Aquinas recognizes and even extols this seeming paradoxical unity of duty and pleasure in the implementational aspects of caritas: As Gerard Gilleeon says, “For St. Thomas there is no place in a morally good act of will for an absolute disjunction between love referred to self and love referred to another. The proper effect of love is to associate self with the other. Rather than search for the realms of altruism or selflessness that are supposed to counter the utilitarian ethic of calculated self-interest, we have found it more fruitful to track the realms of self-identification with others. We agree, then, with M. W. Martin, who also argues that it is philosophically more consistent and more practically productive to activate rather than remove a commonality of interests between donor and recipient. As such, it is the presence of an identified self, not the absence of self, that animates care and is therefore a sense and sensibility to be honored rather than eschewed.

In addition to the dynamics of identification, a second formative inclination is that of gratitude. Over the course of a few decades, my colleagues and I have interviewed over 250 individuals from across the economic spectrum about their motivations for care. A virtually universal disposition that we encountered is the propensity that many summarize by the simple yet heartfelt phrase “to give back.” It turns out, however, that upon probing we unearth an impetus that is even more vital than this salutatory phrase suggests. Invariably, beneath the desire to give back is a sense of gratitude, and behind that gratitude is an appreciation of blessing, grace, gift, luck, or fortune. Gratitude is an active, mobilizing sentiment; a discerning encounter with blessing animates a response of care for others.
Theologian Robert Ochs remarked in a lecture years ago that there are three ways to take a gift. It may be taken for granted, taken with guilt, or taken with gratitude. We have found in our interviews that the most positively formative disposition of philanthropic consciousness and conscience involves taking the gifts of fortune with gratitude. Those who take their gifts with gratitude approach the world with a more emotionally abundant, secure, and gracious disposition. They recognize their material and personal capacities as dependent on the providence of God, people, or circumstances. And they discern from experience more than from tenet that because so much has been given to them, so much can be given by them.

In a perceptive way that brings us back full circle to identification, those who experience such blessing and gratitude also formulate the moral logic by which a spiritual experience of blessing engenders a pragmatic practice of care. The most consequential corollary of apprehending one's life as imbued with gift is the generative recognition that just as my fortune is not due entirely to my own merit, others' misfortune may not be completely attributable to their own failure. Such an insight forges an identification between donor and recipient as the offspring of a common heritage of unmerited positive and negative fortune, and as the source of a common destiny. Those who have been dealt a friendly hand care for those who have been dealt an inauspicious one. Blessing breeds gratitude and gratitude breeds identification, and, again, identification breeds generosity.

Fortunately, identification, gratitude, and care are not foreign endeavors. By inclination we identify our fate with the fate of others, even if these others are at first family and our closest associates. By inclination, we experience unmerited advantage and seek to provide it to others. Experience imbibes us at least with embryonic sentiments of radical love and radical care. As the Book of Deuteronomy says, the law of love is not too hard for you, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will go over the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?" But the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.16

Identification and gratitude, then, are familiar in two senses. They are dispositions that are not only common to experience but are common because they are born in and borne by the family, and are often expressed in familial metaphors. Our research indicates that we are first inclined to help those we perceive to have a fate that parallels our own fate or the fate of our spouse, parents, siblings, or children. It also consistently reveals that all who care for others out of gratitude regard their activity as an active engagement, rather than an absence, of self.17 How the general understanding of moral biography, identification, and gratitude helps specify what is distinctive about the particular arena of philanthropy is the topic of the next section.

The Distinctive Characteristic of Philanthropy as a Form of Care

Moral biography, care, and identification are three pillars of philanthropy. A moral biography is capacity married to moral compass; care is the content of a moral biography; and identification is the animating inclination of care. Within this framework, philanthropy is a distinctive mode of identification, a type of care, and an element of moral biography. Philanthropy is important because it is a relationship of care and is constitutive of moral biography. It is distinctive because, as I will explain, it is a direct relationship of care; it is not privileged because, as I will also explain, it may not be the most important relationship of care for any particular individual at any particular place and time. Philanthropy is one specific relationship directed toward meeting the true needs of others.18 As such, philanthropy stands alongside many other relations of care—such as those of parent and child, spouses, friends, employer and worker—and is not privileged when understood in its conventional sense. However, when and where philanthropy is the best way to combine capacity and moral compass in a particular situation, it is a cardinal moral practice.

