

Philosophy Bakes Bread, Episode Nineteen, with Dr. Martha Nussbaum

On Anger and Forgiveness



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[Intro music]

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[Theme music]

Dr. Weber: Hey everyone, you're listening to WRFL Lexington, 88.1 FM, *all the way to the left* on your radio dial. This is Dr. Eric Weber here with a very special episode of *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. We are now on our new time slot, which is Tuesdays at noon from here on out, at least in the summer here. I hope you enjoy the show. This is a very special episode, but I'll let it speak for itself. I hope you enjoy.

[Theme music]

Dr. Weber: Hello and welcome to *Philosophy Bakes Bread*: food for thought about life and leadership, a production of the Society of Philosophers in America, AKA SOPHIA. I'm Dr. Eric Thomas Weber.

Dr. Cashio: And I'm Dr. Anthony Cashio. A famous phrase says that philosophy bakes no bread, that it's not practical. We here at SOPHIA and on this show aim to correct that misperception.

Dr. Weber: *Philosophy Bakes Bread* airs on WRFL Lexington 88.1 FM, and is recorded and distributed as a podcast next. Listeners can find us online at philosophybakesbread.com. We are on twitter as @PhilosophyBB, on Facebook at Philosophy Bakes Bread, or by email at philosophybakesbread@gmail.com

Dr. Weber: Last but not least, you can call and leave a short, recorded message with a question, or a comment, or bountiful praise if you like, that we may be able to play on the show at 859-257-1849. That number is 859-257-1849. On today's show, we are very fortunate to be joined by one of the most influential living philosophers, Dr. Martha Nussbaum. How are you doing today, Dr. Nussbaum?

Dr. Nussbaum: I'm doing just fine. Thank you very much for having me on the show.

Dr. Cashio: It is our great pleasure. For those of you who don't know, Dr. Nussbaum is the Ernst Freund Distinguished Service Professor of Law and Ethics at the University of Chicago as well as the recipient of the 2016 Kyoto Prize in Arts and Philosophy. That's a big prize. Congratulations, Martha.

Dr. Weber: Dr. Nussbaum has also been selected to deliver the 2017 Jefferson Lecture, the top honor that the U.S. Government confers in the Humanities.

Dr. Nussbaum: I did it! I did it last night. You can actually watch it on the NEH website pretty soon. They are putting it up probably tomorrow.

Dr. Weber: Excellent. We will put a link to that in our notes for the show.

Dr. Nussbaum: There will be a link.

Dr. Weber: She has authored a number of books. Some of her more recent works include: *Political Emotions*, *Why Love Matters For Justice*, *Creating Capabilities: The human Development Approach*, and her most recent, *Anger and Forgiveness: Resentment, Generosity, Justice*, which will be the main topic for this episode.

Dr. Cashio: Ok Martha. In this first segment which we call, "Know Thyself", we ask you to tell us about yourself. Do you know yourself? Tell us about your life and what you think about philosophy and how you came to do philosophy.

Dr. Nussbaum: Let me just say first to people, that if they want a long account of this that I think is quite well-done, look at the online journal *Emotion Researcher*, where there is a very long biographical account of me done by this excellent philosopher who interviewed me. Lots of baby pictures and all that stuff. What I talk about is how I first went to graduate school in classics, because I was interested in the ideas about emotions that I found in classical literature and classical philosophy. I soon migrated into this interdisciplinary program, I now would say Ancient Greek and Roman philosophy, except in those days nobody was studying the Romans. That was my first home, was thinking about the tragedies, about Plato and Aristotle, and I still regard that kind of scholarship as enormously important. In fact, I dedicated the Jefferson Lecture to a Harvard colleague of mine who was a scholar of Ancient Greek who died last week. I still attach a lot of importance to that, I still teach one Greek or Latin course every year to keep my skills up. I gradually started to move away, to broaden my reach to think about the worth of these ideas as live, contemporary philosophical ideas. Ideas about what emotions are, what kinds of vulnerability a good life includes, and what kinds of vulnerability are the result of background injustice. From that point my work went in two different directions, which of course interlace in various ways. One direction was thinking more about the structure of emotions and the structure of particular emotions such as fear, disgust, and anger.

I'm writing a new book now about political fear. Thinking about their role in individual lives and the good human life more generally. The other direction is thinking about political justice: What would a threshold level of freedom and opportunity be in a decent society? That means thinking a lot about vulnerability there again, because some forms of vulnerability like vulnerability to lost, death, are endemic to human life. If you try the stoics to shut off all sources of vulnerability, then you have an impoverished life. On the other hand, there are some forms of vulnerability like being hungry, being raped. Those are things no society should take lightly. They should stop

them or when they do occur, take them very very seriously and express the idea that all human beings ought to have the opportunity to live without those terrible violations. Sorting that all out is really what I've been doing in my capabilities approach to political philosophy, and thinking about the special vulnerability of certain marginalized groups: women, adults and children with disabilities, people who are aging. The new book I'm working on right now, I'm working on proofs now, and thinking about the lives of gays and lesbians in American society. All of these forms of structural injustice that need to be addressed, by law as well as by well intentions. That's the story. Of course, I don't know what you want to know about whatever you asked me? What would you really like to know about me?

