



Dr. Mary Tilton,
Executive Director of the Patten Foundation
Bryan Hall 07

Oct. 30, 2006

Dear Dr. Tilton,

COLLEGE OF
ARTS AND SCIENCES

position,
chairs,
etc.

I am writing to nominate Prof. Martha Nussbaum for a Patten lectureship for 2007-08. Prof. Nussbaum is the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago, with appointments in the Law School, the Philosophy department, and the Divinity School, and associate memberships in the departments of Classics and Political Science. She also is a board member of the Human Rights Program and is the founder and coordinator for the Center for Comparative Constitutionalism.

Qualifications
• books, articles

• distinctive
contributions

Prof. Nussbaum is a "natural" for a Patten lectureship. She has done path-breaking work in several areas of scholarship, and writes on topics of broad interest. Her many books (12 or 22, depending on how you count them), edited collections (13), articles (282) and reviews (54) have had a major impact in the fields of philosophy, classics, education, law, comparative literature and political theory. She is a very imaginative thinker who has helped to make topics that were considered not deeply philosophical a much more central part of philosophy. Her work has altered the boundaries of academic fields and provides a model for all interested in interdisciplinary research (and for those who didn't think they had any such interest until they began reading her work). I think here of her *The Fragility of Goodness: Luck and Ethics in Greek Tragedy in Philosophy* (1986), which brought Greek philosophy and Greek tragedy to bear on each other in a way that was quite bold and novel, and treated as important themes that were at the time largely ignored in the field of ancient philosophy. Similarly, her next book, *Love's Knowledge* (1990), helped love to become a serious philosophical topic, no longer one that graduate students would be laughed at for wishing to examine in depth, and at the same time showed how fruitful for philosophy (including analytic philosophy) it can be to examine philosophical questions via literature.

• range,
reputation
• special
honors

With her *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* (first presented as the Alexander Rosenthal lectures in 1991, published in 1995 in English, and soon thereafter in Italian, Spanish, and Hebrew) she fully established herself as a public intellectual as well as the first-rate classicist, philosopher and literary critic she was already recognized to be. Her work as a public intellectual was already well underway; she was a research advisor from 1987 to 1993 for the World Institute for Development Economics Research in Helsinki (a division of the UN University); she was sought after by such interviewers as Bill Moyers; and she was publishing articles and reviews in such periodicals as *TLS*, *The New York Review of Books*, and *The*

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• most recent accomplishments

New Republic. I find it breathtaking that she has continued her outstanding scholarship in philosophy in literature, ethics, political philosophy, philosophy of law, and classics at the same time that she has turned out a number of books of broader “intelligentsia” interest, aimed not only at academics with interdisciplinary interests but also at judges, policy makers, and the general public. She has just completed a book on India and democracy, *The Clash Within: Democracy, Violence, and India’s Future* and is putting the finishing touches on a book that I expect will receive a great deal of attention, *Liberty of Conscience: The Attack on America’s Tradition of Religious Equality*. At the same time, she is currently at work on a more “academic” book entitled *The Cosmopolitan Tradition*, from which is drawn some of the material she will present to us if awarded a Patten lectureship.

Awards

Nussbaum’s work has won her numerous prestigious awards, including the Grawemeyer Award in Education for her *Cultivating Humanity* as well as two other awards for that book; book awards for *Sex and Social Justice*, for *Love’s Knowledge* and most recently for *Hiding from Humanity*; the most distinguished fellowships available to professors in the humanities, including a Guggenheim, an NEH, and an ACLS; and election to the American Philosophical Society, the Academy of Finland, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She has received the Medal of the Italian Senate and Medal of Pio Manzù Center, the Outstanding and Inspiring Leadership Award from the Indian Consulate (Chicago, 2003), and honorary degrees from twenty-seven institutions (with two more scheduled for 2007), including University of Athens, Greece (2005), the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague (2005), the University of British Columbia (2006), the University of Haifa, Israel (2002), Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven (1997), Williams College (1996) and Ohio State University (2003). She was elected President of the Central Division of the American Philosophical Association for 2000, and is currently President of the Human Development and Capability Association. She has been selected to be the subject of a future volume in the *Library of Living Philosophers*, a very high distinction indeed.

Further accomplishments

The international character of Nussbaum’s fame is evident not only in the awards and honorary degrees she has received, but also in the many languages into which her books have been translated (Czech, Dutch, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Spanish, Swedish) and the ten collections of her articles that have been published as books only in languages other than English (one of them in Persian). In addition, her speaking engagements have included many name lectures here and abroad: the Tanner lectures in Cambridge, England, the Tanner lectures at Australian National University, the Seeley lectures in Political Theory at Cambridge University, the Amnesty lecture and the Weidenfeld lectures at Oxford University, Hagerstrom lectures at the University of Uppsala, the Donellan lectures at Trinity College, Dublin, two name lectures delivered in India, the Gifford lectures at the University of Edinburgh, the Don Dunstan Human Rights Oration in Adelaide, Australia, in

addition to many lecture series and name lectures in the US. She has also held fellowships and visiting appointments in Norway, India, France, and England, as well as at a number of universities in the US.

