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MARTHA C. NUSSBAUM**

*Love's Knowledge*  
ESSAYS ON PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE



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"The best modern discussion of the ways in which what we call philosophy and what we call literature interrelate....Anyone who wants to think about how literature and philosophy can serve each other should not just read this book but study it and return to its complex arguments again and again." --Wayne Booth, *Philosophy and Literature*

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"With this volume Martha Nussbaum gives new meaning to the word 'interdisciplinary': No mere dabbling in closely aligned fields, the essays presented here are based on her considerable knowledge and understanding of classics, philosophy, and comparative literature....Her assertions are balanced, insightful, and infused with subtle humor."--*The Bloomsbury Review*

From the Back Cover

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About the Author

Martha C. Nussbaum is Professor of Law and Ethics and the University of Chicago Law School.

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This volume brings together Nussbaum's published papers on the relationship between literature and philosophy, especially moral philosophy. The papers, many of them previously inaccessible to non-specialist readers, deal with such fundamental issues as the relationship between style and content in the exploration of ethical issues; the nature of ethical attention and ethical knowledge and their relationship to written forms and styles; and the role of the emotions in deliberation and self-knowledge. Nussbaum investigates and defends a conception of ethical understanding which involves emotional as well as intellectual activity, and which gives a certain type of priority to the perception of particular people and situations rather than to abstract rules. She argues that this ethical conception cannot be completely and appropriately stated without turning to forms of writing usually considered literary rather than philosophical. It is consequently necessary to broaden our conception of moral philosophy in order to include these forms. Featuring two new essays and revised versions of several previously published essays, this collection attempts to articulate the relationship, within such a broader ethical inquiry, between literary and more abstractly theoretical elements.

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This collection of essays is not only a first-rate work in the philosophy of literature, but it goes beyond the limits of that heading to sound out the philosophical implications of the literary works themselves. It begins by raising the question, so often unhappily answered without analysis, of what form of writing is most hospitable to the raising of philosophical questions. The answer, developed over the course of the essays, is that "literary" authors often present a more intricate and acute consideration of philosophical issues, especially those pertaining to human beings as emotional and moral agents; and this implies a thorough critique of not only the writing style most fashionable in philosophy but also the writers most often studied by those who consider themselves philosophers. A number of the essays assume familiarity with works by, for example, James, Proust, and Beckett, while others are more general in their scope. Anyone who feels that important philosophical issues are raised in literary texts, which deserve a careful, intelligent, and non-formulaic (or "theoretical") reading, ought to read this book. Anyone who has the suspicion that love is something that we ought to try to understand in all of its complexity and fullness, ought to read it as well. It might just restore your faith in novels, in philosophy, and in the human heart striving to understand itself.

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