Dr. Weber: When you were studying classics and you were leaning or learning more about philosophy, was there more about philosophy, was there something in particular which drew you most to philosophy? What was it about philosophy that hooked you? I like to ask.

Dr. Nussbaum: I thought it was all philosophy, like starting in high school, I was thinking about some of the same problems that I think about today, like: What is it to grieve for somebody you love? What should a good society make possible for women? And so on. I was writing papers and essays about that. Typically, in my school, which was a very fine all-women school, we didn't read works of philosophy. I think your people often do read philosophy in high school. It's a U.S. thing. We were reading novels, Henry James, Dickens and so on. I was suggesting these same things and thinking about literature, but the Greek tragedies and comedies seemed to me extremely rich in avenues of thinking about these things. Since I was also aspiring to be an actress, I did spend some time as a professional actress, I felt these emotions in my experience of performance. I think that had a particular power for me because when you play the role of the person whose country has been devastated, and who has been thrown into slavery, then you experience something about what that does to people that you might not get otherwise. This is part and parcel when I write about education, I always insist that the arts play a very central role in educating people for citizenship, because in a classroom, when you enact the role of Rosa Parks, who has to go to the back of the bus, you feel something that you might miss otherwise if you have a very privileged life. I myself had a very privileged life, so I had to experience exclusion and hardship through a theater.

Dr. Cashio: Great insight. Is that a role you played? What kind of roles do you remember playing?

Dr. Nussbaum: I played lots of roles. One particular one, which I played in ancient Greek and I'm about to play it this year in our law school, we're going to do it in English, is Hecuba in *The Trojan Women*. *The Trojan Women* is like a narrative about all the bad kinds of vulnerability that can happen to people, but of course women's additional and special vulnerability. There is losing people you love. That's pretty common, but then women can also be targets of rape in more times, they can be used as pawns and cast into slavery and all of these things. Men, one of the worst parts of the play is when a young child who is the future of the city, Hecuba's grandchild, is taken to be dashed from the walls of Troy, because they don't want that city coming back. That brutal event, when the child's body is brought in and is put down before Hecuba on a shield that was the father's shield, that scene where she mourns for her own grandchild and thinks about this and then announces the terrible brutality and the terrible injustice, that is certainly one of the most...experiences I have had as an actress.

Dr. Weber: That's powerful. Before we conclude this segment, I do want to ask you one of the big questions we like to ask in the first segment, which is: What does philosophy mean to you?

Now that we know a little more about you, what do you take philosophy to be? What would you tell people philosophy is?

Dr. Nussbaum: First of all, I want to try to not tell other people what to think it is. I think each person should come up with their own account of it. I don't like legislating for other people, and of course philosophy has so many different parts. If I had to talk about my own conception of what I do, I often come back to the Epicurean definition of philosophy. Epicurus said that philosophy is an intent to pursue the flourishing life by means of reasoning and argument. That's a pretty good characterization of what I feel I'm doing—pursuing the understanding of it but also pursuing through political activism, that kind of work that gives direction to activism, the implementation of it.

Dr. Weber: That's terrific. That's a lovely way—I really like the non-judgmental approach you take to explaining what philosophy is at least for yourself. That's nice.

Dr. Cashio: It's one of my favorite questions that we ask on this show because everyone has a beautifully different answer, which I think is really insightful.

Dr. Weber: We also like to ask, for some of the people who listen to this show via the radio before the podcast comes out, and so we have a very broad listenership. My question for you is: What do you suggest when you encounter someone who hasn't studied any philosophy before as a first text that can be really delightful to look at?

Dr. Nussbaum: I first need to know what their background was before and where they are coming from. That is why I think any curricular prescription for all the different colleges and universities in the U.S. is bound to be stupid because you have to ask who your students are. Students in the U.S. differ not so much in ability, but all people can do philosophy. Plato shows that when he has the slave boy in *Meno* who is illiterate and very oppressed doing philosophy. I think they differ greatly by age, by preparation, by what they have read before. I guess I think that one of the sure-fire things that pretty well works for almost everyone are Plato's dialogues. When people learn about the life of Socrates and what it meant for him to give his life for the chance to examine himself and other people, and when people have the enormous fun of dissecting those arguments in the early dialogues like *the Euthyphro*, *the Laches*, and so on, then they really get drawn into philosophy through the drama of it in a way that almost no other text manages to do.

Dr. Weber: That is a terrific place to start for people. We are so grateful to be talking with Dr. Martha Nussbaum on *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. This is Dr. Eric Weber with my colleague Dr. Anthony Cashio. Thanks everybody for listening, and we will be right back.