Ability as a speaker

But enough on her awards and distinctions. Some very famous people are either not scintillating speakers or are not very congenial human beings, and I want to speak to these matters, since it could be unpleasant to have someone here for a week who was mediocre as a speaker or was a cold, tedious, or otherwise unpleasant individual. There is no reason for either fear in this case. I have heard Prof. Nussbaum speak on numerous occasions, as the keynote speaker at a graduate student conference at The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, at American Philosophical Association meetings (easily six times), at a conference on moral psychology a year or two ago at the University of Texas at Austin, and as a colloquium speaker and lecturer at the Law School at Indiana University (in 2003). She is an outstanding speaker. She does not condescend to her audience or "dumb down" the material, but at the same time presents it in a way that is engaging to her audience. She knows her audience; she knows how to give a general lecture that is sufficiently accessible, and not too replete with scholarly detail, and at the same time does not simply give a canned, crowd-pleasing, performance. As several have attested in their endorsements, she is exceptionally suitable, among first-rate scholars, to speak to a general intelligentsia audience, as well as to professors and graduate students from a variety of fields.

(range, depth)

Abilities as a teacher

I also have interacted with Prof. Nussbaum informally in a number of settings. She is very good with students, as well as with faculty from a variety of disciplines. (I was not surprised to learn that she had won a Faculty Award for Excellence in Graduate Teaching at the University of Chicago.) If she comes to IU as a Patten lecturer she will no doubt be remembered by the many undergraduates and graduate students with whom she meets for her enthusiasm and her readiness to listen to others, as well as her brilliance and her stimulating lectures and conversation. It is also worth mentioning that she is a person of remarkable stamina, who will no doubt be very generous with her time during her week here as a Patten lecturer. I say that partly on the basis of observations of her in other settings, and partly on the basis of her response to my question as to just what she might wish to do by way of lectures, visits to classes, etc., if awarded a Patten lectureship. My initial suggestion to her was that in addition to giving the two Patten lectures, she attend a couple of classes, and then meet informally with various groups of students and faculty over meals and coffee. She was happy to do that but immediately proposed additional activities, as well, including giving seminars in which we would discuss one or another chapter of her work in progress.

(optional!)

Planned activities

← indication of her willingness to come if invited

details! + dates

I turn now to those specifics. Let me first confirm that she is indeed happy to spend an entire week here. She prefers to come during her winter quarter, when she has a lighter teaching load and thus can more easily spend a week

be sure of a commitment to at least 4 days in residence

titles
of lectures

with us, but apart from that, she did not indicate any particular time constraints. As to specific activities: there is no dearth of ideas of what she might do if she comes, and in fact there are so many that we will need to sort out later, once we know whether our nomination succeeds, exactly what to schedule. The tentative plan includes two Patten lectures, "Duties of Justice, Duties of Material Aid: Cicero's Problematic Legacy," and "Globalizing Human Capabilities: the Material Foundations of a Decent Global Society." In addition, she will present to the Philosophy Department and the political theorists and anyone interested from History or the Eighteenth Century Study program, a colloquium, "Mutilated and Deformed!: Adam Smith on Material Conditions and Human Dignity." She also suggested giving one or two seminars in which we would discuss work of hers after reading it in advance. One possibility is to have a Classics seminar to discuss parts of her book in progress that would be of particular interest to classicists. Matthew Christ indicates in his letter of support that the Department of Classical Studies would very much like to have such a seminar, and said he would also welcome the opportunity for graduate students to host a coffee for her and for faculty to take her to dinner. Turning now to a different unit: we will plan on her having a meal with the Hutton Honors students. I understand that this is already a tradition, and in this case it will be of particular interest to at least some of the students, as I will have just taught, the previous term, an honors course in which we read a number of articles or chapters of Nussbaum's.

every Patten lecturer should plan on this!

But that is just the beginning. Susan Williams suggests that Prof. Nussbaum might give a lunch talk to the law faculty or visit her class on feminist jurisprudence or her seminar on comparative constitutional law on gender equality. Those are both classes that I'm sure would interest Nussbaum greatly. Rich Miller suggests organizing a meeting with Nussbaum at the Poynter center for students and faculty members from various disciplines working on issues of ethics, social policy, and public life. Aaron Stalnaker, from Religious Studies, would like to invite her to any or all of the following: to participate in a monthly workshop in Ethics, Philosophy and Politics to discuss work in progress, to join a graduate seminar he'll be teaching in which they'll discuss her book, *The Therapy of Desire*, and to have lunch with faculty and students, including some of their undergraduate majors. Bert Harrill, Director of Ancient Studies, suggests that she might be part of the brown-bag lunch series with Ancient Studies graduate students, or present a colloquium in Ancient Studies. (I'll ask Matthew Christ and Bert Harrill to coordinate their ideas if the Patten nomination is successful, given the significant overlap in audience.) I will be teaching a course that semester to which I'd like to invite Prof. Nussbaum, as well, a senior seminar on Kantian ethics in which we will be discussing some of her work. Clearly, this is more than can fit into one week, but I list the possibilities that have been mentioned so far so that the Patten committee can see that there is a great deal of interest in taking full advantage of Nussbaum's visit. I might just add here that faculty and graduate students in the philosophy department will want to join in on

emphasize cross-disciplinary appeal — range of supporting letters



meals out with Nussbaum and in some cases meet with her one on one (as I certainly will); and I imagine there are a number of people in other units, besides those mentioned above, who will also wish to do so.

*previous
success →*

I have been thinking of nominating Nussbaum for a Patten lectureship ever since she was here in 2003 to give a lecture at the law school and a colloquium to the philosophy department. I think 2008 is not too soon after her last visit to have her back again, this time staying a week, and meeting with many more people. I am confident that she will be a very successful Patten lecturer. Please let me know if I can provide you with any additional information.

Sincerely,

Kudy Professor of Philosophy