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## Martha Nussbaum's Humanism and Posthumanism

**Annotation:** Author focuses on Nussbaum's theory of human development and especially her capabilities approach (CA). The approach includes the basic human capabilities establishing fundamentals of the human development. The core values of the CA are human dignity and freedom, however, a very important part of the approach are also our relations to animals, plants, and nature. According to Nussbaum, it is necessary to keep in mind that dignity does not concern only human beings, but also animals. For this reason, she argues for plurality of forms of life as well as plurality of dignities. Nussbaum affirms that we have a duty to establish possibilities for positive development of any rational animals including non-human animals.

**Keywords** Martha C. Nussbaum, emotions, human development, human flourishing, non-human animals.

### Humanizm i Posthumanizm Marty Nussbaum

**Streszczenie:** Autorka skupia się na teorii rozwoju człowieka Marty Nussbaum, a zwłaszcza na podejściu do zdolności (PZ). Podejście to obejmuje podstawowe zdolności ludzkie, ustanawiające podstawy rozwoju człowieka. Podstawowymi wartościami PZ są godność człowieka i wolność, jednak bardzo ważną częścią tego podejścia są również nasze relacje ze zwierzętami, roślinami i przyrodą. Według Nussbaum należy pamiętać, że godność dotyczy nie tylko ludzi, ale także zwierząt. Z tego powodu opowiada się ona za mnogością form życia, jak również wielością godności. Nussbaum potwierdza, że mamy obowiązek stworzyć możliwości pozytywnego rozwoju wszelkich racjonalnych zwierząt, w tym zwierząt innych niż ludzie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Martha C. Nussbaum, emocje, rozwój człowieka, kwitnienie ludzi, zwierzęta inne niż ludzie.

### Гуманизм и постгуманизм Марты Нуссбаум

**Аннотация:** Автор сосредотачивается на теории человеческого развития Марты Нуссбаум и особенно его подходе к возможностям (ПВ). Подход включает в себя ос-

новые человеческие возможности, устанавливающие основы человеческого развития. Основными ценностями ПВ являются человеческое достоинство и свобода, однако очень важной частью подхода являются также наши отношения с животными, растениями и природой. По словам Нуссбаума, необходимо помнить, что достоинство касается не только людей, но и животных. По этой причине она выступает за множественность форм жизни, а также за множественность достоинств. Нуссбаум подтверждает, что мы обязаны создать возможности для позитивного развития любых рациональных животных, в том числе животных, не являющихся людьми.

**Ключевые слова:** Марта С. Нуссбаум, эмоции, развитие человека, процветание человека, нечеловеческие животные.

### Introduction

Human development is one of the noble goals of almost whole human history and sustainable development is a very important aim especially of the last decades. There are many ideas, theories and approaches how to reach these goals of humans as well as sustainable development. We can mention the ancient theories of human flourishing from times of classical ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, through the Middle Ages and St Aquinas's ideas, modern theories, for example of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Marx's total human development through fulfilling human needs or John Stuart Mill's ideas of art of living of human individuals and many others. The 20<sup>th</sup> century offered to us the two great social experiments; however, they were connected with totalitarian regimes and awful consequences for humankind following from their ideologies (fascism and „communism“).

A turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries offers to us on the one hand the new ideas how to go on with human development and on the other hand, how to keep a development to be a sustainable. One of the significant contemporary theories is Martha Craven Nussbaum's theory of human development based on the capabilities approach (Nussbaum, 1995, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2013, 2016). Nussbaum, following Amartya Sen, defines capability as the opportunity to achieve plans and goals of a human being has reason to value in its human development. Nussbaum specifies what she sees as the most significant capabilities in a list of ten aims to be regarded as a set of suggestions on which governments and institutions can act, depending on their level of growth, culture and history. Whilst there should be limited ideas for each capability, these ideas are necessarily not clear as they will be context dependent<sup>1</sup>. The aim of the article is to present a short outline of Nussbaum's capabilities approach and analyse the meaning of emotions in human development.

### Capabilities approach and theory of emotions

Nussbaum's capabilities approach includes mental states which mean being able to have connections to things and people outside ourselves and in their means of human development; to like very much those who love and take care for us, to

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<sup>1</sup> Hedge, N., and MacKenzie, A. (2012), *Putting Nussbaum's Capability Approach to work: re-visiting inclusion*, „Cambridge Journal of Education“, Vol. 42 No. 3, p. 331.

mourn at their absence; generally, to love, to mourn, to experience longing, gratefulness, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety. To support these capabilities means support various forms of human association that can be shown to be decisive in human development<sup>2</sup>.