Dr. Cashio: Welcome back to *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. This is Dr. Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber and it is our great pleasure today to be speaking with Dr. Martha Nussbaum, author of the 2016 book *Anger and Forgiveness, Resentment, Generosity, Justice*. In this segment, we're going to focus on the concept of anger and in the next segment we're going to talk about forgiveness. That seems like a natural way to set that up. Martha, perhaps you could begin, we want to invite you to tell us how you came to write this book. What made you think about it?

Dr. Nussbaum: I've written a lot about other emotions. I have written about compassion, love. I have written a whole book on disgust. I had made remarks about anger, but I had never really

written at length about anger. When I got invited to give the John Lachs lectures in Oxford I thought about several topics. One was the fear of death. But I ended up thinking that that wouldn't be a good four or five-lecture series. Anger was a richer topic, especially combined with forgiveness. I chose the topic really before I knew what my views were going to be. It was just one of the fun things that in thinking about it, just sitting in one place and thinking, I came to feel that some of the casual things that I had said earlier were actually quite wrong. I had said that I thought that unlike disgust, anger was a constructive emotion, that it was valuable, and an ally in the pursuit of justice. But once I got down to it and really thinking, "How do we define anger?" I had a lot more problems with that stuff that I had said earlier.

I start with Aristotle's definition, which is a good place to start because pretty much all of the definitions in the western tradition follow Aristotle, but also Indian philosophy has very similar accounts. I don't know other non-western traditions, but I do know that in Indian traditions it's very similar...very similar definition to Aristotle's. What Aristotle says is that anger is a painful emotion. The response to the belief that someone else has seriously damaged someone or something that you care very much about, and that the damage wasn't just accidental but that it was wrongfully inflicted. That's just part of it but let me stop there. We have serious damage pertaining to something that you think is very important and then we have wrongfulness. Then he adds, and this is what everyone else also adds, that anger also has another part, which is a pleasant hope for payback or retribution. Initially, that might seem odd, because we might think that's not conceptually a part of what anger is, but the more I pursue this, and the more I thought about anger and not just in my personal life but in workplace and other more casual associations, and in the political life, I decided that basically, there's going to be one major exception, but basically Aristotle is right. People don't necessarily want to go out and take revenge themselves, but when they are angry, it does include the thought that "That person should pay for that." Pain should be inflicted, whether it's through the law, or divine justice, or indeed it could just be the wish that that person's life would go very badly in the future. People who get divorced often wish that the second marriage of the betraying spouse will turn out badly. I came to think that if we think about the wish for payback in that broad way, Aristotle is basically right. Most anger does contain that wish for payback. There is where I start being very critical of anger.

The problem is that payback doesn't achieve anything. People kind of think, and again, it's a kind of magical belief that is very common, very human, that it cancels out the harm that was done. You kill the murderer and that somehow balances out the murder. It doesn't! It doesn't bring the dead to life. The tragic poet Aeschylus says, "Once a man's blood is spilled upon the ground, what can call it back again?" We don't want to accept that. We don't want to mourn and grieve, we want to think that by inflicting proportional pain on the wrongdoer we can somehow right the balance in nature again. People think, "I have been betrayed. I have been humiliated, but if I litigate and I hit that person with a massive divorce settlement, then I've got my own back. He's had his comeuppance." This just doesn't really make sense in most cases. If you are worried about murder or rape or assault, you don't undo that by inflicting pain on the wrongdoer. Punishment sometimes does good. But then we have to ask: When does it do good? Why does it do good? Typically, I argue, punishment does good only when it fixes something in the future, not in the past. A painful punishment might deter other people from committing that kind of offence. It might deter that particular individual from committing another offence. Or, it might better yet reform that individual. That's the right way to think about the pain and punishment. Not the idea that it fixes that past.