Most efforts to conceptualize philanthropy emphasize the presence of a special dedication to the public good or philanthropy's connection to the nonprofit sector. However, neither of these aspects gets to the essence of what distinguishes philanthropy from politics and commerce in a positive rather than a derivative way, as is indicated by its residual appellations of third, nongovernmental, and nonprofit sector.

In my view, the defining characteristic of a philanthropic relation of care is what activates its attention. In commercial relations, needs elicit a response largely to the extent that they become expressed in dollars—that is, they are translated into what economists call "effective demand." Similarly, in political relations, needs elicit a response largely to the extent that they can become expressed as campaign contributions or as votes—which in fact is another form of effective demand. What makes commercial and political demand "effective" in eliciting a response is that these forms of demand are presented through a medium upon which suppliers depend for their material existence. Neither businesses nor politicians can afford to ignore such concrete indications of their clients' will. On occasion, commercial and political agents may attend directly to people's needs, in which case they incorporate a philanthropic dimension. However, for the most part and over the long run, commerce and politics respond not to the inherent value of the people in need but indirectly to the medium through which people express their needs, and on which commercial and political actors rely for their survival.

In philanthropic relations, the focus is not on the medium of votes or dollars that communicate needs but directly on the people who have the needs. The immediate object of attention is the people in need. In contrast to commercial...
and political relations that are mobilized by the medium of effective demand, philanthropy is mobilized directly by what I call an affective demand that activates the recognition of and identification with others in their needs. A construction company builds homes not just because someone has a need for a home, but because that need is expressed with dollars. Habitat for Humanity builds a home because someone needs a place to live.

Recall that in Les Misérables, Jean Valjean consoles the dying Fantine by agreeing to bring Fantine’s daughter, Cosette, under his care. This reflects a philanthropic relation with both Fantine and Cosette not simply because Valjean is attempting to do good, nor because his help is tax deductible or housed as formal philanthropy within the boundaries of the nonprofit sector. It is philanthropic because it matches the resources of a giver to the needs of a recipient through a social relation that is directly mobilized and governed by a strength of character and moral compass born of identification with another as a radical end in need. It is interesting to note that Jean Valjean carries out his care for Cosette essentially as a family relationship of father to daughter (replacing his lost relationship with his sister’s daughter) and his care for Fantine as a relationship of surrogate spouse (replacing his relationship with his sister). He also carries Marius on his shoulders through the sewers of Paris as his son, soon to be wedded to Cosette. Significantly, Valjean is an industrialist and mayor who could have cared for Cosette through commerce by employing her in a fairer labor contract than the innkeepers, Monsieur and Madame Thernardier, or through the police by placing her in a state guardianship established by town policies.

Once again, philanthropy is motivated by identification and can be seen to be familial. It is familial in that Valjean relates to those he helps as flesh of his flesh. It is also familial in that philanthropic relationships emulate family relationships; both attend to others in need because of the value of those in need rather than because of the value of the medium through which needs are communicated. Finally, philanthropy is familial in that it is a relationship of mutual care. Jean Valjean fulfills his happiness as he bestows it on others. Just as donors express care by supplying material and spiritual capacity to meet the needs of recipients for effectiveness and significance, so do donors receive care by having their needs for effectiveness and significance met as well. In this sense, philanthropy becomes a collaborative relationship of mutual care between donors and recipients. When such relationships of care, rooted in the identifications and practices of family, become extended in kinship, space, and time, they help create a public way of life I call the moral citizenship of care.

The Moral Citizenship of Care

Up to this point, I have discussed several elements of the spiritual inclinations and affections of individuals that constitute philanthropy as moral practice. These include the understandings that a moral biography is the pursuit of an ultimate goal through the confluence of what I have referred to variously as capacity and character, empowerment and moral compass, choice and virtue; that the content of moral compass is care or the meeting of the true needs of others; that care is motivated not by philosophical altruism or absence of self but by an identified self, with self-love being a constituent ingredient; and that the defining attribute of philanthropy is responding because others are in need rather than because others are able to express their needs through a medium of effective demand.

