



STAGES OF THOUGHT

Book reviews by

Martha C. Nussbaum

Shakespeare the Thinker

By A.D. Nuttall

(Yale University Press, 428 pp.)

***Shakespeare's Philosophy:
Discovering the Meaning Behind the Plays***

By Colin McGinn

(Harper Perennial, 230 pp.)

***Double Vision: Moral Philosophy and Shakespearean
Drama***

By Tzachi Zamir

(Princeton University Press, 234 pp.)

I.

Philosophers often try to write about Shakespeare. Most of the time they are ill-equipped to do so. There is something irresistibly tempting in the depth and the complexity of the plays, and it lures people who respond to that complexity with abstract thought, even if for the most part they are utterly unprepared, emotionally or stylistically, to write about literary experience. Such philosophers see profound thought in Shakespeare, not wrongly. But armed with their standard analytic equipment, they frequently produce accounts that are laughably reductive, contributing little or nothing to philosophy or to the understanding of Shakespeare.

To make any contribution worth caring about, a philosopher's study of Shakespeare should do three things. First and most centrally, it should really do philosophy, and not just allude to familiar philosophical ideas and positions. It should pursue tough questions and come up with something interesting and subtle—rather than just connecting Shakespeare to this or that idea from Philosophy 101. A philosopher reading Shakespeare should wonder, and ponder, in a genuinely philosophical way. Second, it should illuminate the world of the plays, attending closely enough to language and to texture that the interpretation changes the way we see the work, rather than just uses the work as grist for some argumentative mill. And finally, such a study should offer some account of why philosophical thinking needs to turn to Shakespeare's plays, or to works like them. Why must the philosopher care about these plays? Do they supply to thought something that a straightforward piece of philosophical prose cannot supply, and if so, what?

Two of these new books do very badly by these criteria. To be fair, A.D. Nuttall, who died not long ago, was not a philosopher, but a literary critic who did impressive work on the margins of philosophy. (*A Common Sky: Philosophy and the Literary Imagination* was a marvelous exploration of epistemological themes in the Romantic poets.) It is not terribly surprising that his book contributes nothing of original philosophical interest, though it is disappointing that the ideas on offer in this tired, diffuse book are so far beneath Nuttall at his best. Nuttall believes that it is doing philosophy to, say, poke fun at Stoicism in the context of Julius Caesar—but without the least philosophical puzzlement about why so many people lived and died by and for that philosophy, or about what might have motivated its more controversial positions. In general, Nuttall's book exudes a complacency that is most unphilosophical.

Nor does Nuttall satisfy on the second count. He has isolated illuminations to offer about this line or that scene, and he discusses current trends in literary theory well. But he spends such a short time on each play that no real insight is possible, no surprising new interpretation. Even the writing is flat and tired, the voice of someone who is no longer electrified by the dramas and who finds the task of interpretation rather boring. And Nuttall has nothing to say about why someone interested in philosophical problems should turn to Shakespeare.

Colin McGinn's book is much more intelligent, and it is the book of a real philosopher, with reasonably useful things to say about gender as performance, about the fluid nature of the self, about knowledge of other minds. Still, it is all at the level of Phil 101. McGinn does not offer anything subtle or new; he just identifies familiar philosophical themes that figure in the plays. The impression conveyed is that Shakespeare has gotten a good grade in Phil 101, with McGinn as his professor and his superior in understanding. This is a terrible way to approach Shakespeare's complexity.

McGinn's attention to language and dramatic structure is so hasty that he, too, has no new or convincing readings of the plays he tackles; he just gives the reader a breezy tour through them, never pausing to be puzzled. Nor does McGinn give any account of why we might need to turn to Shakespeare for philosophical illumination. McGinn obviously enjoys reading Shakespeare, but Shakespeare himself does not make a creative contribution to the thought distilled from the plays. McGinn already knows what to think about the philosophical issues, and, with a certain narcissism, he is pleased to find confirmation of himself in Shakespeare.

How might a philosopher do better? The most distinguished Anglo-American philosophical writing on Shakespeare in recent years, by a long distance, may be found in the work of Stanley Cavell. Cavell's essays, collected in the book *Disowning Knowledge in Seven Plays of Shakespeare*, amply fulfill my first and second standards for this enterprise. His sometimes mysterious and idiosyncratic readings of a group of plays offer philosophical insights that are surprising and subtle, while genuinely illuminating themes of love, avoidance, skepticism, and acknowledgment in the dramas. Cavell's writing is difficult, at times opaque. But we should see this way of writing as expressing the agony of human emotions and the intense difficulty of philosophical thought.