Now we have one more thing that Aristotle says, which most later philosophers do not accept. That is that anger is a response not to any kind of wrongful damage, but only to the kind that he calls a 'down-ranking' or a status injury. His idea is that when you are angry, you are always thinking that I have been dissed. I have been put down in the social hierarchy. I don't think that's always true. That's often true but not always true. Later people don't include that in the definition. If we think of that case where we think that what we really want to do is adjust your own position in the zero-sum game in the social hierarchy. That's the one case where payback really achieves what you want. The real problem is not the murder or rape itself, but the way it has lowered you relative to other people in the social hierarchy. If we assume it's a linear social hierarchy, then by pushing that person relatively lower, you do automatically push yourself up relatively higher. Since we are imagining the relative status is all you care about, then you don't have to worry that the real problems created by the murder or by the whatever has not been solved. That case, which of course is very common, not just in honor cultures but in our own society, is the one case where payback really works. OK. Why not go in that direction? Because it's very narcissistic and it's very narrow. One of the ways we could think about this, which I later thought is a wonderful example, is the musical *Hamilton*, which I think is one of the great works of recent theater. It's all about the conscience between Aaron Burr, who sees everything in terms of relative status. The dueling culture is one about insults and status. Hamilton by contrast wants to actually create something and he wants his life to mean something intrinsically. Unfortunately he gets trapped into the status game because that is the game that society is living by and so he loses his life in the duel. The point is that status is the narrow way of thinking what's worthwhile. Burr is a very unpleasant character because that is all he cares about. He's very narcissistic. He wants to be in the room where it happens, and that wonderful actor, Justin made that such a compelling moment in theater, yet you see that there is something wrong with him. He just doesn't care about the things that really matter, about doing justice, creating a new nation and so on. That's the problem with status. You have a choice. One choice would be you care only about payback, but you're fixed on the real problem, the murder or rape, but then your concern with payback doesn't really make sense, or you focus only on relative status, which what you do would make sense, but your values are off. You're not really worrying about the things that really matter. Anger is very problematic.

Here comes the big exception. I said that anger first of all thinks about a wrongful action and about somebody inflicting it wrongfully. If we just stop there and we have a protest against a wrongful action and we drop the payback part of anger, then I think we are on the right track and we have what I call transition anger in which we turn around and we face to the future and we have an emotion whose entire content is how outrageous that is that must not happen again. In other words it's talking about how to fix a problem. You're protesting what's wrong, but we're turned towards the future and we're trying to fix the problem. That's what I think makes sense and that's what I favor. I think great political reformers like Martin Luther King Jr, who we can talk about more later, they see things the same way. What we want to do is think going forward about how we produce a society that does better than what the past has had in it. Typically, that doesn't go well with payback, because if you are just going to try to annihilate the people who oppressed you, usually that's not going to produce a kind of cooperation and work and hope that actually make a better society. Gandhi, Mandela and King all repudiate payback very very strongly and they repudiate that aspect of anger. But they strongly favor protest against injustice. That's where I stand too.

Dr. Weber: One of the things that's remarkable about your book is the potential insight we can take from it for rethinking how we massively over-incarcerate our citizenry. Coming back to one particular point that you raise in what you said, you brought up the issue of narcissism and that is very important in your book and what you're talking about. At the same time, the United States has just elected what many would call a textbook narcissist. My question is, for people who love this president, why should one say that narcissism is wrong?

Dr. Nussbaum: I guess the prior question is: What were the emotions in people that prompted them to choose this person? This is really the topic of the book I'm writing now, which is called *The Monarchy of Fear*. It's about the way that fear and a sense of powerlessness in fact perverts democracy. Actually, president Obama in his final speech, before he left the office, said that democracy can buckle if we give way to fear. That's really what I'm saying in the book, that there are real things to be worried about. Jobs, problems, automation, the outsourcing of jobs, the global economy. These are big problems and peoples' lives are actually not going well. The incomes of the lower middle class white population have stagnated. There is an outbreak of drug addiction and deaths from hopelessness that economist Agnes Deaton has chronicled. The health status of white middle class men has plummeted. These are real problems. People are feeling hopelessness and fear. Then, what next? The new insight I have got about anger is that when you operate out of a sense of hopelessness and fear and you don't know quite where to go, one thing that often happens is that you substitute scapegoating and blame for any constructive reaction to where you are. You can see this in lots of ways, thinking about Salem witch trials, where the witch hunters were young men on the verge of adulthood, not hysterical teenage girls, as it turns out. The real ones were young men who were economically uncertain, they didn't know how to live. They were in this dangerous place and they were terrified. But if we can just blame it all on a witch, then we can pretend that the real problem doesn't exist. That is what is happening a lot with the scapegoating of immigrants, and the scapegoating of women, who have 'taken our jobs' and so on.

People who operate in that way are easy prey for someone who can say to them, "Don't worry. I'll take care of you. I'll solve all of our problems." That's the monarchical aspect of fear, that it leads you to want to entrust yourself to this big grand old figure who will say, "I can solve all of your problems." It also leads you in the way I've described to want to be monarchical yourself by demonizing and oppressing other people who seem to be the scapegoats of your problems. It's this very complicated reaction and I'm trying to talk about how fear interweaves with anger and both with a kind of poisonous envy, so I wrote a chapter on envy, and how all of the emotions knit together with fear in the driver's seat in this particular instance. That is the primary thing. A person who is a narcissist, it may be, but not all monarchs are narcissists. The thing that made people entrust their lives to Trump is the claim that 'We are going to take care of you. America will be great again. Don't worry. We are going to do all of this. You will be great again.' Perhaps it was the very grandiosity of his personality that enabled him to make such grandiose claims because without having any policy, without having any constructive plans for how these things actually happen, the primary thing is that he assuages people's fear. He makes them feel taken care of and that's very dangerous because when people feel that way they are apt to surrender their own agency and that is incompatible with a healthy democracy.