I now draw together my considerations by indicating how what I have described about philanthropy as a personal practice provides the foundation for a caring society, that is, the organic link between what is personal and what is communal or cultural. Just as for individuals the sense and sensibility of philanthropy revolves around a caring relationship directed toward simultaneously meeting the true needs of others and oneself, for society the sense and sensibility of philanthropy revolves around how personal relations of care become translated into what I call the moral citizenship of care.

By introducing the notion of a moral citizenship, I seek to name a vibrant, yet often ignored, aspect of what constitutes the moral health of a society in general, and of the United States in particular. This entails drawing out two implications of what I said in the foregoing sections for understanding the foundations of a caring society. Conceptually, I recommend complementing our notions of political and economic citizenship with the notion of moral citizenship, which focuses on the motivations and practices of mutually beneficial identification and the social relations of care spawned by such identification. Empirically, I suggest the need to recognize that in addition to formal philanthropy, the moral quality of a culture emerges from and, in turn, animates a fuller range of informal relations of care that pervade daily life. Although there are several implications of my sanguine portrait of moral interdependence for the debate on the social capital and civil society, I will not here repeat what I have said elsewhere.9

I propose the notion of moral citizenship of care as a conceptual framework for understanding and making broader interpretive sense of the full range of practical social relations of care—of which formal philanthropic giving and volunteering are but two important components. As far as I know, the term moral citizenship of care has not been used anywhere else, but what I mean by it is straightforward. I have already discussed at length the meaning of care as the attention to others in their true needs, and I have indicated that I am using the notion of moral in Selznick’s sense as the constellation of mobilizing affections and values that arise not from an external ethic but from the everyday engagements surrounding “mundane needs, practical opportunities, and felt satisfactions.”10

The combined term moral citizenship requires more explanation and can be clarified by contrasting it to political and economic citizenship. First, moral citizenship shares with political citizenship the proposition of equivalence among individuals. But with moral citizenship, this equivalence is not primarily before or under the law. Rather, the equivalence is before and under the sentiment of
self-recognition in others and self-identification with the needs of others. If the instrumental trajectory of political citizenship revolves around exercising the legal rights and duties of democratic processes, the instrumental trajectory of moral citizenship revolves around fulfilling the inclinations and obligations of the contents of care—extending from the familial to the global.

Clearly, the rights and duties of political citizenship can be congruent with the objective of advancing the social relations of assistance and can contribute to their improvement and operation—indeed, the rights and duties of citizenship derive from, imply, and even add an array of pro-social desires, sentiments, and dispositions, especially having to do with the aspect of universalism. However, because political rights and duties are by constitutional mandate limited in their reach, they are neither profound nor broad enough to be the primary ethic for identifying, inspiring, and nurturing the fundamental character of a free society. As salutary as political citizenship is, it is mainly an adjunct to, rather than the source of, a moral community. Moral citizenship is the ground or social foundation of political citizenship and is the end for which political citizenship is a means. Moral citizenship resides in and fortifies the interstices and ultimate goals of life where political citizenship never does, or should, reach. Moral citizenship provides the content for the processes and content of political citizenship.

Moral citizenship is equally more profound than economic citizenship, something Adam Smith readily acknowledged. In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith insists that economic markets (and political institutions) cannot be expected to produce beneficence in society. For Smith, the economic citizenship of the free market provides a framework and a floor for rudimentary well-being within society, but not for greater well-being:

Society may subsist among different men, as among different merchants, from a sense of its utility, without any mutual love or affection; and though no man in it should owe any obligation, or be bound in gratitude to any other, it may still be upheld by a mercenary exchange of good offices according to an agreed valuation. . . . Society may subsist, though not in the most comfortable state, without beneficence.

The additional voluntary moral sentiments of beneficence are required to establish a deeper moral commonwealth in which the needs and injuries of others are responded to from love, gratitude, friendship, and esteem:

All the members of human society stand in need of each other’s assistance, and are likewise exposed to mutual injuries. Where necessary assistance is reciprocally afforded from love, from gratitude, from friendship, and esteem, the society flourishes and is happy. All the different members of it are bound together by the agreeable bonds of love and affection, and are, as it were, drawn to one common centre of mutual good offices.