Despite the great merits of Cavell's particular insights, however, he has little to say about why we would want to turn to poetic

drama in general, and to Shakespeare in particular, in pursuit of philosophical themes. His readings of Shakespeare tend to confirm the philosophical notions for which he has already argued independently, in readings of Wittgenstein, Descartes, and other philosophers. Anyone who fails to read Cavell's justly famous essay on the avoidance of love in King Lear can discover the same theme amply explored by way of Wittgenstein in *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (or by way of Hollywood film comedy in *Pursuits of Happiness: The Hollywood Comedy of Remarriage*). Little is said about why it might be important to engage with Shakespeare's plays, among all other texts, on those questions. Indeed, Cavell's remarkable reading of Othello was originally published as the tragic conclusion to his philosophical magnum opus, *The Claim of Reason*, where it follows four hundred pages of argument about Wittgenstein, Austin, and many others.

But now we have Tzachi Zamir's *Double Vision: Moral Philosophy and Shakespearean Drama*, head and shoulders above its rivals. A first book by a young Israeli philosopher, *Double Vision* stands comparison with Cavell for philosophical subtlety and insight (though not for a more systematic philosophical contribution), and Zamir is, happily, much more upfront about what the enterprise of doing philosophy by consulting works of literature is all about, and why it might be important. Helpful, too, is the fact that Zamir writes with an evocative grace that shows a deep emotional response to literature and a sense of its complexities and its mysteries. His style itself helps to convince us that Shakespeare is not simply being used as a primer for Philosophy 101, or reduced to an analytic paragraph. Unlike McGinn, Zamir writes as someone capable of being puzzled, capable of delving into the painful or exhilarating depths of certain problems with Shakespeare as his guide rather than his pupil. *Double Vision* is quite a brilliant book.

II.

Zamir understands that it is crucial not just to show that there are themes in the plays that philosophers have also discussed, and not just to show, through interpretation, what the plays contribute to our understanding of those themes, but also to say why it is important to turn to plays in particular, and to literary works in general, for philosophical guidance. His argument is complicated, but we may summarize it as follows. Literary works offer their readers a range of experiences that philosophical prose cannot provide, reshaping their perceptions in a variety of ways. Some of these experiences are varieties of emotional response; some are experiences

of dislocation and a loss of meaning; some are experiences of losing a sense of meaning and then finding it again; some are experiences of not being able to figure out who or what a certain person is, or even what a person or self might be. And sometimes the experience is that of following the shifting trajectory of a human relationship.

So there is not just one thing that literature offers. It portrays and dissects a wide range of human experiences, all of which we have in life, but which literature offers in a concentrated and heightened form. And when we are dealing with not just any writer, but with Shakespeare, we find again and again that the shaping of plot and the resources of language are used to construct and then to deepen a set of these experiences in ways that provide resources for knowledge. If what we are after is to understand the search for value against the threat of nihilism, we would do well to engage with *Macbeth*; or to understand how a certain theatricalization of the self can be employed to deflect attention away from the indeterminacy and ineffability of the self, with *Hamlet*; or to understand whether and how far successful parenting requires the willingness to engage with, and not repudiate, the childlike parts of the self, with *King Lear*. We would do well to engage with these works because they provide us with experiences that are epistemically relevant to our search.

That is a very general claim, as it should be, avoiding any narrowly reductive account of literary meaning. But the claim is so general that it risks vacuity. It must be immediately backed up by detailed readings that again and again make good on the promise of new understanding, returning in each case to the question, what have we learned from the specifically literary quality of the works? At the heart of Zamir's book are three chapters on erotic love in *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Othello*. He prefaces his readings by pointing to the great difficulties that philosophy has had investigating love, especially erotic love; and he suggests that only works that convey to their reader the texture of complex human experiences, with all their internal tensions and contradictions, will put us in a position to make any philosophical claims at all.