Dr. Weber: That's a really good point for us to remember. We're going to take a short break and come back with *Philosophy Bakes Bread*, talking with Dr. Martha Nussbaum. This is Dr. Eric Weber with my co-host Dr. Anthony Cashio. Thanks everybody for listening. We'll be right back.

Dr. Cashio: Welcome back everyone. It is your privilege today to be listening to *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. This is Dr. Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber and it is our privilege today to be speaking with Dr. Martha Nussbaum. In the last segment we talked about anger, our problems with it, about how it played out in the political sphere. In this segment we are going to turn to another part of her most recent work *Anger and Forgiveness*, we are going to talk about forgiveness in ways of transitioning from unhealthy forms of anger to wiser ways of thinking and approaching our problems. So Martha. In your book, you note that forgiveness is a bit of a hot topic in politics and philosophy and popular culture in general. Yet you seem to think that the popular or classical way of thinking about forgiveness is problematic. Why do you think that forgiveness is such a popular topic right now and where does it fall short?

Dr. Nussbaum: People want an alternative to anger and violence. That's good that they should look for alternatives, but in fact, if you start looking at the concept of forgiveness, there is more than one concept. If you look at the central one in Judeo-Christian traditions, there are some real problems within. It doesn't give us what we need. Typically, forgiveness is a relation between humans that is modeled on a very asymmetrical relationship between God and humans. That's the first thing to say, that we have to ask if it's suitable to take this hierarchical and asymmetrical model and transfer it to human relations. In a religious conception, the typical idea is that the human comes before God and says, "I have sinned", confesses, and then abases him or herself. I look at all of the steps before you can get forgiveness. You have to abase yourself and say, "I am frail, I am mortal, and I'm going to promise you I am changing, and I'm not going to do it again." We will leave this religious part aside. As a religious Jew, I do not think that this is an appropriate conception of how one should relate to any God that I would care about, but that's a different issue. Thinking about humans, the problematic thing is that it's all too much like another side of anger. Imagine you are a betrayed spouse and you say, "Abase yourself before me, and you say 'what a wretched person I am. I'm never going to do that again.'" And then, in due course, if I'm convinced, I might possibly wave my angry feelings to you." To me, that's continuing on in anger. It's extracting a performance of humiliation, which is not a very pleasant performance as a condition of waving angry feelings that perhaps you shouldn't have had in the first place. That's what I call transactional or conditional forgiveness.

Then there is another kind which appears in some Rabbinic texts in Judaism and also in the gospels quite frequently, which is unconditional forgiveness, which is without any pre-condition you just remit. You say I'm waving my angry feelings. That's a lot better, because it doesn't have this unpleasant extraction aspect. It might still be asked, "Why did you have the angry feelings in the first place?" If they are full-fledged anger-seeking payback. Also, there is a whiff of moral superiority in a lot of instances of that. You are still standing above the person looking down, saying, "I will bestow my grace." St. Paul even says, "Forgive them unconditionally. In so doing, you will heap coals of fire upon their head." That's very unpleasant. Why do people forgive in that rather smug sphere? I don't like that. What I like is unconditional love and generosity. I look at the parable of the prodigal son, where the father doesn't know what the son is going to do. Is the son going to apologize? Is he going to change his life? The first thing he does is that he runs to him with a deep stirring of strong emotion and he embraces him. The love comes first and the reform, probably will follow later. He will give him advice and so forth. But if you lead with love, I think that's much superior.

Back to the political people. Martin Luther King Jr. emphasized this all of the time. He said by love I don't mean you have to lament the enemies. You don't have to like them, even. But I mean this unconditional generosity of spirit and of goodwill toward them. If you start with that, then it's much easier to form a partnership where you can ask people to work with you to change things. That was something that Mandela did instinctively. He just was a real generous person. Everyone who knew him thought, "What an amazingly open and generous person." He thought first, "How shall I make a good working relationship with the person?" Typically, he made the first move through love and generosity and the person typically responds to that and forms a relationship. That's what I would prefer and it often works in political life and certainly in personal life, it works very well. That doesn't mean letting go of accountability. One of the things you will do when you are working with people to make things better is to say very clearly that racism is wrong. We're going to go beyond that, we're going to repudiate that. In the case of South Africa, a new country has to have a very clear understanding of what is just and what is unjust where we express our values and repudiate the bad values of the past done in a future directed spirit. It's not done in a way of exacting a penance from people. Actually, there was a difference between Mandela and Desmond Tutu. Tutu, as you can see in his book *No Future without Forgiveness*, he does personally train the truth and reconciliation commission in an exercise in Christian forgiveness where there is confession and humiliation and so on. Mandela never uses, to my knowledge, the word forgiveness. He's all about reconciliation, moving forward, justice and so on. Even Tutu, by now, has come around to seeing that reconciliation can be better achieved...he has a new book with his daughter about how families trapped in sexual violence can reconcile. He moves beyond this Christian forgiveness paradigm to a much more reconciliation and generosity oriented paradigm. I think it's very interesting that he's done that.

