IX. SELECTED WORKS ABOUT VISUALITY

NOTE: See Orality and Literacy: 115-21. I should note here that writing systems accentuate visuality, as does the printing press, but I have dealt with them in two separate categories in the present classified bibliography.

(IX.1) Adler, Mortimer J. Aristotle for Everybody: Difficult Thought Made Easy. New York and London: Macmillan, 1978. Accessible. Topic: History of Philosophy. Also see Adler (VII.2; IX.1; IX.2; IX.3; X.1); Crowe (I.41); Lacy (XII.83b); Nussbaum (IX.55).


(IX.5) Aristotle. The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation. 2 vols. Ed. Jonathan Barnes. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984. Topic: History of Philosophy. Also see Adler (IX.1); Aquinas (III.5); Aristotle (I.10; X.3a); Copleston (III.34); Garver (I.72); Koziak (III.110); Lonergan (IX.48); Mann (IX.49); Nightingale (IX.53); Nussbaum (IX.55); Ong (IX.59); Sorabji (VI.9a). Almost everything I have published is based on Aristotle’s insight regarding act and potency – act actuates potential. To be sure, my understanding of Arthur R. Jensen’s account of Level I and Level II cognitive development is based on my aligning Level I with orality and residual forms of oral cultural conditioning in the world-as-event sense of
life; and Level II with the world-as-view sense of life. However, in addition, I see Level II as actuating cognitive potential. In short, I do not equate the relative under-development of Level II that concerns Jensen as a decisive absence of cognitive potential, as Jensen seems to see it, but simply as a relative unactuated cognitive potential due to highly oral cultural conditioning.


(IX.7) Belting, Hans. Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art. Trans. Edmund Jephcott. Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1994. Topics: History of Art; Cultural Studies. Also see Ong’s The Presence of the Word (I.140); Bloom (I.190); Cushman (X.13); de Mello (I.42); Eliade (I.53); Engberg-Pedersen (I.55); Loyola (III.113); Menn (X.32); Sokolowski (I.170); von Balthasar (I.189).


(IX.10) Bloom, Harold. Ruin the Sacred Truths: Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present. Cambridge, MA; and London: Harvard UP, 1989. Topics: Literary Studies; Religious Studies. Also see Bloom (I.14). In a remarkably straightforward way, Harold Bloom makes observations that I would align with Ong’s thought: “Frequently we forget one reason why the Hebrew Bible is so difficult for us: our only way of thinking comes to us from the ancient Greeks, and not from the Hebrews. No scholar has been able to work through a persuasive comparison of Greek thinking and Hebrew psychologizing, if only because the two modes themselves seem irreconcilable” (27). What Bloom here refers to as “our only way of thinking” does indeed come from the Greeks, as he says, not from the Hebrews. For all practical purposes, Bloom is here referring to what Ong means by distinctively literate thought and expression. For all practical purposes, what Bloom refers to as “Hebrew psychologizing” is an example of the world-as-event sense of life that Ong associates with primary orality and with residual forms of primary oral cultures. By contrast, Greek thinking represents the world-as-view sense of life that Ong (IX.61) discusses. As a result of the powerful cultural conditioning of print in the print culture that emerged historically after the emergence of the Gutenberg printing press, what Bloom refers to as the “two modes” of
(1) Greek thinking, on the one hand, and, on the other, (2) Hebrew psychologizing have indeed seemed irreconcilable, as he says. In a similar way, as a result of our Western cultural conditioning in print culture, what Ong refers to as the world-as-view sense of life and the world-as-event sense of life have seemed irreconcilable with one another. However, Anthony de Mello (I.42) suggests in effect that what Ong refers to as the world-as-view sense of life is a prison. So de Mello urges us to work toward escaping from this prison.