Romeo and Juliet conveys the hyperbolic, extravagant, and rather abstract character of young love, with its focus on a generalized and aestheticized image of the body ("I ne'er saw true beauty till this night"), and its humorless mutual absorption, its search for a transcendence of mere earthly humanity. Juliet is the sun, her eyes "two of the fairest stars in all the heaven." She is a "bright angel," soaring above the heads of mere mortals. This sort of love, Zamir

shows, works by distancing, and even bracketing, reality; it is actively hostile to fact and evidence. Since it is determined to rise above the earth, it is also lacking in particularity: Juliet is an abstract image, an angel, and neither Romeo nor the audience knows a great deal about the earthly attributes that distinguish her from others.

One sign of these qualities in their love is the play's constant fascination with images of sleep and dreaming. Like many critics before him, Zamir notices that the play itself draws readers into a lulled and dreamy state. Such a state might be seen as mere forgetfulness; it might also be seen as infantile narcissism. Zamir rejects both these interpretations in favor of one that focuses on the transfiguring experience of the perception of beauty: "Love in the play is not only an abandonment of the world, a dim or foggy experience, but also a penetration of it through heightened perception." By allowing ourselves to be drawn into this complex state, we instantiate, and learn more fully to understand, our own relationship to aesthetic beauty, and to the blindness to daily life that its perception frequently involves.

By contrast—in what for me is Zamir's most fascinating chapter—*Antony and Cleopatra* depicts "mature love," love between people who enjoy being grown-ups together, and who have no project of transcending human life, because they are taking too much pleasure in life as it is. Romeo and Juliet do not eat; Antony and Cleopatra eat all the time. Romeo and Juliet have no occupation; Antony and Cleopatra are friends and supportive colleagues with a great deal of work to do running their respective and interlocking empires. Romeo and Juliet have no sense of humor; Antony and Cleopatra live by elaborate jokes and highly personal forms of teasing—what Zamir calls "idiosyncratic practices." ("That time,—Oh times!—I laugh'd him out of patience") Romeo and Juliet, utterly absorbed, pay no attention to anybody around them; Antony and Cleopatra love to gossip about the odd people in their world, and spend evenings wandering through the streets watching the funny things people do. Romeo and Juliet speak to each other only in terms of worshipful hyperbole; Antony knows how to make contact with Cleopatra through insults, even about her age (he calls her his "serpent of old Nile"), and she knows how to turn a story about a fishhook into a running joke that renews laughter each time it is mentioned. All this suggests a romance that, unlike that of the younger couple, "does not work through transcending life, through perpetually setting its intensities at odds with what life is, but rather structures itself through life and the daily pleasures it affords."

It's not that they do not pay attention to each other's bodies, says Zamir—but in contrast to the teenage lovers, the body in *Antony and Cleopatra* is always seen as animated by a searching and idiosyncratic mind that makes contact with another particular mind through intimate conversation. Cleopatra is clearly supposed to be attractive, but, as Zamir notes, the play, by contrast to Shakespeare's sources, downplays this aspect of her attraction. It is her complicated personality, full of surprises, to which Shakespeare most draws our attention. ("Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale/Her infinite variety.") Her mode of seduction, in Zamir's persuasive reading, is above all mental. "Cunning past man's thought," as Antony describes her, she ingeniously elaborates a battery of stratagems to keep herself in the forefront of his attention: flirtation, capricious annoyance, the constant private teasing, frustrating allusions to significant undelivered information—but also shared ambition, trusting collaboration, sincere and deeply felt admiration for his achievements, and insistence on her own equality. (When Charmian advises deference and flattery, Cleopatra is appropriately contemptuous: "Thou teachest like a fool; the way to lose him.") Zamir is particularly insightful, and adds something that I believe to be new in the literature on the play, when, examining the scene after the battle of Actium, he shows the love expressed in Cleopatra's delicate attunement to the phases of Antony's career, her subtle sense of when to approach him and of what should and should not be said. I do not know another critic who gives Cleopatra the credit for empathy that she plainly deserves.

But does she really love Antony? The question is Zamir's. In part because many critics do not like Cleopatra, feeling that any such complicated, capricious, and powerful woman must be incapable of love, Zamir feels compelled to press this question repeatedly. He seems to have a hard time trusting the reality of this middle-aged love, so lacking in outsize rapture, so immersed in the daily movement of work and conversation. Zamir eventually finds an affirmative answer to his question in the scene in which news of Antony's marriage to Octavia is delivered to Cleopatra by a messenger—whom she first upbraids and then, in a bizarre tantrum, drags physically around the room by his hair. (Stage direction: "She hauls him up and down.") Her angry reaction, says Zamir, must convince "even the most suspicious of audiences that this woman's love ... is genuine." And here, I think, Zamir missteps: he reads Cleopatra's reaction as a pure case of erotic jealousy. But of course it cannot be that, since Cleopatra knows that the marriage is politically motivated, and not at all based on overwhelming pas-

sion. And she intuits quickly that Octavia is no rival in brains or fascination.

