

Compassion in Epicurean Philosophy

Aporia Vol. 7, 1997

On the Contrast between Pity and Compassion in Nietzsche

SUZANNE OBDRZALEK

Some have dared to call pity a virtue (in every *noble* ethic it is considered a weakness); and as if it were not enough, it has been made *the* virtue, the basis and source of all virtues. To be sure—and one should always keep this in mind—this was done by a philosophy that was nihilistic and had inscribed the *negation of life* upon its shield. (*Antichrist*¹ 573)

60

SUZANNE OBDRZALEK

not the only way to confront the suffering of one's fellowman. I will suggest that in the strong, pity can be reoriented in a life-affirming manner, which I will call "compassion." The response to suffering through compassion is not only suggested in Nietzsche's writing, but it also follows from his ideal of the noble individual and from his doctrines of the will to power and *amor fati*. However, in ultimately arguing for

<https://aporia.byu.edu/pdfs/obdrzalek-on-the-contrast-between-pity-and-compassion.pdf>

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/2387-compassion-in-epicurean-philosophy/?postID=16678#post16678>