Dr. Weber: Terrific. In your book, speaking of forgiveness, obviously, you raise the example of the tragic murders in Charleston, South Carolina, at the AME Church and the African-American family members of the victims famously forgave their loved ones' racist killer, Dylan Roof. When they did so, is it not reasonable to call their forgiveness heroic? It seems as though this is a forgiveness that reaches beyond what you might usually expect of people. The question then becomes, would you say that your view calls for a heroism in terms of that kind of virtue, or is that expectation realistic? Or is this just a very special example of the kind of think we should strive for?

Dr. Nussbaum: The first question is: What, in terms of my three attitudes—transactional forgiveness, unconditional forgiveness, and unconditional love—what were they doing? They used the word forgiveness, but it certainly didn't have this air of...it wasn't transactional. They weren't demanding anything of him. It wasn't even quite like unconditional forgiveness, because they didn't say that they were so superior. In fact they acknowledged that they were struggling. It was more like my generosity model, although each case is a little bit different. This is heroic. Now of course you would not want them to give up, nor did they give up the idea that what he did was terribly wrong and that there should be an acknowledgement in the public culture that what he did was terribly wrong. No matter whether you believe in this sort of punishment or that sort of punishment, you should be in favor of some legal acknowledgement through the system of punishment that this was terribly wrong, must be deterred, must not be repeated. I feel like their forgiveness is not incompatible with that. When they later came back and talked at the trial, it was perfectly clear that they thought that he should be convicted, there should be a public expression that this is terribly wrong and it should not be repeated. It also shouldn't negate grief. Some of the people that I talk about, including Gandhi, was a total stoic and he

thought that you should get rid of grief as well as all of these other emotions like anger. No, I don't go there. Actually, King was very big on grief, because as in his wonderful speech about the little girls who got murdered, he urged the public to join in grieving because it is important to reinforce the thought that this is terrible, that what has happened is terrible and their lives have been lost and this is tragic. I don't think that the people in South Carolina were diverging from that model. They were grieving deeply and they were saying that this was terribly wrong. But what they didn't have was the vindictive thought that somehow reaping their vengeance on this one man would be a way of fixing what had happened. That is the magical thinking that I criticize in the book.

In the book I tell the story of Michael Jordan, who was once asked on TV about the murder of his father, if they caught the man who killed your father, wouldn't you want him to be...I think they even say, "Would you want them to have capital punishment?" Jordan just looked a little puzzled and said, "You know, that wouldn't bring him back." I thought Wow. Three cheers for him. Someone who is as secure in his masculinity as a big-time athlete in our country could own up to not being vindictive, not wanting to fry that person. I thought that that is the right attitude, wanting to say that the murder is wrong but not thinking that in some way or any way will be fixed by tormenting the abuser.

Dr. Weber: In other words, this is a good set of examples of forgiveness. But it doesn't seem like you think this is heroic in the sense of being beyond what we should expect of people?

Dr. Nussbaum: I think what is crucial is that you need help, and you need leaders in the community. They did of course have the church community to channel the understandable anger with the payback wishes that arise at such a time. King coined the word 'channelize'. You have to channelize this anger into the direction of some constructive future-directed approach. What always is needed is to give people something to do that would actually be useful. One thing in that case that we don't know about those people is whether their pastor gave them any useful political action to take. One good example of a useful turn to the future is the Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Those mothers probably wanted all kinds of payback for the people who caused their children to be killed. But instead they joined in a very constructive and useful political campaign to have deterrent punishments for drunk driving, to have these things like you can't start your car unless you breathe through a breathalyzer if you have a record of DUI. These are constructive steps that have by now greatly reduced the instance of drunk driving. That was the useful thing to do. Nothing heroic about that. It's a way of using your pain in a constructive way for the good of the future.

Dr. Cashio: That's a great example.

Dr. Weber: That is a great example and a perfect moment for us to say that we are going to come back after a very short break with one last segment with Dr. Nussbaum. This is Eric Weber and my co-host Anthony Cashio with you on *Philosophy Bakes Bread*.

Dr. Cashio: Welcome back everyone to *Philosophy Bakes Bread*. This is Dr. Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber and we have been talking this afternoon with Dr. Martha Nussbaum. In this last little segment we're going to have some big-picture questions, some lighthearted thoughts, and we'll end with a pressing philosophical question for you our listeners, as well as info on how to get a hold of us.