(IX.17c) Critchley, Simon and Jamieson Webster. *Stay, Illusion! The Hamlet Doctrine*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2013. Also listed as Critchley and Webster (X.12a). Topics: Literary Studies; Psychoanalytic Theory. Also see Nightingale (IX.53). The artful Plato provides us with the contrast of philosophy versus poetry – which involves an unfortunate denigration of the spirit of poetry that Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster set out to challenge by rectifying how we view tragedy. They say, “Tragedy is not some prephilosophical expression of a traditional way of life” (191). Using a short quotation that is attributed to Gorgias as a touchstone, Critchley and Webster claim that “tragedy is always something spectated; it always involves a theoretical or cognitive distance” (191). Here is how they explain their own reasoning: “As is well known, the ancient Greek word for ‘theory’ (*theoria*) is linked to *theoros*, the spectator in a theater, and can be connected to the verb that denotes the act of seeing or contemplation (*theorein*)” (16). Critchley and Webster also say that “we don’t believe that there is psychical existence without fantasy” (189). Fantasy may be involved in sublimation, which they define as “the transformation of passion” (200). Passion is related to desire.


(IX.24) ---. “IQ and Standard English.” *College Composition and Communication* 34 (1983): 470-84. Also see Farrell (IX.23); Flynn (IX.25); Nisbett (IX.54). Because learning to read proficiently is the key to making the aural-to-visual shift in cognitive processing that Ong writes about in *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (IX.59), I regret that I did not know about Gary Simpkins’ reading research, listed below in the category on visuality (IX.75), at the time when I wrote this article. I have no problem with the idea of using non-standard forms of English in readers to promote reading instruction for African American elementary-school students. In addition, I regret that I did not think to say in my discussion of the *McGuffey Readers* that new readers might be prepared with orally resonant selections that might work as well as the *McGuffey Readers* have worked. The aural-to-visual shift in cognitive processing that Ong writes about is connected with the actuation of cognitive potential – the kind of cognitive ability measured, however imperfectly, by IQ tests, especially the kind of cognitive ability that Arthur R. Jensen refers to as Level II. What he refers to as Level I cognitive abilities are as well developed in
children who come from a strongly oral cultural background as in children who come from a more visually oriented cultural background. But Level II cognitive abilities are not usually actuated in people from a highly oral cultural background unless and until they have individually undergone the aural-to-visual shift. For this reason, Simpkins’ research about reading instruction is best understood as involving the aural-to-visual shift in cognitive processing that is connected with actuating cognitive potential of Level II. Nevertheless, we do need to remember the tendency known as “backsliding” because individual children from a strongly oral cultural background can indeed make short-term gains on IQ measures as the result of intensive educational programs, only to have those gains disappear after the students leave the intensive educational program.


(IX.32) Havelock, Eric A. *The Greek Concept of Justice: From Its Shadow in Homer to Its Substance in Plato*. Cambridge, MA; and London: Harvard UP, 1978. Topics: Classical Studies; History of Philosophy. Also see Havelock (I.81; IX.33); Voegelin (I.188). Havelock devotes an important chapter to detailing the history of the ancient Greek verb “to be” (233-48). Also see Charles H. Kahn’s *The Verb “Be” in Ancient Greek: With a New Introductory Essay* (Indianapolis and Cambridge, UK: Hackett Publishing, 2003). The verb “to be” is best understood as representing the stasis or static sense of vision that Ong associates with the world-as-view sense of life (see Ong’s “World as View and World as Event” [IX.61]).


