

REVIEWS—REPORTS

Ryszard Maciołek (rev.): Anna Głąb, *Reason in the Practical World. Philosophical Views of Martha C. Nussbaum*, Wydawnictwo Akademickie i Profesjonalne, Warszawa 2010, p. 235.

Martha C. Nussbaum Practical Philosophy

Anna Głąb's monograph, published in the series "Philosophy in the 21st century", is dedicated to the life and views of Martha C. Nussbaum. Martha Nussbaum is one of the most famous representatives of the contemporary American philosophy. She is recognized in Poland and known for her commitment to the defence of women and sexual minorities rights, advocating the inclusion of philosophy in solving practical problems of the world. The book consists of four chapters, introduction, conclusion, bibliography and index. The two-level structure of the book is clear and logical, within the chapters there are subchapters (though the second chapter departs from the two-level organization principle). The *Introduction* portrays M.C. Nussbaum, in particular from the academic status perspective, and attempts to place the philosopher's views among the views of other representatives of

the most recent American philosophy. However, the attempt to categorize the views of Nussbaum according to the interpretation canons applied by most philosophy historians seems to fail since, as the author herself notes, for philosophers combining analytic, existential and pragmatic elements none of the categories appear appropriate. This applies to Nussbaum, as well as to other contemporary American philosophers such as Charles Taylor, Alisdair MacIntyre and Bernard Williams. Eventually, the author chooses to use the criterion proposed in the book *Kleine Geschichte der Philosophie* (eng. *Small History of Philosophy*) by Otfried Höffe, who on the basis of Aristotle's views divides the philosophical currents of the 20th century into theoretical and practical philosophy. The author includes the philosophy conception proposed by Nussbaum in practical philosophy. The latter she understands as philosophy in which "all philosophical issues (also theoretical) stem from practice and the whole philosophy (also theoretical) is used directly or indirectly to solve practical problems we face" (pp. 9–10). According to the author, this philosophy renounces the ambition to become a science with the task of adding "bricks to the edifice of knowledge"

(p. 10). The purpose of the reviewed work is threefold: 1) presenting and analyzing M. C. Nussbaum's philosophical views, 2) determining the type of the philosophy concept proposed by the author and placing it on the map of contemporary philosophy, 3) arguing that despite the difficulties in defining the nature of Nussbaum's views, her proposal is a valuable approach to philosophizing (p. 10).

The key to understanding Nussbaum's views seems to be the theory of capability. Additionally, her views can be distinguished by internal antimetaphysical essentialism, model of multicultural education (MME), being a version of liberal education, and the conception of liberal social democracy. The review should focus on at least two original solutions to the problems addressed by Nussbaum, i.e. the theory of capability, which is the central point of her philosophy, and the conception of liberal education. The theory of capability has its sources in the so-called Aristotle's functionalism but finds justification in metaphysical theory of hylomorphism. According to the latter concept, being, whose the primary and most important manifestation is substance, is a compound of form and matter. The compound of form and matter reflects a composite of act and potency. The form constitutes actuality element and the matter refers to potentiality element. The concept of being as the one composed of subontical parts explains the dynamics of being and the fact that it is the subject to change and transformation. This concept also applies to man who realizes potentialities, but also by performing

actions improves. According to Aristotle, a function or an activity attributed to human beings appears to be the "action of the soul in accordance with reason or without reason". In *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle says that to be a man, we should follow a rational plan i.e. in accordance with practical wisdom.

Nussbaum raises the question of what it means to "life involving meeting some proper human function"? (p. 19). Is it a part of life, in which a function is carried out, then at least some part of life would be the same with the life of other creatures, such as animals. Or it means existence reliance on this feature, which is the guiding principle suitable shape lives. Nussbaum advocates for the latter interpretation. All human life is not the sum of the individual parts, and no part of it, or vegetative or sensual is not identical with the life of other creatures. The argument of the function is the theoretical basis for the theory of potentiality. However, it is cut off from the roots of his metaphysical theory, and even, perhaps so as not to arouse associations, it does not refer directly to Aristotle himself, but to Neoaristotelian. The inspiration here was the Declaration of Human Rights, developed among others by Maritain, which sets out the objectives of human life, and that is the potentiality of human update, the execution of functions. According to the author of the theory of potentiality to develop Nussbaum led not only by positive neoaristotelianism anthropology, but also defects of utilitarianism, against whom there was, especially with regard to the concept of ethics. Not