Zamir himself makes much of the fact that Octavia is later described as “of a holy, cold, and still conversation.” With her “modest eyes/And still conclusion,” she “shows a body rather than a life.” (In fairness to Octavia, we should observe that, though the first of these judgments comes from the relatively impartial Enobarbus, the second remarkable insult is uttered by Cleopatra herself, and the third by that same messenger, no doubt averse to a second “haling,” and happy to echo exactly what Cleopatra wishes to think about Antony’s marital relationship.) So jealousy, focused on the sexuality and spirit of the rival, is not what her emotion is about. She does eventually get around to asking what Octavia looks like, at the end of this scene and in a later one, but it is an afterthought, well after the unfortunate messenger has been dragged about, and after she has asked him, three times, “He is married?”

So it is clearly the fact of marriage, and not the particularity of the wife, that is the target of her fury. This formidable woman, powerful, unique, who has wit, achievement, success, and glamour, who rules a kingdom, who seems an utter stranger to banality—this woman suddenly sees that she is circumscribed by the world’s most banal form of power. This fact seems to her so completely outrageous and absurd that she can react only by behaving in an absurd, even infantile, way. Zamir is correct, then, that she does love him—but it is not jealousy that is the proof, it is her regal intolerance of mere social impediments, and, far more, her utterly submissive tolerance of them, as she accepts and lives with the limitations entailed by the news, whatever they may ultimately turn out to be. (But does she really accept limitation, or is all that dragging by the hair, that funny threat to put the messenger in brine and turn him into a pickle, itself one more outsize joke, a theatrical display of determination and indomitability? Cleopatra is certainly capable of games more elaborate by far. An actress might play the scene in many ways.)

Romeo and Juliet’s love transfigured the world by raising love into the heavens: Juliet is the sun, and, as with the sun, we have no idea what, if anything, makes her laugh. Antony and Cleopatra transfigure the world from within, making each daily experience more vivid, funny, and surprising. Without each other, the world is sadly boring. “Shall I abide/In this dull world,” she asks him as he dies, “which in thy absence is/No better than a sty?” What is piggish, in her view, is not the body, it is the absence of interesting conversa-

tion. So the world needs to be transfigured here, too, but the transfiguration is human and particular, rather than celestial and abstract.

What does all this have to do with philosophy? Well, in the first place, no philosopher has ever given a decent account of the complexities of “mature love.” (John Stuart Mill’s letters and autobiography come close, but they are not philosophical works, and Mill, despite his many virtues, is not exactly the man to describe the role of jokes and erotic teasing in love.) Nor is this failure just an accident, or a social fact about cultural reticence. Zamir plausibly argues that philosophical prose all by itself could not convey the quirky and uneven nature, the incommensurable particularity, of this type of love, the way genuine feeling is embodied in a fish story. And so he contends that the experience of the spectator or reader, as she goes through the variegated moods of this relationship, is epistemically significant, putting her in a position to make claims about love, and to assess claims about love, as no abstract account could do.

III.

If Antony and Cleopatra’s love faced fatal political and military obstacles and was for that reason tragic, wrecked on “the varying shore o’ the world,” still there is nothing fundamentally tragic in the texture of the love itself, which is at its heart more akin to comedy. In *Othello*, by contrast, Zamir finds a love that is tragic at its core, fated for violent death—because of one party’s determination to see and to deeply love, and the other party’s horror of being seen and being deeply loved.

Any successful interpretation of *Othello* must explain Othello’s readiness to be deceived. Iago is certainly skillful, but he has an all-too-willing victim. At every point, Othello picks up Iago’s suggestions and runs with them. No other character, despite receiving the same information, shows the slightest inclination to believe that Desdemona is unfaithful. Here McGinn writes his best chapter, showing how the play takes the classical philosophical problem of the knowledge of other minds and displays its agonizing human reality—but, focusing on enumerating passages that highlight epistemological themes, he does not finally show us why Othello is driven mad by this problem in a way that other characters are not. Some interpreters impute the Moor’s collaboration with his tormentor Iago to his racial insecurity in a society that stigmatizes him. Yet this suggestion by itself does not tell us why the insecure

rity should take the form of sexual jealousy and ultimately violence—especially violence directed against the one person who appears to have no awareness of his racial difference. (“I saw Othello’s visage in his mind.”)

