

# [Not for profit](https://assignbuster.com/not-for-profit/)

[Art & Culture](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/art-n-culture/)

Erin Powell Dr. Donald Roy PS 101 September 29, 2012 Martha Nussbaum: “ Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities” Martha C. Nussbaum is the author of the book, “ Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities. ” The book begins by drawing the reader’s attention by explaining the “ Silent Crisis. ” She describeseducationin the eyes of the government, and in the eyes of the people. There is a connection made between education and the liberal arts. The title of the book, “ Not For Profit,” are three simple words that when put together, have a deep meaning.

In this case, Nussbaum is using the phrase to relate to education. The government sees education as a way to further our economic situation. Statistics say that a student that attends college will earn a great deal more than a student that has not attended college. When people earn moremoney, they usually spend more money. This stimulates our economy, and is the goal of the government. Government aims to use education as a tool to better our economy, yet they continually decrease the amount of money they give to public schools each year.

They take out the true classes that give a person their true identity. It seems as if people are slowly becoming uniform, in being that liberal arts are being taken away, and students are left to studying simply the core classes of what they call “ education”. Martha is trying to explain that our education is not for profit! Education is supposed to let people explore different skills and talents. There is a difference between education for profit, and education for citizenship. Education is intended to enhance the lives of the students which receive it. Nussbaum 9). Martha quoted the Universal Declaration ofHuman Rights, 1948, which said: Education shall be directed to the full development of the humanpersonalityand to the strengthening of therespectfor human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance andfriendshipamong all nations, racial or religious groups. I couldn’t agree more with this quote. This should be the true meaning and importance of education, not for the greediness of the government to use it for profit. Democracy truly needs the humanities.

Liberal arts supplement education in making it better-rounded. Without the arts and humanities, we become the government’s puppets, only being used to increase the economy. Liberal arts have been a part of education for quite some time. However, they have never truly been an important part of education according to government standards. What are important to them are the four core subjects: math, science, social studies, and language arts. Martha Nussbaum seems to disagree. To her, the liberal arts are the parts of education that make each student an individual.

It gives them their creativity, and it teaches their brains to think critically and analytically, rather than being confined to a box dictated by the core subjects. These ways of thinking are very valuable. They set apart each person, giving them their true identity. Liberal arts teach people to think for themselves. Without them people will rely on the government to do the thinking, and the government will no longer truly represent its people. The Socratic Way defines the way in which students “ think and argue for themselves, rather than defer to tradition and authority,“ and is “ valuable for democracy. (Nussbaum 48). In terms of education this is important because thinking for oneself leads tocritical thinking. Critical thinking causes students to also think analytically; therefore they get a better understanding of their material. Democracy is rule of the people. If the people cannot “ think and argue for themselves,” then how can they rule their country? It would be difficult to choose representatives if the people could not make their own decisions. Also in the business world as well, it would be difficult to get anything accomplished.

Tradition and authority have been important in history. However, Nussbaum does not seem to agree with them. When everything just goes by tradition, nothing is being changed. Things just happen the way they have always happened. Authority tends to stay similar as well. This is because people just go with the flow. They tend to not think for themselves, but instead make decisions based on tradition. Martha Nussbaum is a liberal; when things need to be changed, they should be changed, and I completely agree.

We cannot live according to tradition, because there might be a critical thinker or two in this world whom can discover a better or more efficient way to do things. If we are to improve at all in our lifetimes, living by tradition is not going to accomplish the goal. In this world there are Americans, Europeans, Australians, Mexicans, etc. However divided, we still affect each other. We borrow, buy, and sell from other countries, as well as become allies or enemies. Martha describes a “ world citizen” in her book.

This means that despite our geographical and cultural differences, we should put these aside to work together. “ The world’s schools, colleges, and universities therefore have the important and urgent task: to cultivate in students the ability to see themselves as members of a heterogeneous nation, and a still more heterogeneous world, and to understand something of the history and character of the diverse groups that inhabit it. ” (Nussbaum 80. ) The idea of becoming a “ world citizen” is wildly idealistic. There are so many people in this world that just cannot accept others.

Power is a huge part of it, being that people want to be in charge. Some don’t want to be considered equal; they believe that some people are superior to others. It would take a humungous amount of effort to convince everyone on the planet to become a “ world citizen. ” Play is important in the lives of all people, but especially children as they begin to develop. Nussbaum talks about play in Chapter 6. It is essential to play in order to understand the value and worth of other people. Children’s stories and nursery rhymes cause children to put themselves in the shoes of another person.

Therefore they learn that other human beings have feelings also, which helps children with a healthy development. It’s this healthy development in which play causes that Nussbaum believes is so important. As children grow into adults, however, they don’t necessarily “ play. ” They have “ left behind the world of children’s games. ” (Nussbaum 101). Therefore the arts become important. Whether it’smusic, singing, painting, photography, etc. , the arts put people, fictionally, into the shoes of others. In doing this, people continue to grow in their concern for other human beings.

As Martha describes our current situation, democratic education is truly “ on the ropes. ” Chapter seven talks about why this is true. Our economy is not doing so well. Every day our country goes further and further in debt. Apparently to our government, education is not very important, so they continue to make cut after cut of school funding. When the schools receive less money they have to make cuts on their spending. The humanities are always first to be reduced or eliminated. But when humanities, an important factor of a democratic education, are taken away we are certainly “ on the ropes”!

Without the humanities, schools cannot fully give students a democratic education. So what can we do about it? Nussbaum mentioned the alumni of schools. She claimed that some of them will send money or grants to their previous schools to help fund the humanities and liberal arts which they enjoyed having while they were in school. However, this cannot fund all parts of every program. Even in the core-subject classroom, we can encourage critical thinking. However, class sizes would have to be downsized. Schools would have to hire more teachers. Finances would obviously have to come from somewhere.

But in decreasing the amount of students in each classroom, it is easier for theteacherto focus on their students rather than primarily on the material. Smaller groups of students also make it easier to have classroom discussions where all students can participate and think outside the box. Humanities and liberal arts are clearly important to Martha Nussbaum. They should be important to everyone, and I wish they were. This world would be a better place if education was taught around the arts, rather than the arts simply being an elective, or being eliminated due to funding cuts.

I enjoy being able to think for myself and I’m sure all people do. Our government is not perfect, and there never will be a perfect government. We can’t rely on tradition to continue governing this country; we have to make changes in order for the government to best represent the people and to make good decisions. Neither can we submit to the authority, just because it’s there. If we don’t agree with something we have to have the audacity to stand up for what we believe in and never give up. Profits shouldn’t be the main influence for education, nor should it control how we educate our future generations.

Instead we should focus on developing people as individuals, rather than people as money-makers. We all have feelings, and everyone deep down wants to feel important and competent. Simply ignoring our feelings is not an option. Drew Faust says it best, “ Human beings need meaning, understanding, and perspective as well as jobs. The question should not be whether we can afford to believe in such purposes in these times, but whether we can afford not to. ” (Nussbaum 124). Mistakes are made when we question whether or not to keep humanities in education. It’s obvious that democratic education needs the humanities.