without significance was also a long-term cooperation with American philosopher, Nobel prize winner in economics in 1998 Amartya Sen, which for several years has worked at the World Institute for Economic Research in Economics (WIDER) in Helsinki. Potentiality theory marks the relationship to the idea of human capabilities Sena, as well as to the idea of basic goods Rawls, although the theory is compared to the second theory of competitive advantage. Takes the view that the capacity is more fundamental than the right, satisfaction or goods at all. Potentiality lists 10 of them, and they are: life, health, bodily integrity, emotions, the use of the senses, imagination and understanding, practical reasoning, life in the community, care for animals, plants and the world of nature, the possibility of fun, laughter and entertainment, the ability to decide about their environment (p. 36). According to the authors reviewed publication list has been derived from different interpretations of the human being from different eras and places, which gives it a universalistic. But it is hard to say, which the author has not done that this list is complete, whether it was ordered hierarchically or weight determines the position of potentiality in the catalog so I wonder why the author also mention some of them (last) speaks only of the feasibility of, in other cases, as if it were necessary. Could care of animals and plants was categorical, and fun and laughter just hypothetical? Reflects the lack of mention of such potentialities as worship of God or a deity and profession of religion, starting a family and family life,

care and education of children, etc. She probably could to show on either of these potentialities, in which the latter is concluded. After all, it is difficult to understand why the profession of religion would have its implementation in the life of the community (the author pointed out in the framework of the religion), and concern for the natural world, for example, also express concern about the children. It seems that the natural and formal community are here treated as identical. Taking into account other statements Nussbaum, who shares the Aristotle opinion of the man as a political animal (*zoon politicon*), appear to be inconsistent. In his theory of potentiality sees the weapon in the fight for quality of life. In her opinion, this theory throws a bridge between philosophy and economics, and allows to evaluate the quality of life of the communities living in different cultures. Quite strongly opposed to the use of GDP per capita as the sole or primary measure of quality of life. It is therefore considered that the proposed theory it is a great tool to create social policy. List Nussbaum capabilities like a list of the elements of the good life, constructed by Robert Erikson. Scandinavian professors, such as philosopher Robert Erikson Swedes and Finnish sociologist Erik Allardt introduced the Aristotelian criterion of social welfare based on the idea that a human being is the essence of an active, tends to the proper functioning of the various spheres of life. Allardt defends the idea, according to which the quality of life in a nation should be judged on the basis of the richness and diversity of human func-

tions. The author lists a whole list of tasks that should be in the area of social policy. These include, among others ensure healthy air and water, and consistent health care, freedom of choice of sexual orientation, the ability to play. In addition, access to the general education and what it is worth noting the creation of institutions to promote and protect the humanistic form of education, etc. According to Nussbaum, the ends of the state should also provide all people the right environment for moral perception and moral development opportunities. American philosopher postulates here seems to exceed even the tasks expected of a so-called the welfare state.

M.C. Nussbaum is one of the leading representatives of the so-called liberal education, which is very often identified with humanistic education or general education. Sometimes, moreover, quite wrongly, is associated with the ideology of liberalism. The idea of liberal education originates from Aristotle, from his vision of education as a way of making people free and to prepare them for the realization of political tasks. Education is generally was more focused on the development of intellectual skills and moral than the transfer of some content that would constitute a corpus of knowledge or competence of the professional politician. In this sense, liberal education not only shaped the “workshop” free man, devote or intending to give the public service as equipping it with these efficiency (virtues), which made it more open and generally more human. The idea of a liberal education survived thereafter, mainly under

the influence of the medieval education, as a so-called program the liberal arts, which were considered during the development of the medieval university education as a preparation for study at the faculties of medicine, law and theology. Liberal education ideas are still very much alive and revived in different variations and versions during the public debates on education reform, especially when taken before program changes seem irrelevant. Great importance for the revival of interest in liberal education during the second half of the previous century had Allain Bloom's book *Fri. Closed Mind*. Publishing became a bestseller and was soon translated into many languages. Bloom, American philosopher and university professor, undertook the task of clarifying the intellectual crisis in America, the 70 – of the twentieth century. He gave her sharp criticism of the intellectual and moral life of academia, especially the programs and methods of education in American universities. According to the opinion of the student revolt of 1968, they have sterilization, ideology, and ultimately degraded. The principle of political correctness has undermined the authority of teachers, intergenerational ties weakened and reduced demands on the students. As a result, contributed to the “impoverishment of the soul” and closed minds of American students. Bloom called for in his work to rehabilitate the education based on classic works of Western civilization. Have a huge role to play in the renewal of classical philosophy. Previously, because in the thirties of the last century called for the renewal of liberal

education Mortimer Adler and Robert Hutchins. University of Chicago reform in the spirit of liberal education has to Hutchins, who was then the president. Great Books program developed by Adler, was a list of the most important works of Western civilization. Both led seminars dedicated to the Socratic method, which analyzed mainly philosophical, but it contains the scientific literature and imaginative literature. It is worth noting that the list of Great Books is just one work's Polish, that Nicolaus Copernicus *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies* (Latin: *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*). Adler presented his proposal in a number of papers on liberal education, including among others in his book *Reforming of Education*.