What concerns emotions in Nussbaum's theory, it possible to see them as a significant contributor to the method we think and learn about human development (and sustainable development) and also life's deepest secrecies, especially our personal vulnerability, our reliance on others, and about ways we can help out the flourishing of ourselves and other people<sup>3</sup>. According to Nussbaum, the emotions are, indeed, a form of knowledge through which we think about things that we take care about but that are beyond our control. With Stoic philosophy as her guide, Nussbaum opens a much wealthier view of the emotions and of their contribution to moral thinking as one of the most significant factors of human development<sup>4</sup>.

Nussbaum states her theory of the emotions as neo-Stoic. We have already laid the groundwork to realize what this might mean. The Stoic opinion of the emotions is that they are a form of knowledge, that is, a way of reasoning about things in our human development. Different from other forms of knowledge, the things that are the object of the emotions are things that concern to us, that we take care about or feel connected to. Given the changes of life and the ultimate finitude of objects of concern, however, they are also features of our lives that are eventually out of our control. If something happens somehow to either improve or jeopardise an object of concern, our emotions are how we think about it<sup>5</sup>. Nussbaum claims, emotions are *eudemonistic*, that is, they refer intrinsically to a human being's sense of human flourishing and human development however they also concern the sustainable development. Nussbaum wants to maintain that our *eudaimonia*, or flourishing happiness as a form of human development, depends upon our formulating a cluster of aims and goods to which we join value, which in turn are constituent elements of a conception of what it means for us to live good life, to reach well-being and human flourishing. For compassion to then occur, we must make the eudaimonistic decision that the other's well-being is involved in our personal conception of well-being, good life and human flourishing<sup>6</sup>.

According to Paul Gallagher, there are some points worth noting here. First, as Nussbaum's Stoic interlocutor has underlined, the judgments made with regard to compassion and, in fact, all emotions are particularly subjective, incomplete, and regional, and not neutral, impartial, and general. Second, Nussbaum seems to have made a decided, but unstated, shift to Kant at this point. The set of goods or ends that Aristotle argues are constituent for *eudaimonia* to occur are not up for catch, are not goods that gain their goodness because we face-to-face value them. There is a best way of living for humans and their human development, nevertheless of our opinions on what that

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<sup>2</sup> Nussbaum, M.C. (2011), *Creating Capabilities: The Human Development Approach*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA and London.

<sup>3</sup> Plumb, D. (2014), *Emotions and human concern: Adult education and the philosophical thought of Martha Nussbaum*, „Studies in the Education of Adults“, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 145-162.

<sup>4</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> Gallagher, P. (2009), *The Grounding of Forgiveness: Martha Nussbaum on Compassion and Mercy*, „American Journal of Economics and Sociology“, Vol. 68, No. 1, pp. 231-252.

might be. He affirms that Nussbaum's *eudaimonia* is undergirded by a Kantian-inspired notion of autonomy often expressed in noble-minded recent political philosophy as government neutrality with regard to ends. Gallagher argues that autonomy thus understood means that you are free to choose what ends constitute your private conception of *eudaimonia* and human development, and that there are not ends given by nature<sup>7</sup>.

In Nussbaum's estimation, the reality of the emotions is open-ended, and ever emerging than many would hope. Still, as a form of rational thought, emotions are far from being unreasonable or hopelessly not capable of contributing to the good life, well-being and human development (as well as sustainable development). The emotions take part in the real world, where real objects of concern flourish or feel pain. The evaluations of the emotions are subject to being more or less right or wrong, and the perceptions and beliefs that support them, and the judgements that they sustain are still cooperative to both *epistemic* and, particularly, *phronetic* reasoning of our human development involving human flourishing. The advantage of Nussbaum's neo-Stoic theory of emotions, it that, at the same time as it considers the complexity of the emotions, it retains a keen sense of their capacity to support to moral reasoning and human flourishing and development of the human beings<sup>8</sup>. Nussbaum's reason for exploring emotions also in animals is to point out how emotions are 'elements of our common animality with considerable adaptive significance: so their biological basis is likely to be common to all'<sup>9</sup>.

According to Gallagher, an encounter with Nussbaum's rich and nuanced exploration provides a possibility to reflect upon one's own emotionality as a part of our human nature, on the things one take cares about in life, and about one's own sense of neediness and vulnerability in face of the finitude of things of the world. It provides one a chance to reason about the various alternatives one might use to deny or rage against one's own sense of vulnerability and, in doing so, be a negative force in the lives of other people as well as how to make them better<sup>10</sup>. The two cardinal ways that Nussbaum sees this occurring are, first, through overcoming the emotion of disgust, because it is a barrier of our human development as well as due to a fact that an emotion divides us from others insofar as it pushes the other away as different and subordinate to us; and, second, by cultivating the mental capacity of imagination, which Nussbaum believes will make possible us to understand and feel the pain of those who undergo tragic events who are not in our recent empirical orbit, not just humans, but also animals<sup>11</sup>.