In contrast to moral citizenship, both political and economic citizenship are intermediate goals of life. They focus foremost on access to and participation in a process of determination rather than directly on the content of that determination. There are, of course, substantive contents that people seek to obtain via political and economic citizenship. However, in order to obtain these contents, those seeking them must express their desires largely through electoral processes and market mechanisms rather than directly as needs. In other words, the practice of political and economic citizenship revolves around the process of effective demand that I described previously. Political and economic citizenship can be counted on in the long run to produce outcomes for those in need only to the extent that those in need can materially discipline political or economic decision makers by providing or withholding votes and dollars. Still, and this is crucial, where a vibrant moral citizenship exists, political and economic decision makers sometimes in fact do transcend the dynamics of effective demand and respond directly to those needs that are signaled by the categorical worth of the people who have those needs. Hence, we do find policy makers taking principled stands that may cost them political capital, and business owners and corporations providing pro bono or discounted goods and services that cost them financial capital.

As a practical ethic and as a way of life, the moral citizenship of care is that sphere of thinking, emotion, and behavior that begins in the tribulations and aspirations surrounding what is close at hand and extends to an ever-broadening horizon of others in need. Moral citizenship does not divide the private from the public, the local from the distant; instead, it speaks of the levels and distribution of moral capital rather than of social and financial capital. The moral citizenship of care focuses on the extension and expression of care, rather than on the extension and expression of civic life, membership, and participation, as the cornerstone of cultural health. The moral citizenship of care leads us to focus on the informal and formal relations of care in which people are currently engaged and which they need to take up, rather than foremost on the derivative social and political relations that can thrive only by attending to effective demand. The moral citizenship of care sets the agenda for political and economic citizenship by designating the injuries of existing law and commerce and specifying directions to rectify the current dispensation. The moral citizenship of care is the public and communal outcome of the moral biography of care as the latter extends to broader concentric circles of human kinship, time, and space.

Conclusion: The Formation of Moral Biography

In this chapter, I have set out a series of interconnected considerations about the moral dimensions of philanthropy. The motif of the chapter is that dispositions and practices of care that individuals perform are part of what constitutes a life as a moral biography or *gospel*. This gospel is the intersection of empowerment and moral direction. The development of moral biography is the foundation for the quality of the commonwealth as the locus of a moral citizenship of care.

Throughout the chapter, I have emphasized the inclinations, dispositions, and sentiments that constitute moral biography and moral citizenship. I also
maintain that life is dialectical such that every sense and sensibility leading toward care can be weakened or undercut by equal and opposite forces. As Amy Kass reminds us, “the Greeks understood that great misfortune may lurk in the shadow of great good fortune. They knew that a great windfall can cause a great downfall, and that gifts are equally conducive to benefit and harm, to joy and sorrow.”24 I have written frequently about the potential for capacity to lead to both blessing and curse under the rubric of the “dialectic of care and control.” 25

By this I mean that every opportunity to follow moral compass also offers an opening to lose moral bearing. Ever present is the potential for capacity to become separated from care, and to choke off what needs to be done. For this reason, I want to conclude this chapter with a few words about how people learn, deepen, and recast their moral biography as time and circumstances change, and as they face countervailing forces that threaten to misdirect their moral biography. I have focused on the moral sense and sensibility of motivating care as familiar, attractive, and fulfilling rather than alien, unpleasant, and debilitating. The question is, How do people become attuned to what is truly familiar and fulfilling? How do they educate their sense and sensibility so as to care rather than merely control? The answer: through a conscientious process of clarification or discernment.

There are many traditions of discernment by which individuals discover and implement their practical vocation in the light of faith, and I am undertaking a study of them. For now, I will say a few words about the method of discernment with which I am most familiar, that offered by Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit religious order, and subsequently fleshed out by others.