Nussbaum critically A. Bloom evaluated the book that it believes is true draws insights from the classical world, but instead "to think together (*współmyśleć* – in Polish) with Plato and Aristotle on rationality and open-mindedness, puts them on a pedestal" (p. 53). The Phi Beta Kappa lecture, she visited several university campuses, where she met a wide variety of cultural and ethnic students. This, as well as work in the WIDER vindicated Nussbaum – according to the author of the reviewed work – that her current views on education and the family are provincial. All of this led her to promote multicultural education model (MME), which is expressed in his book *Cultivating Humanity*. Breaks in the monocultural of academic world, especially with the dominance of Western culture. It is worth noting that the list of over a hundred items listed

by Adler's Great Books program was not on either one work that was outside the circle of the white man's culture. Nussbaum, perhaps under the influence of cooperation with SEWA (Self-Employed of Women Association in Punjab, India), became interested in issues of sexual orientation. She worked on the introduction of Brown University for university curriculum, „the study of sexual minorities” as a complement to the study of ethnic minorities. Her version of liberal education can be reduced to a few elements: (1) rooted in the tradition of Socratic education (creating a critical social culture by emphasizing the importance of analytical thinking, reasoning, and active participation in the public debate), (2) educate students primarily in the sense of being citizens of the world, and only secondarily citizens of the country, (3) development of narrative imagination, the ability of empathy in the mental states of other people, especially those from other cultures in feelings, thinking of others, the ability to read their stories and desires, (4) recognition of the situation of women in other parts of the world. From this list, only the first element would meet with acceptance other members of the opposition of liberal education. Other elements, especially (2) and (3) could be accepted with some reservations. The fourth element would likely be treated as heterogeneous in relation to the goals and objectives of liberal education. According to the American philosopher is a truly liberal education, i.e. free and learning that, if the mind frees the student, daring him to a fair critique of traditional behavior and to op-

pose their own thinking (p. 56). Liberal education should develop in every person the ability to be fully human, which it considers to be self-aware, self-governing and able to treat others humanely. For citizens of the world of education in favor of language learning and knowledge of other cultures and hostile refers to monodisciplinary education, believing that it is implemented in European universities. Nussbaum reprimands too much specialization and in favor of interdisciplinary education. The curriculum should allow contact with literature and art, the role of education is systematically reduced. It is difficult, therefore, properly educate narrative imagination. The above comments do not raise larger Nussbaum representatives of the opposition liberal education. Can be problematic, however, Nussbaum interdisciplinary understanding of the curriculum. If it leads to a logical order violation and does not develop a sense of such an order, it will not be accepted by those who prefer other models of liberal education than the model of multicultural education. The reform of American education discussed the author advocates against conservatives, defending liberal education in the spirit of the classic curriculum for the university, which include research on the cultures of the Middle and Far East, the ethnic minorities, the experience and the development of women and the sexual minorities. In her opinion, university can't go back to the old forms and content a teaching, which are inadequate to this state of world. No wonder that it caused controversy with conservatives, who believe that

do not place research on sexual minorities in curriculum is "a defense of classical education and the Western philosophical tradition" (p. 50). Nussbaum argues, however, that it should be the opposite. According to the study – including philosophy and history should also examine "what strange and disturbing Polish" (p. 50). It is believed that her version of liberal education (MME) is a particularly topical after 11 September 2001 year, for fear that caused the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, may lead to restrictions of moral imagination and the polarization of society that will turn against citizens representing other cultures than Western culture. Comparison of expression Nussbaum on liberal education with the statements of other representatives of this trend in education, in particular the views of Adler and Bloom is not only inconsistent, but even downright provocative. These philosophers as a remedy for spiritual weakness of the young generation of Americans saw the need to return to education to the roots, to the sources of Western civilization. On the contrary, Nussbaum advocates moving away from the roots. The proposal does not sound too convincing in the light of its own views on philosophy, especially because of the esteem for the works of the classics of philosophy, such as Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, etc., and in general the importance it attaches to the history of philosophy. Her research interests in the field of literature also does not seem to exceed the range of the western literature. It is unfortunate that Nussbaum puts too much emphasis on the need for the MME knowledge

about what is different in the life of modern societies, rather than what is common. A much more convincing sound in this respect Peter Drucker's words, the modern economist, best-selling author of works on entrepreneurship and management about the value of liberal education for the development of intellectual skills and abilities of creative students. His departure from the requirement of specialized and professional education for the liberal due to other demands and completely different tasks posed by the liberal education than does Nussbaum.