(IX.33a) Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time: A Translation of Sein and Zeit*. Trans. Joan Stambaugh. Albany: State U of New York P, 1996. Topic: History of Philosophy. Also see Caputo (IX.14a); Sherry (X.44c). To what extent did the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) support the programmatically anti-Semitic ideology of Adolf Hitler’s Nazis in Germany? With the recent publication of some of Heidegger’s private philosophical notebooks in German, this question is being revisited once again. Jennifer Schuessler has published an informative review of the relevant passages and their resonances with Heidegger’s other writings: “Heidegger’s Notebooks Renew Focus of Anti-Semitism” in the *New York Times* dated March 30, 2014. Schuessler says, “The so-called black notebooks, written between 1931 and 1941 and named for the color of their oilcloth covers, show Heidegger denouncing the rootlessness and spirit of ‘empty rationality and calculability’ of the Jews, as he works out revisions to his deepest metaphysical ideas in relation to political events of the day.” According to Schuessler’s article, “Richard Polt, a professor of philosophy at Xavier University in Cincinnati, pointed to the student notes from a seminar that ran from 1933 to 1934 (published in German in 2009 and released in English in December), which showed Heidegger speaking of ‘Semitic nomads’ who will never understand the nature of ‘our German space.’” Evidently for Heidegger, “our German space” was supposed to be a kind of refuge from Jews, the “Semitic nomads.” So these two key passages can be aligned with Nazi ideology. For Heidegger, the story of modernity is the story of alleged decline. This alleged decline involves “the dehumanizing effects of modern technology and [of] much the modern philosophical tradition itself” – to quote Schuessler. This alleged decline involved Heidegger’s account of “the nature of being,” as Schuessler points out. According to Heidegger’s account of the nature of being, people in the pre-modern past had a sense of being that has somehow been lost in modernity. Now, Heidegger came from a Roman Catholic background. For a period of time, he was in the Jesuit religious
order in the Roman Catholic Church. (Governor Jerry Brown of California
was also in the Jesuits when he was a young man. Disclosure: I myself
was in the Jesuits for about eight years.) For centuries, Roman Catholic
popes have been denouncing modernity, but without naming Jews as
alleged agents of modernity. For example, the recent German pope, now
Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI (previously known as Joseph Ratzinger),
regularly criticized modernity for its supposed secularism and alleged
relativism. In a short book he co-authored with Marcello Pera, *Without
Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam* (New York: Basic Books,
2006), Ratzinger even employs the same imagery that Heidegger uses:
rootlessness. But Ratzinger does not single out the Jews for special
attention. So let’s consider the imagery of rootlessness. If we were to think
about our human ancestors who were hunter-gatherers, I guess we could
describe them as rootless. In addition, if we consider Heidegger’s
indictment of modern Jews are “Semitic nomads,” then I guess that we
could say that all our human ancestors who were hunter-gatherers were
also nomads. However, because Heidegger singles out modern Jews as
“Semitic nomads,” I think that we should turn our attention to the story of
Abraham in Genesis. As the story goes, Abraham abandoned his roots and
became a nomad in response to what he understood as the voice of God
speaking to him. Religious Jews of all stripes look to Abraham as their
father in faith. Moreover, Christians of all stripes, including Roman
Catholics, look to Abraham as their father in faith. Furthermore, Muslims
of all stripes look to Abraham as their father in faith. But if Abraham is the
exemplar of the life of religious faith in the monotheistic deity conceptual
construct, then life appears to be a nomadic journey involving
rootlessness. However, you could argue that the story of Abraham’s
nomadic journey is aimed at finding a new homeland and putting down
roots there. But this interpretation of the story of Abraham seems to allow
room for Heidegger’s “our German space” – but not necessarily in the
anti-Semitic way he himself uses in his contrast of “Semitic nomads” with
“our German space.” In any event, because Heidegger’s view of
modernity coincides with the view of modernity espoused by 19th-century
and later popes, how much, if at all, did his personal anti-Semitism
influence the development of his philosophic thought during his Nazi
years? To what extent, if it all, did he buy in to Nazi ideology during his
Nazi years, and how did this influence his philosophic thought, if it did?
But if Heidegger’s philosophic thought has been tainted by his personal
anti-Semitism and/or by the Nazi ideology, hasn’t the Declaration of
Independence been tainted by the racist views of the white slave-owners
who helped formulate it? And how many authors, if any, have not been
tainted by anti-Semitic views and/or racist views and/or sexist views
and/or classist views – and the like? After all, aren’t all of sinners? Let the
person without sin cast the first stone. As Schuessler notes, Heidegger’s
philosophy has exerted its strongest influence [in France], through thinkers
