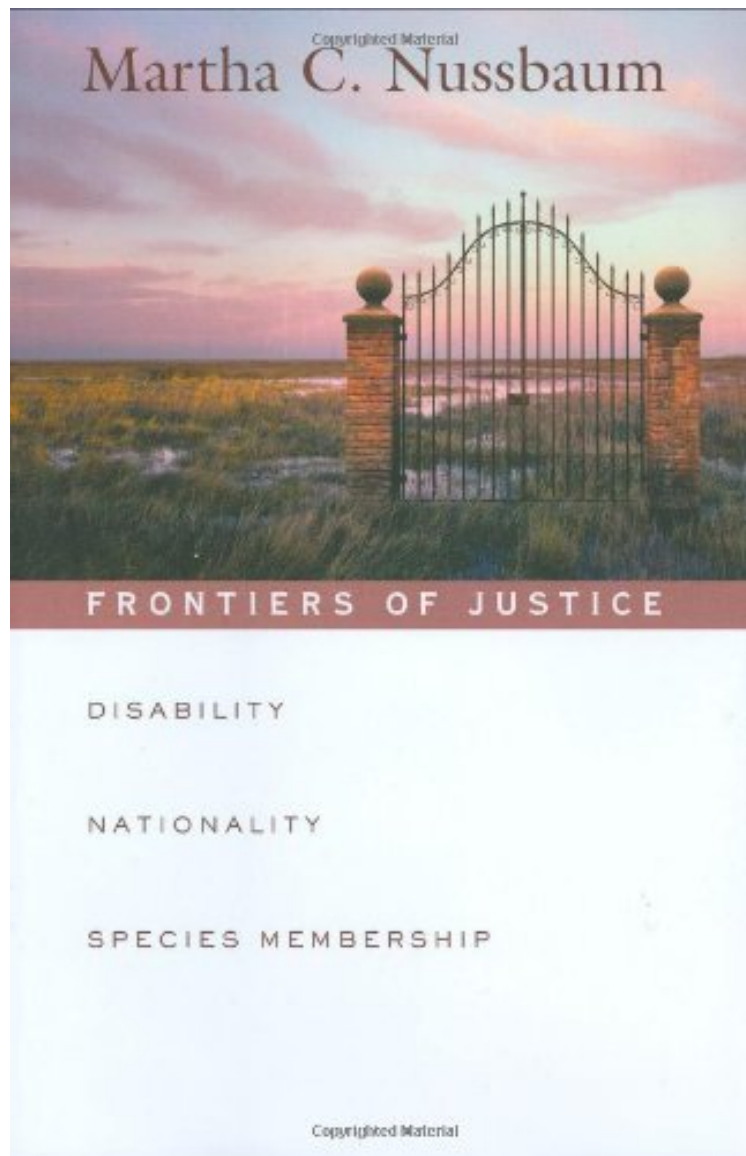


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## Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership (The Tanner Lectures on Human Values)

*Martha C. Nussbaum*

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**Martha C. Nussbaum : Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership (The Tanner Lectures on Human Values)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Frontiers of Justice: Disability, Nationality, Species Membership (The Tanner Lectures on Human Values):