In Ignatian spirituality, discernment is the process by which individuals learn their duty, not by eliminating predilections but by discovering them at a deeper level. For those generally and regularly oriented toward good—“going from good to better,” as Ignatius puts it—what is to be done is discovered by a convergence of intelligence and affection in the light of movement toward one’s ultimate end. Theologian Michael Buckley, writing on the elements of discernment, says that the ultimate end in religious terms is “transforming union.” But it is not enough to have this end; we also need a concrete means “of contacting or of being guided by God.” The religious person, says Buckley, “is vitally persuaded not only that God has offered himself as such a possibility and fulfillment, but that he will guide human life towards this realization; God offers not only finitude, but consistent direction.”26

The term discernment derives from the Latin cernere, “to sift,” and dis, “apart.” Discernment is a process of archeological discovery in which the discreta or discrete aspects of life are sifted through and ordered into meaningful patterns and purposeful decisions. In practice, discernment is a process of self-reflection often aided by the questioning and direction of an advisor or spiritual director who encourages individuals to clarify and set the course for carrying out decisions in an environment of liberty and inspiration. Liberty is the material and psychological freedom from unfounded presuppositions, assumptions, fears, and anxieties. Inspiration is the personally ascertained array of desires that provide the direction for commitment. Discernment is not carried out to eliminate aspiration, inspiration, and inclination, but to make them clearer. It is, in the end, the identification of a munus suavisimum, that most pleasant duty that enlists the aptitudes, intelligence, and aspirations of a person to embrace what is pleasing as a path to happiness. In an address at Boston College, theologian Howard Gray said discernment aims not at finding the most difficult thing to do, but the most inspiring thing to do.

In regard to charitable giving, discernment helps individuals to uncover for themselves, rather than simply be told, the prospects and purposes of their financial life in the context of the prospects and purposes of their spiritual life. Through discernment, individuals clarify their level of charitable capacity, clarify the people and causes they care about, and unearth how to translate their capacity and care into specific philanthropic endeavors that are personally formative for both themselves and those they seek to help.

The content of such discernment varies from individual to individual. Still, we have found that virtually all those we have interviewed develop their own sense and sensibility about philanthropy by addressing and answering some version of the following four questions:

- Is there anything you want to do with your material capacity?
- That meets the true needs of others?
- That you can do better through philanthropy than through government or commerce?
- That enables you to identify with the fate of others, fashion a financial morality for yourself and your children, and achieve greater happiness by expanding the effectiveness and significance of your life and the life of those for whom you care?

In the end, while financial gifts flow to fulfill the true needs of recipients for happiness and to close the gap between the beneficiaries’ history and aspiration, moral and spiritual gifts flow to the donors as a result of charitable giving that fulfills their true needs for happiness—developing the interstices of a caring society characterized by a moral citizenship of care. Although the moral citizenship of financial care has always been part of an ascetic way of life, it is an especially valuable element of spiritual life in an age of affluence. As personal and social wealth expand the horizon of choice for individuals, it becomes increasingly important that we develop a positive spirituality for affluent living and for making wise choices among the obstacles and opportunities of affluence.

A key personal and cultural question of the twenty-first century for an increasing segment of the world’s population is, how do I fashion my own and my community’s spiritual life in an age of affluence? How will the vast growth in the quantity of choice be translated into a deeper development in the quality of choice? Answering these questions requires clarifying the level of our financial capacity and deciding how best to allocate it with moral compass. This, I believe, will increasingly include conscientious decisions about financial care in the form of charitable giving. To animate such a spiritual life in an age of affluence, we are not without the resources of inclination toward care, the dynamics
of identification, and the process of discernment by which individuals link choice and wisdom, capacity and character, and empowerment and moral compass.

From this perspective, the ethics of doing good is neither alien nor automatic. I concur with Aquinas that grace builds on nature, and compliance with grace entails the conscientious self-formation of discerned decision making in the light of one's ultimate end. In order for doing good to fill the interstices of daily life, it must be voluntary. This means we need to enlist the motives and the methods to fathom the daily vocation of our moral biography as the connection of capacity and moral compass, the dynamics of care as attention to meeting the true needs of others, the place of philanthropy as one avenue for directly doing so, and the moral citizenship of care as the cultural and social fruit of the foregoing.

Notes

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7. Schervish, Coutoukis, and Lewis, Gospels of Wealth.
9. Ibid., p. 75.
19. Schervish and Havens, “The Boston Area Diary Study.”
23. Ibid.