like Jean-Paul Sartre and Jacques Derrida.” In 1967, three of Derrida’s
books appeared in English translation in the United States. With the publication of those three books, Derrida’s influence in certain academic circles in the United States began to rise. Derrida’s critique of logocentrism resembles Walter J. Ong’s critique of the corpuscular sense of life involved in the visualist tendencies of distinctively literate thought and expression from ancient Greek philosophy but especially accentuated by the Gutenberg printing press and its impact. See Ong’s book Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue: From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason (IX.9: 65-66, 72, 146, 171, 203, 210). Derrida’s critique of logocentrism also resembles Bernard Lonergan’s critique of what he refers to as “naïve realism” in his book Insight: A Study of Human Understanding (IX.48). Derrida’s critique of phonocentrism involves a critique of what Ong refers to broadly as orality, which includes the world-as-event sense of life of preliterate peoples as well as other forms of orality involving literate peoples. In any event, Ong came from an American Catholic background, and he became a Jesuit priest. As noted above, Heidegger advanced the anti-modernity agenda of 19th-century and later Roman Catholic popes with the same kind of backward-looking nostalgia. In contrast, Ong did not embrace the anti-modernity agenda of the Roman Catholic popes. He was not backward-looking, but forward-looking. While Heidegger was basically a technophobe, Ong was basically a technophile, but not an uncritical one. Ong advertises his basically positive view toward technology in the title of his book Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word (I.139). He further accentuates his basic point in his articles “Writing is a Humanizing Technology” (1983), “Writing and the Evolution of Consciousness” (1985), and “Writing is a Technology that Restructures Thought” (1986). Ong’s basically positive view toward technology, including not only writing but also the Gutenberg printing press and other forms of technology, led to the charge that he was a technological determinist. This charge was also made against Ong’s former teacher and friend Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980). McLuhan is the author of the book The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man (XII.96a), in which he borrows Ong’s thesis in his book Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue (IX.9), but amplifies it in his own ways. McLuhan is also the author of the book Understanding Media: Extensions of Man (XII.96e). McLuhan’s Understanding Media was his breakthrough book. But Ong did not have a breakthrough book. As a result, McLuhan became far more widely known than Ong did. Now, in 1937, Marshall McLuhan became a convert to Roman Catholicism. To one degree or another, he bought in to the anti-modernity themes of the 19th-century popes. For example, he was an old-fashioned Thomist like the French Thomist philosopher Jacques Maritain. Even though McLuhan in the late 1950s read Bernard Lonergan’s book Insight: A Study of Human Understanding (IX.48), he did not become a newfangled Thomist like Lonergan. As a result, McLuhan was somewhat disappointed when the Second Vatican Council in the Roman Catholic Church (1962-1965)
effectively down-sized the importance of Thomistic philosophy and theology in the church. As a Jesuit, Ong had studied the old-fashioned Thomistic philosophy and theology as part of his Jesuit training. However, he did not cling to the old-fashioned Thomist philosophy the way that McLuhan did. Now, just as Ong was basically a technophile, but not an uncritical one, so too McLuhan was basically a technophobe, albeit a highly reflective one. But, as mentioned, both Ong and McLuhan were charged with being technological determinists. At first blush, it is hard to imagine that these two Catholics could be considered to be determinists in any serious sense of this term. For freedom of choice is the basic principle of Catholic moral thought. No free choice = No moral culpability = No sin. So I need to introduce a distinction between determinism (i.e., no free choice) and determinative (i.e., a contributing influence). Neither Ong nor McLuhan was a technological determinist. But both viewed technology as playing determinative roles in our cultural conditioning. But McLuhan in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (XII.96a) is closer to Heidegger’s anti-modernity view than Ong is in any of his books. In addition, McLuhan is closer to Heidegger’s view about the supposedly dehumanizing effects of modern technology than Ong is. In conclusion, I would urge the people today who are interested in studying Heidegger’s thought to turn their attention instead to studying Ong’s thought and McLuhan’s. I know, I know, they were both Roman Catholics. By definition, Roman Catholics are conservatives, aren’t they? Orestes Brownson certainly thought they should be. In certain ways, McLuhan was a social conservative. For example, many feminists might see some of his views as typical of a white male sexist out of the 1950s. Between them, though, Ong and McLuhan, most notably in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (XII.96a), offer two contrasting syntheses of a new order – beyond Heidegger’s or Derrida’s. But I clearly prefer Ong’s synthesis over McLuhan’s.