4 of 12 people found the following review helpful. NussbaumBy RAY1345Argument on Disability is good. Nationality it begins to fade and finally Species Membership is a joke. she has to create an artificial world of vegetarians (all lions and predators in cages) to maintain her equality principles... It was a good read... for fiction.43 of 44 people found the following review helpful. What Constitutes A Life Worthy of Human Dignity?By Etienne RPMartha Nussbaum is a promoter of the capabilities approach, a school of thought that seeks to delineate the conditions for a just and decent world based on what people are actually able to be and to do (their "capabilities") in order to lead a life worthy of human dignity. Amartya Sen has pioneered this approach in the realm of economics where he has proposed to analyze development as consisting of freedom as much as of material progress. Nussbaum's approach differs from Sen in subtle ways: she is more interested in philosophical debates than economic reasoning, and (whereas Sen remains in the vague as to what constitutes basic human functionings) she provides a list of ten capabilities that must be fulfilled beyond a certain threshold in a fully just society.Nussbaum applies this approach to three unsolved problems of social justice: how to treat people with physical and mental impairments so that they can live up to their human potential; how to extend justice to all world citizen regardless of the place they live in; and what are the issues of justice involved in our treatment of nonhuman animals. In doing so, she engages in a detailed discussion of the social contract theory proposed by John Rawls which, all its merits notwithstanding, cannot provide a satisfying answer to these three pressing social problems.Take people with disabilities. Social contract theorists imagine the contracting agents who design the basic structure of society as "free, equal and independent," and usually conceive the social contract as providing mutual advantages to its members. But how to include people who may have a limited ability to take part in the deliberations establishing the contract, or whose special needs often contradict the assumption that social justice should provide all members of society with roughly equal endowments? Nussbaum shows that a conception of the person more akin to Aristotle than to Kant helps frame the idea of a life in accordance with human dignity, while countries like Sweden or Germany show examples of practical arrangements that allow people with disabilities to participate actively in all the major spheres of life.The contract model also typically constructs a single society, which is imagined as self-sufficient and not interdependent with any other society. In a second step, these societies establish relations to regulate their dealings with one another based on a set of core principles embodied in international law. This model leaves many issues unanswered, such as the unequal distribution of wealth and power across countries and the universal validity of human right principles. Based on Grotius and the natural law tradition, Nussbaum develops a theory of transnational justice that includes respect for human rights and the need for economic redistribution.Likewise, moral philosophers typically hold either that we have no direct moral duties to animals or that, if we do, they are duties of charity and compassion rather than justice. But nonhuman animals are also capable of a dignified existence, and our theories of justice should recognize that right. Nussbaum mentions a court ruling in India that goes into this direction; she could also have referred to the European Union, which has enshrined the protection of farm animals' welfare in its constitutional treaties.8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Traveling through the Frontiers of Justice: One Occupational Scientist's Journey through the Capabilities ApproachBy murphy kristianNussbaum, M. (2006). Frontiers of justice: Belknap Press.Nussbaum's aim in Frontiers of Justice is to build upon John Rawls' Social Contract Theory (SCT). Social Contract Theory originated during the Enlightenment as a hypothesis to explain how and why humans come together to form a society. In a hypothetical State of Nature, human beings of close to equal power, with similar interests and limited resources, come together to create a partnership in which both parties are mutually benefited and in which both parties give up some rights against each other via a Social Contract. This Social Contract allows human beings to live a more peaceful life, and thus is beneficial. In Frontiers of Justice, Nussbaum hopes to address three unsolved problems of Rawl's SCT relating to three groups: People with Disabilities, Developing Nations and Nonhuman Animals. Nussbaum does not set out to reject SCT theory or Rawls' account of SCT, or provide a complete account of social justice; rather her Capabilities Approach is an "account of minimal core social entitlements". (p. 75) The cornerstone of Nussbaum's capabilities approach is captured in this quote, "The basic intuitive idea of my version of capabilities approach is that we begin with a conception of the dignity of the human being, and of a life that is worthy of that dignity--a life that has available in it "truly human functioning," in the sense described by Marx in his 1855 Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts...Marx speaks of the human being as a being "in need of totality of human life-activities," and the approach also takes its bearing from this idea, insisting that the capabilities to which all citizens are entitled are many and not one, and are opportunities for activity, not simply quantities of resources." (p. 74). Nussbaum provides a list of entitlements that describes ten Central Human Capabilities. This list is to be used by governments/societies as a guide when planning and evaluating citizen rights. Nussbaum believes that a society should set up parameters that ensure truly human functioning in which the society should strive to obtain for all of its citizens and that these rights cannot be traded off for each other. Additionally, the Capabilities should not be imposed on anyone--ensuring that all citizens have a choice in their functioning.As a student of Occupational Science, an interdisciplinary "academic discipline that generates knowledge about the impact of daily activities on the health of individuals, communities, nations and the world", I really appreciate Nussbaum's insistence that humans have the right to enjoy full functioning in life-activities, or Occupations-" everyday, often taken-for-granted, activity" that "promote(s) health, well-being and quality of life

throughout the lifespan". (See USC Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy website for quotes cited above and more information[...].) After all, all humans are occupational beings and participation in Occupations is a key component of developing a rich quality of life. Nussbaum deserves applause for placing such importance on full participation in Occupations for all Occupational Beings. When considering Nussbaum's concern for people with disabilities and nations with lower economic capital through an Occupational Science lens, the concepts of Occupational Injustice and Occupational Deprivation are foregrounded. People with disabilities often are not included in the designing principles stage in Rawls' SCT (or any other SCT for that matter) even though people with disabilities live in the same society in which these designing principles of justice are carried out. Consequently, social and physical constructions are not built in an inclusive manner (such as Universal Design- a concept supported and utilized by Occupational Therapists and Occupational Scientists that encourages the construction of buildings that are accessible to all Occupational beings). As a result, people with disabilities experience Occupational Deprivation and Occupational Injustice as they are excluded from many rights and capabilities that their non-disabled counterparts enjoy. Additionally, they are made and thought of, as living off of the practical arrangements, i.e. charity, of the citizens who designed the non-inclusive principles of justice. This omission of people with disabilities in the designing stage of society reduces the quality of life for people with disabilities as their choice of whether or not to take part in various occupations is limited. In Rawls' SCT the notion of mutual advantage between parties making a contract excludes certain less advantaged groups. Nussbaum's group of concern, poor nations with less monetary capital, are excluded from participating in a contract with wealthier nations, thereby also excluding them from taking part in designing principles of justice and establishing a partnership with wealthier nations who could aid them. Probably more accurately (to better focus the onus of this situation), the desire for mutual advantage between nations results in wealthier nations not extending as much assistance to less well-off nations as they would if they were in a contract together. This lack of assistance results in poorer nations often experiencing Occupational Injustice. People living in poverty frequently do not have the means to fully participate in occupation--both life sustaining occupations and occupations in which a sense of joy and meaning are derived. Furthermore, Nussbaum finds traditional measurements of a nation's quality of life, a nation's GNP, troubling. Only using one measure, an economic measure at that, cannot holistically capture an individual's or nation's quality of life. Viewing occupations in a holistic manner is at the heart of Occupational Science. According to Nussbaum, a better measure for assessing quality of life is whether an individual or nation can fully participate in chosen occupations that are embedded within Nussbaum's ten capabilities. Overall, Nussbaum's *Frontiers of Justice* is quite innovative, if not also Utopian. I kept thinking, "If only the world really could be like this." Even if Nussbaum's ideas are not currently a reality, her book gives us a good starting point towards achieving a more just society. A just society where all Occupational Beings can fully participate in their chosen occupations--living deep and meaningful lives.