The author reviewed book certainly has shown a remarkable erudition and inquisitiveness. The goal they had set itself, and it was worded quite minimalist – presentation, analysis and classification of conception of philosophical Nussbaum to one of the known currents – was made. It seems that the importance of the issues that it raises in his work brings meaning and seriousness of philosophy, however, that it not restores its prestige. We must honestly say that the accuracy and precision are not advantages Nussbaum style philosophy. It is easy to see that Anna Głąb has presents of the silhouette and views the American philosophical thinker with a passion. She does not hide her appreciation for philosophy, designed to shape the face of social, economic and political modernity. Author does not hide his inclination to philosophy involved in the affairs of the world. Perhaps the unconcealed enthusiasm can be explained by the lack of reaction and response to some controversial author of the thesis

formulated by Nussbaum. You have to admit, however, that the author of the reviewed work despite feeling apology conception of philosophy and ideas of the American philosopher, well formulated under her at a number of criticisms. Critically looking at the form of reasoning, the way of narrative and argument. He cites the fact that even scientific misconduct Nussbaum, who defended in the name of values such as non-discrimination based on sexual preference, filed as an expert witness, false testimony about allegedly widespread and popular in ancient Greece homosexuality. The disadvantages to the inconsistency of expression of the American philosopher, but the author explains the ailment complexity of life and not an academic nature of its philosophy. A drawback is the excessive didacticism and moralizing tone, which in turn explains the personality of Nussbaum and will repair the world through philosophy. Draws attention to the social and political utopia her views, although it is an explanation, giving as an example the welfare state model implemented in the Nordic countries. The author ends question: “[...] perhaps this attitude philosophy Nussbaum sets the path for the future of the discipline, the path descends from the heights of abstraction and debates bringing satisfaction only at the theoretical level, in the direction of the current human problems, [...] philosophy more diverse and less academic and practical philosophy oriented Particular cases” (p. 213). The question is rather rhetorical, but it reveals the author's sympathy to the philosophical style of the American

philosopher that differs from the dominant contemporary philosophy. The concept of the philosophy of the author not only discouraged, but even foretells the future. The author reviewed publication doubt its scientific and literary workshop is able to arouse the reader's interest and views Nussbaum person. Faithfully presents the philosophical, put them scrutiny. He can also see the consequences of gaps, inconsistencies and gaps in them. It is a pity, however, that in their assessments did not go away and not taken from the American philosopher discussion on these points, which deviate from the accepted principles of the tradition and culture of Europe, which, regardless of whether or not anthropocentric, it is generally personalistic. A shortcoming of such work is to reduce the authors to conclude the fact Nussbaum rejection of the concept of a person, replace it with the term "human being" and state the reasons for doing so. As it is difficult to give up this idea is the fact that the author discusses the views of Nussbaum uses it anyway. Resignation from the use of the concept of a person because of that "it is less flexible, and it was in the history of often ill-used in a way [...]" (p. 170) or because it is difficult to tell whether some people have features that assumes the traditional definition person is a misunderstanding. Even more unconvincing administration by Nussbaum as a reason for the resignation of the concept of the cases of verbal behavior of some people who use it colloquial speech to denote persons of one sex only, i.e. males, and not even every human being. It is a pity that the author did not re-

mind here the concept of person formulated in the Christian philosophy, especially by Albert M. Krąpiec or J. Maritain. Similarly strikes failing to respond to the views of the author Nussbaum on human dignity. According to her dignity is not based on a current ownership of a person, such as for example, have a reason. Nor is it a value independent of ability, because they only update that makes human life is worthy of life. Dignity is not a property that is not gradable and impossible to lose. It depends on the ability (p. 176). Questions openly on the one hand inalienability of human dignity and confuses it with a worthy life. Man is entitled to human dignity as a person. Personal dignity can be violated, you can not respect that, but you can not destroy it, or to waive it. It is also not graduated. You can only lead a more or less decent life, which means only life more or less convenient or fair, in which more or less respect for their personal dignity, and others. But even then, when a man goes invasive of another's life or even their dignity, the dignity of a person does not lose. Capacity of a person if he wants Nussbaum human being, do not matter when it comes to the dignity of the person. Person, as a self rational nature, has dignity because of internal (metaphysical), and Christian personalism also external reasons. The author of work to make this piece work more clear and show the differences in philosophy humanity Nussbaum with the philosophy of the Aristotelian-Thomistic stream, which probably contribute to a better understanding of the position of the American philosopher.