(IX.39a) Kretzmann, Norman; Anthony Kenny; Jan Pinborg; and Eleonore Stump, eds. *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy: From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism 1100-1600*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1982. Also see P. Mack (XII.89); Ong (IX.59).


(IX.44) Levinson, Paul. *Digital McLuhan: A Guide to the Information Millennium*. London and New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 1999. Topic: History of Technology. Also see Logan (IX.47a; XII.85c); McLuhan (XII.96; XII.96a; XII.96b; XII.96c; XII.96d; XII.96e); Postman (XII.143; XII.144).


(IX.48) Lonergan, Bernard. Insight: A Study of Human Understanding. 5th ed. Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan. Ed. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran. Vol. 3. Toronto; Buffalo; London: U of Toronto P, 1992. Also listed as Lonergan (X.30). A classic. Topics: History of Philosophy; Personalism; Therapy. Also see Morelli (X.36b). Just as Ong’s work in cultural history and theory has not received the attention it deserves, so too Bernard Lonergan’s Insight: A Study of Human Understanding has not received the attention it deserves either. In it Lonergan mocks the tendency to equate knowing with “taking a good look.” In Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue (IX.59) and elsewhere, Ong refers to this kind of tendency as visualism and hypervisualism. In Method in Theology, 2nd ed. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1973: 214), Lonergan identifies the following philosophic schools of thought as being based on equating knowing with “taking a good look”: “materialism, empiricism, positivism, sensism, phenomenalism, behaviorism, pragmatism.”


IX.54 Nisbett, Richard E. *Intelligence and How to Get It: Why Schools and Cultures Count*. New York: Norton, 2009. Topic: Cultural Studies. Also see Farrell (IX.24); Flynn (IX.25); Simpkins (IX.75).

IX.55 Nussbaum, Martha C. “Human Functioning and Social Justice: In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism.” *Political Theory* 20 (1992): 202-46. Topic: History of Philosophy. Also see Adler (IX.9); Aquinas (IX.4a); Crowe (I.41); Newell (III.128b); Nussbaum (IX.55b). Basically, Martha Nussbaum is an Aristotelian. So am I. A universal declaration of human rights presupposes a universal human nature. But the conceptual construct we use to describe a universal human nature must be rooted in the philosophic position of realism, or else in Bernard Lonergan’s variant of this position that he styles as critical realism. So no universal human nature, no universal human rights. But no declaration of universal human rights = no standard for estimating social justice. Therefore, I greatly admire Martha Nussbaum for defending Aristotelian essentialism.