Theories of social justice are necessarily abstract, reaching beyond the particular and the immediate to the general and the timeless. Yet such theories, addressing the world and its problems, must respond to the real and changing dilemmas of the day. A brilliant work of practical philosophy, *Frontiers of Justice* is dedicated to this proposition. Taking up three urgent problems of social justice neglected by current theories and thus harder to tackle in practical terms and everyday life, Martha Nussbaum seeks a theory of social justice that can guide us to a richer, more responsive approach to social cooperation. The idea of the social contract--especially as developed in the work of John Rawls--is one of the most powerful approaches to social justice in the Western tradition. But as Nussbaum demonstrates, even Rawls's theory, suggesting a contract for mutual advantage among approximate equals, cannot address questions of social justice posed by unequal parties. How, for instance, can we extend the equal rights of citizenship--education, health care, political rights and liberties--to those with physical and mental disabilities? How can we extend justice and dignified life conditions to all citizens of the world? And how, finally, can we bring our treatment of nonhuman animals into our notions of social justice? Exploring the limitations of the social contract in these three areas, Nussbaum devises an alternative theory based on the idea of "capabilities." She helps us to think more clearly about the purposes of political cooperation and the nature of political principles--and to look to a future of greater justice for all.

Martha C. Nussbaum's impressive new book *Frontiers of Justice* can be easily summarized as Rawls meets Aristotle... Well-argued and beautifully written, *Frontiers of Justice* is an important, provocative and thoroughly admirable book, and will be essential reading for anyone interested in the concepts of justice and moral entitlement. (Mark Rowlands *Times Literary Supplement* 2006-02-03)[Nussbaum] aims to widen the reach of Rawlsian theory by addressing questions it has thus far largely neglected, such as the role of distributive justice in international relations, the claims of disabled people and the moral status of nonhuman animals. Nussbaum's resourceful and imaginative exploration of Rawls's work displays a command of the longer tradition of political philosophy that matches and even surpasses that of Rawls, along with a notably richer sensitivity to the history and variety of constitutional arrangements. The result is a notable contribution to philosophical inquiry that merits the most careful study by all

who try to think seriously about public policy. (John Gray *The Nation* 2006-06-05) Professor Nussbaum calls her work a "picture of who we are" in a world "more complicated, and interdependent, than philosophical theory has often acknowledged." But it may also be a map for navigating that complicated world in the pursuit of justice. (Harvard Law 2006-05-01) Martha Nussbaum has written a substantial philosophical treatise on the difficulties that recent fashions in political theory have put in the way of understanding the nature of justice for the mentally and physically disabled, foreigners, and animals... She is philosophically deft... One real achievement of *Frontiers of Justice* is to stir up the reader's imagination. Some books beat the reader into submission; Martha Nussbaum has never done that, and here she invites the reader into an open-ended discussion in just the way one wishes that all other philosophers did. (Alan Ryan *New York of Books* 2006-06-22) The task of the public intellectual is to ensure that important areas of common life (public policy, cultural activities, moral understandings, and so on) live up to the standards thoughtful reflection reveals. The United States has not proved the most fertile ground for this sort of person, but now and then contenders arise, and Martha Nussbaum is surely one of the more formidable candidates of our time, discharging the responsibilities of that role with a dizzying industriousness... In *Frontiers of Justice* she brings her considerable talents and energy to a set of questions which, she persuasively argues, public discourse and philosophical reflection have too long ignored: namely, what are our obligations to the disabled in our midst, the poor around the globe, and nonhuman animals everywhere? (David McCabe *Commonweal* 2006-05-19) Nussbaum's explication of the human and animal capabilities essential for lives of dignity sets a demanding, detailed, moral and political standard to strive for. (Ernest Dempsey *Philosophy Now* 2007-03-01) In her new and pathbreaking book, Martha Nussbaum shows that the social contract tradition, despite its great insights, cannot handle some of the most important political problems of our day, and she points the way to a conception of justice more attuned to our human frailty, our global society, and our place in the natural world. This work will change how we think about the nature of social justice. (Charles Larmore, University of Chicago) About the Author Martha C. Nussbaum is Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics Department of Philosophy, Law School, and Divinity School at the University of Chicago. She is the author of many books, including *Poetic Justice*, *Loves Knowledge*, and *The Fragility of Goodness*.