Also missing is the assessment of policy objectives and the nature of social democracy in terms of Nussbaum. American philosopher talks about redistribution of wealth, noting that this measure should be redistributing the potentiality of specific people mentioned in the theory. Too few goods and too much, according to Nussbaum may be harmful. Is of the incommensurability of goods, i.e. claims that it can not be – as it would utilitarians – to compensate for the absence of some other goods. The government of the country should be approached with respect to each ability that a human being has, and also provide the institutional, material and educational support necessary for the development of its potentiality. Distribution should be carried out on the basis of knowledge of human abilities in different areas of life (p. 186). He does not hide his love of the welfare state model that best fulfills the task, she posed in front of a state. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that undergo erosion model modern state. One of the main reasons is the lack of the proper relationship between the contribution in the production of goods and the level of participation in their distribution. Violation of the relevant correlation destroys both entrepreneurship and productivity. Effects – increased unemployment, lower productivity, decrease in state revenues, increase budget deficits work, etc. The author herself admits that the vision of the state and its tasks in Nussbaum writings borders utopia. The allegation that the author cites as Nussbaum that the criterion of the quality of life in the country wealth

utilitarianism, expressed mostly by the amount of per capita GDP (gross domestic product per capita) is, at least partially ineffective. Gives as an example of South Africa, which has a high GDP, but are present in the large disparities of wealth and riches. According to the author utilitarians do not ask for a fair distribution (p. 173). GDP covers the key elements of human life: the average length of life, the right to employment, political freedom, etc. Error utilitarians in general is that they are based on a false idea of human nature – man as *homo oeconomicus*. GDP per capita has the same weaknesses as any mean or average. Given size, the economic, the population may be less or more diverse in terms of its value. Should know the value of the dispersion of this magnitude, to decide on the scale of income inequality. John Rawls, and it goes for many other modern thinkers, in his theory of justice permits inequalities in income, but only if they serve the most vulnerable and economically without them the situation would be even worse (p. 181). The allegation that the state does not reflect the wealth of the quality of life is fair, but pretty trivial. Today, many economists use economic indicators to express the level of wealth and well-being of society. These indicators, however, do not provide the quality of life, but about the state of the economy. The quality of life could provide more so socio-economic measures. These include, among others. average life expectancy, the number of hospital beds per 1 thousand population, the number of completions during the year, the percentage of infant mortality, etc. It can

be said that the above considered complementary indicators, indicative of the quality of life, allowing for a comparison between different countries. However, the matter is complicated by the fact that in sociological terms, quality of life is treated as subjective magnitude, reflecting the level of satisfaction with life. In this case, even the socio-economic measures are not appropriate indicators of quality of life.

Although the above-discussed comments submitted work is extremely valuable editorial position on the Polish market. It seems that the work would gain in value if the author has made their assessment from the perspective of other concepts of philosophy and philosophical positions of other trends, such as the Neo-Thomism and personalism. It can also irritate the reader too free use of philosophical concepts and categories used to determine the ideological currents. These shortcomings do not undermine the value of work. Although it is of interest to the philosophical as economists, sociologists, political scientists and educators. Nussbaum concept of philosophy, may intrigue especially those neo-positivist, analytical, and post-modern conception of philosophy discouraged to study it. Perhaps the issue of practical philosophy will encourage the representatives of the American philosopher, above social science to treat philosophy as a complement to their inquiries, and may also open up new research horizons.

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Anna Głąb: A response to the review of: *Reason in the Practical World. Philosophical Views of Martha C. Nussbaum*

In Martha C. Nussbaums “Think Academy”

Thank you very much for the review and for the immensely valuable comments it contained. I am glad that my book and Martha Nussbaum’s philosophy along with it have attracted the attention of Polish scholars. The justification I can offer in response to the charges concerning the implicit character of my statements or the lack of evaluations in matters of sociology, economy, and political science is that my task was not to provide an extensive interpretation of Nussbaum’s social and political views (i.e. to place them on the map of contemporary debates on economy or sociology or to delve into specific economic or political issues). The aim of the monograph was different: namely, to present to the Polish reader the oeuvre of the American philosopher, well-known worldwide and not known at all in Poland at the time that I was beginning my work. In order to accomplish this, I had to do two things: get acquainted with Martha Nussbaum’s entire output (a titanic body of work, with a new book out every year, adding up to a total of 24 books published until 2013, including 7 co-authored with other scholars, not to mention hundreds of articles) and make a synthesis, placing her thought on the map of contemporary philosophy. I perfectly understand that a sociologist or economist will feel unsatisfied, but