IX.55a ---. *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*. Cambridge, MA; and London: Belknap P/Harvard UP, 2013. Topic: History of Philosophy. Also see Bradshaw (X.7); Farley (IX.22a); Havelock (IX.32); Koziak (III.110); Krause (III.110a); Morrison (X.36c); Newell (III.128b). Martha C. Nussbaum’s timely new book is a tour de force – not only both perceptive and profound but also easy to read. Professor Nussbaum argues that love is necessary for social and political cohesiveness in liberal democracies such as the experiments in democratic governance in the United States and India. (Out of considerations of space, I am only going to highlight certain parts of her book here. In doing so, I will omit many of her specific examples, including all of her examples about India.) Basically, Nussbaum’s argument about why love matters for justice is related, roughly, to the motto “fraternity” from the French Revolution, but without
the old gender bias of the term “fraternity.” Historically, the famous experiment in participatory democracy in ancient Athens involved something akin to love—male bonding among the male citizens (women and slaves and visitors were not citizens). In short, fraternity. Historically, the most famous advocates of social justice were arguably the ancient Hebrew prophets such as Amos and Isaiah of Jerusalem and Hosea. In their day, the ancient Hebrews lived under a monarchy, not a democracy. Nevertheless, Amos, Isaiah of Jerusalem and Hosea and other ancient Hebrew prophets had their own ideas of the covenant that they urged upon the ruling class whenever they saw it necessary to do so. Their own understanding of the covenant demanded that the ruling class look after the well-being of all Hebrews in an all-inclusive way—the spirit of fraternity writ large. In short, the ancient Hebrew prophets are the precursors of Nussbaum’s new book, even though she does not happen to mention them explicitly in her book. They are the precursors of her new book in the sense that they pioneered the genre she refers to as normative political philosophy, even though they may not have been the only ones to have pioneered this genre. Digression: Because the covenant is usually not considered in discussions of political philosophy, I can understand why Nussbaum does not discuss the ancient Hebrew prophets’ understanding of the covenant. However, I find it harder to understand why she does not mention Eric A. Havelock’s The Greek Concept of Justice: From Its Shadow in Homer to Its Substance in Plato (IX.32). End of digression. Even though the motto “fraternity” was not explicitly part of the American Revolution, something akin to fraternity no doubt existed among the men known as the American revolutionaries and the Founding Fathers. Those men rallied around the idealistic document known as the Declaration of Independence. The American revolutionaries first had to win the American Revolution before they could proceed to found a new country with its own constitution. As we know, they did win, and then they proceeded to debate the provisions of a new constitution. For the purposes of governance, the Constitution is the document that we turn to, and we still debate the meaning of certain provisions and of certain amendments that have been added to it over the years. Nevertheless, if we want to understand the American spirit, we usually turn to the idealistic Declaration of Independence. As Nussbaum notes, President Abraham Lincoln effectively rewrote the ideals expressed in this document in his famous Gettysburg Address. As a result, to be an American today, Americans are expected to embrace Lincoln’s understanding of the meaning of the ideals Declaration of Independence. So Americans today are expected to love American ideals. In short, Americans are expected to be idealistic. The viability of the American experiment in democracy depends on American ideals and on Americans embracing those ideals. Now, Nussbaum borrows the term “radical evil” from Kant to refer to the many-sided enemy of social and political love. Basically, she is an Aristotelian. However, she excels at using Kant’s thought to her advantage
in this book, most notably in her many-sided discussion of the
psychodynamics of radical evil. She says that “the central ‘narrative’ of
‘radical evil’ [is] the effort to cope with helplessness and finitude” (198).
To one degree or another, all of us have to cope with helplessness and
finitude. (I can understand why she encloses Kant’s term in quotation
marks the first time she uses it, but I do not understand why she keeps
enclosing it in quotation marks thereafter. Is she afraid that she will be
thrown out of the University of Chicago for referring to radical evil? If the
spirit of political correctness at the University of Chicago has determined
that no one on the faculty should refer to radical evil without enclosing the
words in quotation marks, then she should create a politically correct
substitute term to use instead.) Nussbaum says that “‘radical evil’ gets its
start in the form of tendency to subordinate other people to one’s own
needs” (172) – as infants do. “From this early situation of narcissism
grows a tendency to think of other people as mere slaves, not full people
with needs and interests of their own” (172). Nussbaum’s perceptive
account of the origins and psychodynamics of shame (esp. 168-74) nicely
complements John Bradshaw’s discussion of toxic shame versus healthy
shame in Healing the Shame That Binds You (X.7). Nussbaum’s
perceptive account of the origins and psychodynamics of shame leads her
to use the term “anthropodenial,” which she defines as “the refusal to
accept one’s limited animal condition” as a human animal -- “anthropo”
here means human (173). She then characterizes anthropodenial as based
on the expectations of the infant: “To expect to be complete (or
continually completed) is to expect to be above the human lot. Infants
cannot imagine a human sort of interdependency, since they are not aware
that human life is a life of need and reciprocity and that, through
reciprocity, needs will be regularly met. Their helplessness produces
intense anxiety that is not mitigated by trust in the world or its people”
(173). But Nussbaum sees trust in the world and its people as the basic
erotic thrust upon which she establishes her argument for love as
necessary for social and political cohesiveness. She sees the infant’s “love
of light, and, more generally, that generous outward-seeing movement of
the mind, finding the world fascinating and curious, that is both intelligent
and emotional” as providing the basis for wonder and love (174). Now,
Nussbaum’s overall discussion of the tragic spectatorship and the comic
spectatorship (257-75) is brilliant. She sounds as though she herself had
lived in ancient Athens during the Athenian experiment with participatory
democracy (of male citizens, not of women or slaves or visitors). For that
discussion alone, give Nussbaum an “A” for empathy. Empathy is one of
her many strengths. She is also extremely learned. Now, in Stay Illusion!
The Hamlet Doctrine (X.12a), Simon Critchley and Jamieson Webster
also discuss tragic spectatorship in ancient Athens, but they do not discuss
comic spectatorship. In a short chapter (15-17), they discuss the famous
passages in Plato’s Republic in which the character named Socrates “had a
huge problem with theater” (15). Because the real person named Socrates
was sentenced to death in the restored democracy in Athens on trumped up charges, Plato understandably was wary of democracy. In the view of Critchley and Webster, Plato invented philosophy “to displace theater with a drama of its own” (15). But Critchley and Webster do not advert to the Homeric epics as dialogue-heavy models that Plato’s dialogues resemble at least with respect to being dialogue-heavy. Of course Plato’s dialogues are not action-packed as the Homeric epics are. But Critchley and Webster’s basic point stands as valid. “Plato’s stroke of theatrical genius was to replace the tragic sufferings of Oedipus, Ajax, or whoever with another loftier heroic ideal: the dying Socrates” (16). But that’s not all. “Plato sees as the great danger of tragedy, the danger of deception that leads to a theatrocratic political regime based on nothing more than the affective effects of imitation and illusion” (17). He was thinking of the theatrics involved in the trial of Socrates on trumped-up charges. In addition, Plato worried about how the tragedies performed in Athens contributed to culturally conditioning the kind of mindset involved in Socrates’s trial of trumped up charges. In other words, to what extent did tragic spectatorship in Ancient Athens contribute to the death sentence against Socrates by his fellow Athenians? However, Critchley and Webster correctly note that Plato in effect may have thrown out the bath water with the baby. They counter Plato by suggesting that the deception involved in the fiction or fraud or illusion of “the dubious legends of tragedy and the fake emotions they induce [may] leave the deceived spectator in the theater wiser and more honest than the undeceived philosopher who wants to do away with theatocracy” (17). Perhaps.

