***Nussbaum, New Religious Intolerance, pp. 1-58***

1. Introduction - Few words about Nussbaum, referring to “Introduction”

***Chapter 1***

1. What is your reaction to the brief history on the opening two pages? Surprise? Informed agreement?
2. What is the “Socratic approach” to toleration? Explain your own words:
   1. Political principles expressing respect for all
   2. Rigorous critical thinking that looks for inconsistencies, esp. making an exception of oneself
   3. Cultivating “inner eye” – seeing how things look to people of another faith or ethnicity

*Bear the essentials of the Socratic approach in mind, since Nussbaum will argue on p. 96 that we need the approach if we are to implement accommodationist and Lockean approaches to religious freedom.*

1. Explain the cases that raise questions about just how tolerant Europe and America are. What do you think about the cases?
2. Distinguish and explain two ideas of national identity.

* 1. Give examples of each. (HINT: walk through the examples of Finland vs. India and the US which are discussed on pp. 13ff.) Explain how each is transmitted to citizens.
  2. For another and briefer discussion of the contrast, read [this interview](http://www.pbs.org/jefferson/archives/interviews/Will.htm) with columnist George Will about Thomas Jefferson. The relevant part is Will’s response to the observation “And yet there seems to be almost a spiritual devotion to his ideas and to him.”
  3. Is there something attractive about the “European” view of national identity? If so, what is it?

*Note that Nussbaum will. return to this topic at pp. 94-95.*

1. On p. 19, Nussbaum refers to the upsurge of “religious fear” in the US.
   1. Do you think that fear underlies or exacerbates the reactions to Islam that Nussbaum has discussed in this chapter? If so, what is the object of the fear? What, exactly, are people afraid of?
   2. Does fear of some kind, even if not religious fear, animate the immigration debate in the US? To get some ideas, consider the [testimony on immigration policy](http://judiciary.house.gov/_cache/files/3f5d0b44-bb28-493a-9412-050d19e6dc9d/babeu-testimony.pdf) given two months ago to the House Judiciary committee by Arizona sheriff Paul Babreu.

***Chapter 2***

1. What is “The Rabbi’s Speech”? What are the “Protocols”? How do these examples help us understand fear? How about *Fatal Attraction* and *Body Snatchers*?
   1. The essentials of fear – explain each giving examples:
      1. Fear starts from a real problem
      2. Fear is easily displaced
      3. Fear is nourished by the idea of a disguised enemy – other side of same coin: person who is aware of the hidden enemy (viewer of film, reader) enjoys superiority
   2. Is Nussbaum correct to suggest on p. 27 that fear of a snake has been displaced onto people when they are described as in some way serpentine, so that description of disliked group exploits our natural fear?
   3. What do you think of Nussbaum’s suggestion on p. 27 that the *Protocols* make use of the fact that fear and the startle reaction work together? Is she insightful or stretching to make a point?
2. The title of this chapter is “Fear: A Narcissistic Emotion”.
   1. What does Nussbaum mean by that? (HINT: see remark about the need for sympathy (p. 28)
   2. Aren’t all emotions narcissistic? If so, what is special about fear?
3. Interesting point on pp. 27, 29 – evolution has not prepared us well for decisions we need to make. How does Nussbaum think reflection and critical distance will help? (see pp. 32ff.) Do you think she is right?
4. Is Nussbaum correct to suggest at p. 30 that fear is associated with loss of control, and that we especially fear things which puncture our illusion of control or self-sufficiency?
   1. Are we made anxious or fearful by people who are in a dependent condition, such as the elderly, infirm or poor? If so, does Nussbaum’s suggestion help us to understand that?
   2. Pope Francis has said that the poor bring us closer to God by reminding us that we are all – as they are most obviously – dependent.
      1. Is the Pope right about that?

* + 1. Is there, as Nussbaum’s suggestion seems to imply, a natural fear that has to be overcome if we are to learn what the Pope thinks we should from encounters with the poor? What has to happen to us in order for us to overcome it?

1. What are the following contributors to fear and exactly how do they contribute?
   1. Availability heuristic – can you come up with other examples? Why is this relevant to MN’s argument?
   2. Cascades – can you come up with other examples of this?
   3. Anxiety about animal bodies, disgust (pp. 35ff.) – Do you find MN’s examples persuasive or contrived? Is she correct to suggest at p. 38 that covering, as by a veil, plays into this anxiety?
2. Is airport profiling rational/OK?
3. Consider Switzerland’s anti-minaret campaign:
   1. On pp. 48, 61, Nussbaum refers to “necessary immigration”. Why does she think it is necessary? Is she right?
   2. What are the Swiss afraid of? Is it rational for them to fear what they do?
4. Pp. 51-52 – shows that anti-Islamic fear-mongering follows pattern of fear-mongering vs. the Jews. How does it help Nussbaum’s argument that she is able to show a pattern
5. Note the interesting discussion of Iris Murdoch on selfishness and fear at p. 57. Do you agree with Murdoch? Why or why not?