Dr. Weber: Right now, Martha, we're witnessing a lot of political anger in the United States and abroad as well. In your book you consider the case of South Africa, which underwent a transformational truth and reconciliation effort. I lived for nine years in Mississippi and often wondered what the potential might be for the state or the United States to undergo a reconciliation effort here for the American original sin of slavery and the incredible resistance to progress and civil rights and so forth. Many such ideas seem very unrealistic. I wonder what you think might be the prospects of reconciliation efforts here, given the challenges we face in the United States.

Dr. Nussbaum: Notice what they did and what they didn't do. They did not hold criminal trials. The truth and reconciliation commission was predicated on some thoughts about why it would not be a good idea to hold criminal trials, namely, the whites that are overwhelmingly privileged and wealthy, so they would lawyer up and they would be able to get off scot-free. We would never get the truth. So they decided that the truthful acknowledgement of whatever happened was preferable to criminal trials. In the United States we have not proceeded that way because our situation is different. There have been very powerful legal organizations from the very beginning: The ACLU and great lawyers like Thurgood Marshall fighting for legal justice for African Americans who have been falsely accused and also fighting the struggle on the front of constitutional law. That whole story of gradual incremental, often halting progress through litigation is our story. It's not one big commission. It doesn't necessarily give you the closure in a sense of "Oh, now we got all of the truth out there, now we have reconciliation." It has that downside, like we think there is still more to be learned. It was only a month ago where we had an essential witness about Emmett Till coming forth and saying that "I lied on the stand." We haven't got as much truth as we need, but we are getting it. I think we are wise to trust the law. There was dispute about that. There were leaders like Malcolm X that thought that the slow, individualistic course of legal justice was too gradual, too slow. They wanted a much more confrontational and perhaps violent thing to happen.

King was proven right and that the law and non-anger go together in the sense that if you are non-angry and you want to change things and you have a legal system that is flawed that you can work with it...South Africa didn't because they had to write a totally new constitution. That is a good way of doing it. We have to keep on doing it. Unfortunately it is an ongoing work. It is incomplete and it doesn't achieve reconciliation because it doesn't fix all problems. It doesn't fix educational problems, it doesn't fix economic problems. The work of legal justice has to be complemented by an imaginative and committed approach to those terribly unequal situations in which white and black live in this country. Unfortunately it's not like...In India, Hindus and Muslims live side by side, so you could at least hope that you could move forward in neighborhoods and in communities to produce reconciliation although it doesn't always happen. In the United States our problem is the de facto segregation of housing is so complete in a city like Chicago. Not in my own little segment of Hyde Park, which is really pretty integrated, but almost everywhere else blacks and whites don't see each other, they don't know each other. It's much harder for the reconciliation part to be achieved. When you think about other civil rights movements, the movement for justice for children with disabilities can be addressed by mainstreaming those children in public school classrooms because children with disabilities crop up in every family across the economic spectrum. You can address issues of gays and lesbians by this kind of children coming out to one another in schools and to their parents and their families because gay and lesbian kids exist in every family across the economic spectrum.

Race is different because races are separate in our country. We don't see one another, we don't get to know one another, and it's much harder for this kind of reconciliation to occur. I do feel like it's striking that we have made great strides on those other two issues rapidly, but we have not made nearly as much progress on race. The philosopher Elizabeth Anderson, I don't know if you have interviewed her, but her wonderful book *The Imperative of Integration...*

Dr. Weber: She just agreed to give an interview!

Dr. Nussbaum: I think she is absolutely right for our case and that is that integration of housing and schooling is absolutely crucial to the success of racial reconciliation. But we are not making much progress in that respect and so we really just have to redouble our efforts and produce better schools, more integrated schools, and of course redouble our efforts in affirmative action. We can still do it in private universities where we do try really hard to produce African-American lawyers, African American philosophers, but that's more optional, I think, in the sense that African-American families typically want their children to do something that leads to an income and a job and not necessarily love philosophy. Lawyers we produce. Law firms are picking up their side of the burden and they are really making room for African American associates, we hope that they will then promote them to partner. That is yet unclear. My students of color are wonderful students and they are taking their place in the law firm world. It's very difficult to convince any of them to become law academics because they have opportunities that bring in more income than that. To integrate the society you really have to integrate the professions and the graduate schools and the universities. Those are still things we can do because the ban on affirmative action that the supreme court unfortunately enacted in 2007 in *Parents Involved*, that applies to public education and to particularly in that case, elementary education. Our hands are tied in a way, in pursuing Liz Anderson's assignment for us. Let's hope that we can still work on the fronts that we can still work on, and try to produce more and more integration in our society.

Dr. Cashio: Martha, I think you have already answered this question, but it's a question that we ask all of our guests. It comes from the inspiration for the show. Would you say that philosophy bakes no bread, as the saying goes? Or does it bake bread? Is there some use for philosophy in the world? I think you've demonstrated it to some extent. I'm just curious to see what you say.