Stanley Cavell’s famous interpretation goes further. Othello, he believes, has become heavily invested in the idea of his own purity, a project no doubt supported by his awareness of being black, and a Moor, in a white Christian world. So, says Cavell, when Othello makes love to Desdemona and sees the passion he arouses in her, he cannot bear it, because this passionate response proves to him that he is a sexual being, not a pure heavenly will. Cavell’s sentences express, in their haunted and hesitant structure, the torment of that discovery:

In speaking of the point and meaning of Othello’s impotence, I do not think of Othello as having been in an everyday sense impotent with Desdemona. I think of him, rather, as having been surprised by her, at what he has elicited from her; at, so to speak, a success, rather than a failure ... Rather than imagine himself to have elicited that, or solicited it, Othello would imagine it elicited by anyone and everyone else.—Surprised, let me say, to find that she is flesh and blood. It was the one thing he could not imagine for himself. For if she is flesh and blood then, since they are one, so is he.

Cavell then generalizes, in a memorable observation: “If such a man as Othello is rendered impotent and murderous by aroused, or by having aroused, female sexuality; or let us say: if this man is horrified by human sexuality, in himself and in others; then no human being is free of this possibility.” Sexuality, Cavell continues, is the field in which the idea of human finitude, “of its acceptance and its repetitious overcoming,” is worked out. In other words, we are all to some degree ashamed and horrified at our own sexuality, of which another person’s sexual response to us is the proof. We are horrified because we wish not to accept our finitude. We wish to be pure souls without limit or imperfection.

Cavell’s essay is one of the best things written about the play, and one of his own best essays, haunting and devastating to experience. I recall the sense of sudden revelation that swept over all of us when Cavell first presented it in a class I taught with him at Harvard in 1980. But now, with the distance of time, I must say that what Cavell is describing looks to me not like a universal human reality, but like a common style of misogyny, in which people—usually males—have a stake in being above the merely bodily, and find themselves reminded by women’s sexuality that they are not

in that way lofty. But this sort of shame and revulsion at sexuality is hardly inevitable. Why on earth should one think that “no human being is free of this possibility”? (Antony and Cleopatra are utterly free of this type of disgust-misogyny. What disgusts her, and turns the world into a “sty,” is the absence of humor, not the presence of the body.) As a reading of the play, Cavell’s assimilation of Othello to *The Kreutzer Sonata* is much too quick, neglecting the fact that Desdemona’s primary mode of interaction with Othello is not sexual rapture but compassionate understanding, directed at the suffering that he has experienced during his exploits.

Here is where Zamir gets going, in another wonderful chapter. Othello, he argues, has become deeply invested in seeing himself as identical with his heroic role. He is that outsize hero, and the vulnerable shapeless person within has been concealed by that grandiose construction, to such an extent that Othello himself does not even remember that he really is that vulnerable inchoate self. Desdemona sees past the persona to the self within: she recognizes, and pities, his vulnerability. Othello is erotically drawn to her by her compassionate response: “Othello falls in love when he encounters pity directed at him, when, for a change, he is not being used but is understood.” But committed as he is to invulnerability, to being nothing more nor less than the grand heroic construct, he simply cannot stand the loving knowing gaze that reaches past his achievements to “some deeper foundation of his being,” “an unbearable penetrating love that sees through to his source.” He has to extinguish the eyes that see him, and love him, too deeply. “In his growing abuse of her, Othello wants this kind of love to stop somehow.”

In other words, the general human problem raised by the play is the problem of the “false self” (Winnicott’s term) with which we so often mask our real, childlike selves. All human beings have this problem to some degree, wanting to hide from the gaze of those who see our vulnerability too clearly (although it is also seductive to be so seen). For some people, however, the problem is more agonizing than for others, because some people have become so invested in being competent and in control that they have not attended to their inner selves or cultivated the emotional and receptive parts of their personalities. The result is that the true self, the one within, remains in an infantile condition, and the controlling adult has little conscious access to it. When it is seen and addressed, it can be a terrifying experience.