The identification of emotion as part of moral thinking and human development holds potential to promote reflection of marginalised groups through the tying of fairness to equality: since compassion is conceptualised as a pain that is felt for others where there is a breach of capabilities and where there is inequality. Moreover,

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>8</sup> Plumb, D. (2014), „*motions and human concern: Adult education and the philosophical thought of Martha Nussbaum*, „*Studies in the Education of Adults*“, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 145-162.

<sup>9</sup> Nussbaum, M.C. (2003), *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p. 141.

<sup>10</sup> Gallagher, P. (2009), *The Grounding of Forgiveness: Martha Nussbaum on Compassion and Mercy*, „*American Journal of Economics and Sociology*“, Vol. 68, No. 1, pp. 231-252.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem.

the encouragement of emotional recognition with each and every other, by taking the other into one's concept of 'I', offers a way of negotiating the controversial elements of individual and collective-focussed approaches to organising difference in our effort how to overcome our limits in human development and human flourishing.

Deborah N. Brewis affirms that Nussbaum provides a substitute proposal, which suggests that pain and other bad emotions of human beings do not rational thought, but are an essential part of human thought and therefore human rationality as well as human nature. She strives to foreground emotion in the promotion of equality across communities, nations, and countries arguing that emotion plays a significant role in moral thinking, human flourishing, and human development: it anchors morality in equality while avoiding the danger of imposing a comprehensive manifestation of this equality onto divergent cultures. Emotions, as part of thought offer an evaluative dimension that relates to eudaimonia<sup>12</sup>. Emotional answer to an object, be it a situation or possible action, is understood to be informed by beliefs about that object that derive from 'one's most important goals and projects.

Nussbaum's idea of empathy is one of the brightest: empathy is „an imaginative reconstruction of another person's experience without any particular evaluation of that experience"<sup>13</sup>. According to her, the evaluation that a person is in anxiety, and a desire to do something about it, is a judgment of *compassion* rather than empathy. It is significant to note that she is not claiming that this is *all there is* to compassion, but that compassion, when it overcomes negative emotions such as disgust, envy, and shame, entails evaluation. She argues that sympathy is also close to the term compassion, though lacking its strength<sup>14</sup>.

According to Celia Deane-Drummond, for Nussbaum, compassion has three elements that require reasoned decision. The first decision of compassion is one of measurement of *size* – it means what has happened to the human being or other creature is a serious event. The second decision is one of *nondesert*: the being did not deserve this to happen to it. The third decision is *eudaimonistic*, meaning this being is important in terms of my goals<sup>15</sup>. Nussbaum also names wonder: the ability to reason the worth of the other even apart from our own sense of flourishing and human development<sup>16</sup>. For Nussbaum, empathy requires recognition of the *otherness*, rather than simply feeling as if it were its pain, which is emotional infection. Thus, empathy means both an awareness of another's pain and *yet* knowing that it is not mine<sup>17</sup>. Empathy requires sure imagining of what the other being (not only human being) is feeling and is a prelude to compassion where those feelings are connected with bad feelings. Empathy, however, can result in a lack of compassion, as when enemies read the intentions of

<sup>12</sup> Brewis, D.N. (2017), *Social Justice 'Lite'? Using Emotion for Moral Reasoning in Diversity Practice*, „Gender, Work and Organization”, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 519-532.

<sup>13</sup> Nussbaum, M.C. (2002), *Education for Citizenship in an Era of Global Connection*, „Studies in Philosophy and Education”, Vol. 21 No. 4-5, p. 302.

<sup>14</sup> Deane-Drummond, C. (2017), *Empathy and the Evolution of Compassion: From Deep History to Infused Virtue*, „Zygon”, Vol. 52 No. 1, p. 261.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>16</sup> Nussbaum, M.C. (2002), *Education for Citizenship in an Era of Global Connection*, „Studies in Philosophy and Education”, Vol. 21 No. 4-5, pp. 289-303.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem.

their rivals or enemies and manipulate them for their own purposes. Nussbaum also reasons that compassion may be without empathy however empathy is a good `pilot for compassion<sup>18</sup>.

