In this collection of essays Onora O’Neill explores and argues for an account of justice that is fundamentally cosmopolitan rather than civic, yet takes serious account of institutions and boundaries, and of human diversity and vulnerability. Starting from conceptions that are central to any account of justice – those of reason, action, judgement, coercion, obligations and rights – she discusses whether and how culturally or politically specific concepts and views, which limit the claims and scope of justice, can be avoided. She then examines the demands and scope of just institutions, arguing that there are good reasons for taking the claims of distant strangers seriously, but that doing so points not to a world without boundaries but to one of porous boundaries and dispersed power. *Bounds of Justice* will be of interest to a wide range of readers in philosophy, politics and international relations.

Onora O’Neill is Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge. She has written widely on ethics and political philosophy, and her most recent books include *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant’s Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 1989) and *Towards Justice and Virtue: A Constructive Account of Practical Reasoning* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).
BOUNDS OF JUSTICE

ONORA O’NEILL

Newnham College, Cambridge
For Martin Hollis
1939–1996
with happy memories of good conversations about reason,
justice and everything else
## Contents

*Preface*  
Preface ix

Introduction 1

**PART I: PHILOSOPHICAL BOUNDS OF JUSTICE**

1 Four models of practical reasoning 11
2 Agency and autonomy 29
3 Principles, practical judgement and institutions 50
4 Kant’s justice and Kantian justice 65
5 Which are the offers *you* can’t refuse? 81
6 Women’s rights: whose obligations? 97

**PART II: POLITICAL BOUNDS OF JUSTICE**

7 Transnational economic justice 115
8 Justice, gender and international boundaries 143
9 Identities, boundaries and states 168
10 Distant strangers, moral standing and porous boundaries 186

*Bibliography* 203
*Index* 214
I hardly know where to begin in stating my debts and my gratitude to those who have helped with this work. Throughout the 1990s I was helped by numerous audiences, colleagues, pupils and friends. A long list of names would trivialize what I owe in an enterprise that is necessarily in many ways collective. All I can do is to state my warm thanks. The dedication calls to mind one particular, long-standing and much-missed philosophical conversation and friendship from which I constantly learnt.