Zamir does not make use of Winnicott’s concepts, but that is how I would make sense of his shrewd suggestions. Still, his reading has

a harder time than Cavell's in making sense of the sexual form that Othello's fantasies take. For Cavell, "rather than imagine himself to have elicited that, or solicited it, Othello would imagine it elicited by anyone and everyone else." Moreover, the very fact that Desdemona is aroused means, for him, that she is a whore, to be distanced from the self who is striving for purity. (Misogyny often works this way, by projecting the feared and loathed aspects of the self onto others: she, not I, is the body; she, not I, is an animal being.)


How would Zamir, by contrast, make sense of Othello's sexual focus? He would say, I suppose, that by portraying his wife to himself as a whore, attending to many men, Othello can deny that she is focused all too intently on loving him. "Iago," says Zamir, is Othello's "mode of resistance and something in him is using Iago so that it can bloom to full expression." What he cannot stand is the real love that she offers, and so he would prefer to believe anything else. I am not entirely satisfied with such an account of Othello's obsessively sexual fantasies, and I wish that Zamir had said more about this issue.

Yet Zamir's reading is very strong in explaining Othello's odd and disjointed language in the murder scene, in which a carefully constructed persona has unraveled and he no longer knows where or what his selfhood is. He speaks in strange third-person abstractions. He seems to have lost hold of his "I." ("It is the cause, my soul.") Above all, Zamir makes better sense than Cavell of Othello's obsession with extinguishing Desdemona's vision: "Put out the light, and then put out the light." And later, "This look of thine will hurl my soul from heaven." On Cavell's reading, he should be obsessed with her bodily movements, her sexual organs. Zamir convincingly shows us why he is so afraid of her eyes.

Zamir simply offers, side by side, his readings of *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Othello*. He draws no explicit conclusion from the juxtaposition, but these readings, juxtaposed, make us wonder why Antony and Cleopatra do not fall prey to the same romantic agony. It's not that they do not feel jealousy—but the jealousy that they know is of a limited and daily sort, not monstrous or murderous. The answer, it would appear, is given by Zamir's fine passages on their "idiosyncratic practices": they are willing to acknowledge what is uneven, silly, and odd about the self—to let it be seen, to let it be. In their way highly regal and heroic, they have no stake in being only that. The most intelligent and commanding woman in all of Shakespeare, Cleopatra is also one of the silliest and most

childlike—and it is this capacity for allowing silliness to be seen that is their personal salvation and, by its absence, Othello’s doom.

Zamir’s book has its defects. Like many first books, it opens up more questions than it pursues. It lacks, to some extent, what Cavell always gives us: the sense of a coherent and distinctive philosophical sensibility with its own well-thought-out views on the significant questions. Yet those faults can also be seen as virtues: openness rather than dogmatism; a willingness to be puzzled rather than to assert; an acknowledgment that the world, and Shakespeare, does not fit into a single tidy philosophical picture. Nuttall and McGinn fail because they make Shakespeare look simple, reducing him to a primer. Cavell brilliantly succeeds at being Cavell, which is to say that his readings always illuminate issues of human significance; but one often has the sense that the plays are being used as occasions for the pursuit of Cavell’s own preoccupations. In Zamir, however, the plays challenge the philosopher to new thought. Zamir’s approach is respectful of mystery and complexity, and always suggests that the plays contain more than his interpretations have elicited.

To write philosophically about Shakespeare, or any other great author or artist, one needs not so much philosophical learning, or even philosophical argument, but a genuinely philosophical temperament, puzzled and even humble before life’s complexities, and willing to put one’s sense of life on the line in the process of reading a text. As Plato rightly said, it is no chance matter that we are discussing, but how one should live. The philosopher needs to turn to literature because literature gets at depths of human experience, tragic or comic, that philosophical prose does not reach; but then the philosopher will need to show the imprint of that complexity, to reveal something of the pain or the joy that the work evokes from his or her own character. *Double Vision* owes its success precisely to this capacity for philosophical puzzlement, for laying the plays newly open both to emotional experience and to serious reflection. 

From The New Republic , May 2008



Martha C. Nussbaum is Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago. Her new book, *Liberty of Conscience: In Defense of America’s Tradition of Religious Equality*, has just been published by Basic Books.

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Founded in 1990 by Mortimer J. Adler & Max Weismann

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