Digression: For a relevant discussion of the illusions involved in fiction, see Thomas D. Zlatic’s “Faith in Pretext: An Ongian Context for [Melville’s novel] The Confidence-Man” (XII.175). End of digression. But Critchley and Webster also advance a different kind of argument against Plato. Plato famously advances the argument in favor of philosophy as theory – that is, theory as presumably distinct from and superior to action-oriented and emotion-laden theatrics. Critchley and Webster cleverly note that “the ancient Greek word for ‘theory’ (theoria) is linked to theories, the spectator in a theater, and can be connected to the verb that denotes the act of seeing or contemplation (theorein)” (16). The implication of their etymological lesson here is that tragic spectatorship in the theater is similar in spirit to the kind of contemplation that Plato advocates for philosophy. In this way, Critchley and Webster suggest that tragedy should be open to examination by philosophers, as Nussbaum ably undertakes to examine tragedies in ancient Athens. Digression: For a relevant study, see Andrea Wilson Nightingale’s Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greece: Theoria in Its Cultural Contexts (IX.53). End of digression. Now, Nussbaum also deserves an “A” for her use of the Scylla and Charybdis imagery (211-25), which she borrows from the Homeric epic the Odyssey. In the famous episode in the Odyssey known as the slaughter of the suitors, Odysseus strings his powerful bow and fires arrow
after arrow to kill the suitors and restore justice to his homeland. In her own non-violent ways, Nussbaum fires one figurative arrow after another in *Political emotion: Why Love Matters for Justice*. This book is a tour de force.