According to Deane-Drummond, Nussbaum's analysis is extremely illuminating in clarifying the relationships between empathy and compassion, as well in her examination of the Greek ancient literature in order to define more specifically what compassion means for human development and human flourishing. However, her idea that empathy is merely a *pilot* for compassion seems little bit weak. So while theoretically, in accordance with her definitions, it might be possible to show compassion without empathy, compassion is more significant and fuller as a virtue if it is *inclusive* of empathy rather than excluding it of human nature and human development. Modifying her definition, any account of compassion needs therefore to involve in a primary meaning a positive affirmation of the evaluation of compassion toward the other informed by love for the other as a part of human flourishing and human development, rather than, in the way that she sets up her argument, an answer to large negative events that have happened to another that were undeserved. Such answers can be included, but her idea of ordering toward „wonder“ needs modifying to one of effective compassion guided by love<sup>19</sup>.

Nussbaum's explaining compassion that focuses on the specific cognitive evaluations required in compassionate deeds fails to consider adequately the priority of a relations between love and compassion in human flourishing and human development, specifically, that part of compassion that is actively involved, rather than just in answer to another's distress. While empathy exactly speaking means the ability to feel what the other feels, and therefore is potentially either passive in the ethical and moral sphere, compassion is more positive and aside from some uncommon exceptions requires the capacity of empathy for its using in human development and individual flourishing<sup>20</sup>.

Compassion is understood to be part of reasonable thinking and our human development as well as human flourishing: it refuses the idea, rooted in Stoicism, which is asserted in some contemporary ethical theories that emotions can and must be divided from thought as not to 'mislead' ethical and moral reasoning because it is an obstacle of human development. It is because we may see compassion for others as a very significant factor of human development, and that this plays a role in the way we can formulate morality, that emotion is regarded by Nussbaum as being central to the pursuit of social justice as well as human development and human flourishing. To this end, she acknowledges how compassion can be involved into education, political leadership, economic thought on welfare and human development, legal rationality and public institutions<sup>21</sup>. Emotional acceptance can thus offer a way of thinking the other in both the individual and the general; as what might be called a factor of human development and human flourishing.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup> Deane-Drummond, C. (2017), *Empathy and the Evolution of Compassion: From Deep History to Infused Virtue*, „Zygon“, Vol. 52 No. 1, pp. 258-278.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>21</sup> Brewis, D.N. (2017), *Social Justice 'Lite'? Using Emotion for Moral Reasoning in Diversity Practice*, „Gender, Work and Organization“, Vol. 24 No. 5, pp. 519-532.



Compassion responds to the pain it can see with its eyes, and its natural expression is the embrace of care. Compassion exists in the realm of experience, the immediate experience of suffering flesh and blood, and while infused with a cognitive dimension, compassion remains primarily an emotion, albeit a particularly strong emotion. Its only way to extend beyond the pain encountered in the immediate here and now is through the aid of the imagination because it is one of Nussbaum's goals in human development and human flourishing (Gallagher, 2009). The occasion of compassion is then of necessity a personal affair, contingent upon the degree of suffering human beings as well as animals that the observer looks for to be present in the other. But the other side of this is that one can subjectively look what by most criteria would be thought serious suffering as instead trivial of humans or animals<sup>22</sup>.

If compassion is in large part the ability to picture ourselves in the position of the other particularly in human development, the mental faculty of imagination appears to be at its core and it is not only in relations to humans but also to animals. Nussbaum's primary idea for how the imagination would assist the eudaimonistic evaluation in expanding its horizon to support the equality and dignity of all human beings and animals attained by the Stoics at the expense of emotion is especially through education.

### Conclusion

However, some of authors argue that Nussbaum's pays a little interest to positive emotions and her capabilities approach list reflects a Benthamite opinion of positive emotions that is out-dated in light of current psychological research. Positive emotions not only make people feel good; they also broaden and build, and allow human development and also human flourishing. They hope that the research on the positive values of positivity will move Nussbaum to the acceptance of positivity as a valued capability<sup>23</sup>. Really, we think that despite a critique of Marta Nussbaum's little focus on the meaning and role of positive emotions in human development and human flourishing, her theory of emotions as one of the core capabilities is a very useful tool how to improve human life and to reach good life and well-being of human beings. We have also a duty to establish possibilities for positive development of any rational animals including non-human animals.

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<sup>22</sup> Gallagher, P. (2009), *The Grounding of Forgiveness: Martha Nussbaum on Compassion and Mercy*, „American Journal of Economics and Sociology“, Vol. 68, No. 1, pp. 231-252.

<sup>23</sup> Jayawickreme, E., and Pawelski, J.O. (2013), *Positivity and the capabilities approach*, „Philosophical Psychology“, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 383-400.

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