Dr. Nussbaum: I think there is lots of good philosophy that is just fine without having a practical payoff. I want to first say that. I don't think every philosopher do that, but I do think that philosophy contributes a lot to making progress on local problems. The work I've done and the capabilities that we didn't talk about but maybe another time we will, that does make progress in getting the World Bank and other agencies to think differently about what well-being is. I think on issues like race and other issues of social justice, philosophy has a lot to offer. Increasingly, philosophers are willing to take up that challenge. Philosophers have to write well. I keep harping on this to my graduate students because if you're going to make a difference, you have to write in a way that grips readers and draws them in. Leif Wenar was just here on our campus and I think his wonderful book *Blood Royal* gets my good writing prize because he has found a way of writing that addresses the general public about issues of what's called the resource curse, the monopoly of diamonds and oil by brutal dictators and he does this with humor, with mystery, with very clever examples, and the writing is just wonderful. Not that everyone should imitate Leif Wenar, but they should find their own way. My way is different; it's more lyrical perhaps. In any case, you have to do it or else no one is going to care.

Dr. Cashio: There you go. Write well.

Dr. Weber: On this show we like to make sure people see the serious side and the lighter side of philosophy, so we have a segment we call 'philosophunnies'.

Dr. Weber: Say 'philosophunnies'

Sam: Philosophunnies!

(laughter)

Dr. Weber: Say 'philosophunnies'

Sam: Philosophunnies!

(child's laughter)

Dr. Weber: For today's episode, we are very fortunate that in your book there are a few funny stories to pick from. Here is just a passage that sets the scene, and then I have a question for you about that. You write, "Sometimes our associates are irritating in chronic ways and we don't have the option of not associating with them. Indeed, since good comedy is usually based on character, there is more good comedy to be made in what we call the middle of the middle, that is, neither deep intimacy nor casual interactions with strangers than in the more casual domain. The workplace is not very intimate, but in it we pursue some of the most important projects of our lives. It's an odd place. You don't have any reason to trust your colleagues with your life, and yet in a real sense you have to.

Dr. Cashio: That explains the TV show *The Office* to a T.

Dr. Weber: You mention a person who is marvelous, brilliant, full of good will, yet who can be a big baby and talks all the time. If you would, tell us a little bit about that story or another. Whichever you like. Do you have a story you wouldn't mind telling us?

Dr. Nussbaum: I had four people and they are all pretty recognizable, the people that know them. This one was a puzzle because it was a person of great achievement and genuine good will and good humor, but a kind of childish inability to recognize when they should just shut up. What we do to prevent that person from dominating the conversation at our communal workshops in order to let younger people talk and so on... I tell the story of one dean who had the idea of scheduling this person's classes in such a way that he finish class...the class slot ended at five past 12, so by the time he got to that workshop it would be 12:15 and therefore he could not set the topic. The topic would already be under way, and so if he did jump in it wouldn't be as restricted as if otherwise. I have to say this is not such a great problem because the nice thing about this person is that if you just say, "Oh shut up X" in a friendly way, he just smiles and does it. He's kind of a nice narcissistic child.

Dr. Cashio: One of the rare narcissistic children huh? Last but not least, we do like to take advantage of the fact that we have powerful social media that allow 2-way communications for programs like radio shows. We want to invite our listeners to send us questions and thoughts that we've raised on this show. We've raised a lot of big questions this episode.

Dr. Weber: We would love to know if you have a question that you would pose for our listeners.

Dr. Nussbaum: I would love to know people's own views about our current political moment, in the sense of, what are, in your view, the emotions that are driving the unrest and panic that we see. Not only in the people who became Trump supporters, but also on the left, in my students, because there is a high level of panic about our country. What is that all about and how could we address it so that we all can move forward and find more cooperative ways of relating to one another?

Dr. Cashio: That's a good question. Thank you everyone for listening to *Philosophy Bakes Bread*, food for thought about life and leadership. Your hosts, Dr. Anthony Cashio and Dr. Eric Weber are so grateful to have been joined today by Dr. Martha Nussbaum. What a special episode this was. Consider sending us your thoughts about what you heard today or what you would like to hear about in the future, or about the questions we've raised for you on the show, especially Martha's question. What are some of the emotions people are feeling that are driving this current political climate? She talked earlier in this episode about fear, there's definitely a lot of anger, especially that payback tied into there. I would love to hear, along with Eric and Martha, what you guys think.

Dr. Weber: Once again, you can reach us in a number of ways. We're on twitter @PhilosophyBB, which stands for Philosophy Bakes Bread. We're also on Facebook at Philosophy Bakes Bread, and check out SOPHIA's Facebook page while you're there, at Philosophers in America.

Dr. Cashio: You can of course, email us at philosophybakesbread@gmail.com, and you can also call us and leave a short recorded message with a question or a comment that we may be able to play on the show, reach us at 859-257-1849. That's 859-257-1849. Join us again next time on *Philosophy Bakes Bread*: food for thought about life and leadership.

[Outro music]