(IX.55b) ---. *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge, UK; and New York: Cambridge UP, 2000. Topic: History of Philosophy. Also see Nussbaum (III.130a; IX.55a; X.38; X.38a). What Martha Nussbaum means by the capabilities approach can be understood in terms of Aristotle’s discussion of act and potency. Act actuates potency (i.e., potentiality). Capabilities are potentialities, or human potential. Incidentally, Jean Houston’s work in the human potential movement can also be understood in terms of Aristotle’s discussion of act and potency.


loading of this tendency as visualism and hypervisualism. Also see Andrea Wilson Nightingale’s *Spectacles of Truth in Classical Greek Philosophy: Theoria in Its Cultural Context* (IX.53).


(IX.61) ---. “World as View and World as Event.” *American Anthropologist* 71 (1969): 634-47. Also listed as Ong (I.143). Topic: Cultural Studies. Reprinted in Ong’s *Faith and Contexts: Volume Three* (1995: 69-90). In *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (IX.59), Ong refers to the corpuscular sense of life with various terms: corpuscular view of life, corpuscular epistemology, corpuscular psychology (65-66, 72, 146, 171, 203, 210). Both the world-as-view sense of life and the world-as-event sense of life involve the corpuscular sense of life. In *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (IX.48), Bernard Lonergan explains how understanding involves reflecting on sensory data and making judgments about what conceptual constructs and predications are most reasonable and tenable. But Lonergan himself works within the larger cultural context that Ong refers to as the world-as-view sense of life. However, Anthony de Mello, S.J. (I.42) in effect urges people to undertake becoming mystics so that they can escape the cultural prison of the world-as-view sense of life and experience the flow of the world-as-event sense of life. What de Mello means by flow would include the various examples of flow that Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi discusses in his book *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* (III.36). However, Csikszentmihalyi’s examples seem to me to be examples of the optimal flow of energies involving the Warrior archetype, as described by Moore and Gillette (I.118). But de Mello seems to me to work with a much broader and expansive understanding of flow that would include more than just the optimal flow of Warrior energies.


(IX.65) Plato. *Complete Works*. Ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson. Trans. different translators for each work. Indianapolis and Cambridge, UK: Hackett Publishing, 1997. Topic: History of Philosophy. See Copleston (III.34); Cushman (X.13); Dancy (IX.19); Havelock (I.81, IX.32); Henle (IX.36); Jordan (IX.38); Marenbon (XI.8); Menn (X.35); Newell (III.128b); Nightingale (IX.53); Ong (I.134); Rabieh (III.147b); Rhodes (X.43); Stewart (I.149; IX.81a); Voegelin (I.188).

(IX.65a) Prier, Raymond Adolph. *Thauma Idesthai: Sight and Appearance in Archaic Greek*. Tallahassee: Florida State UP, 1989. Topics: Classical Studies; Cultural Studies. Also see Hahn (IX.31a); Nightingale (IX.53).


