

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

this will be mainly due to the philosophical focus of the study. Still, I believe that my identification of numerous problems and my demonstration of thematic diversity in Nussbaum's thought may serve as a good point of departure more detailed research on issues from the field of social sciences, which I have barely touched upon.

In responding to charges, I would like to focus primarily on philosophical issues. One of them is the capabilities approach, the philosophical cornerstone of Nussbaum's idea of social policy. This theory is a kind of social decalogue. The list I present after Nussbaum is not closed, in the sense that it remains open to alterations; it is hierarchically ordered, starting from the Life capability and ending with the Political and Material Control capability. The charge that I refer to some of the capabilities but not to others as *możliwości* (abilities) I consider to be a misunderstanding, because starting from the presentation of the first capability, Life, I remark in parentheses that it means "being able [Polish: *możliwość*] to live to the end of a human life" (p. 36). I do likewise in subsequent points, too. The situation that might have misled the reviewer stems from the problem encountered in translating the linguistically difficult term "capability". I decided that the capabilities approach as a philosophical stance will be best rendered into Polish as *teoria potencjalności* (an Aristotle-inspired term, meaning "the theory of potentiality"), so as to avoid confusion with Amartya Sen's capability theory (Polish: *teoria zdolności*), well-known in economics. When writing about capabilities, Nussbaum

herself understands them as characteristics that, given appropriate human functioning in favorable conditions, can be developed; what she therefore has in mind is potentialities that can either be actualized or not (p. 32). The term "capability" thus combines two intuitions, both of them Aristotelian, and allows Nussbaum to speak the language of politics. Nussbaum's concern is to highlight the fact that, for instance, women in Third World countries have the nominal right to participate in elections but do not have it guaranteed as a capability. She understands the capabilities approach as more fundamental than human rights theories.

I would like to stress here that in my book I present the relations between Nussbaum's thought and personalism, referring mainly to Jacques Maritain's social philosophy (pp. 8, 34–35, 161–163, 209) and discerning the common points between these theories. When it comes to neo-Thomism, I stress that the philosophy of man proposed by Nussbaum has an anti-metaphysical character (pp. 114–115, 198) and is independent of metaphysical concepts (such as the soul or the person), which – particularly with reference to the concept of soul – makes its presentation of Aristotle's philosophy incomplete. However, I also write at the very beginning that my task is not to compare her interpretation of Aristotle with others, e.g. neo-Thomist ones, or to check its accuracy (p. 11). This is a subject for a separate study.

I think that in the context of this anti-metaphysical character of Nussbaum's thought it becomes clearer why she attaches

so much weight to the capabilities approach. The reviewer writes that “the capabilities of the person or, as Nussbaum puts it, of the human being, are of no importance when it comes to the dignity of the person. As a self of a rational nature, the person possesses dignity by virtue of internal (metaphysical) reasons”, but in the context of Nussbaum’s consciously anti-metaphysical philosophy it is capabilities (potentialities) that constitute the ways of realizing a life with human dignity. From the perspective of the Christian philosophy of man (e.g. the thought of M.A. Krapiec), the definition of dignity given by Nussbaum may seem to be a misunderstanding, but in view of the original assumptions of that philosophy (the theory of potentiality and the Human Function Argument, which I write about on pp. 115–121) I consider such an understanding of human dignity consistent. What is more, I believe that certain common points could be found between Maritain’s and Nussbaum’s thought. Working on the Charter of Human Rights, Jacques Maritain wrote that, regardless of metaphysical or religious views, people may, as a result of similar practical principles, reach the same practical conclusions (p. 35). Likewise, Nussbaum stresses that agreement should first of all be sought in conclusions, not in premises (p. 36). Just like the Charter of Human Rights was a lay code of morality for Maritain, the capabilities approach is such a code for Nussbaum. Both are independent of metaphysical or religious points.

In my opinion, the approach to the dignity of the human person that Nussbaum

proposes is more convincing in its practical application. If we went to one of the Third World countries and told someone who lives in extremely difficult conditions that they possess metaphysically grounded dignity, they would not understand it; such a statement would not make sense to them and metaphysical concepts would be empty-sounding words with no reference whatsoever to the realities of life. Choosing the ethical approach to dignity, Nussbaum believes governments ought to do everything for every person to have proper conditions for realizing their capabilities, and this will in turn boost their sense of dignity. Invoking metaphysical arguments is not always right and appropriate, especially when living conditions stand in contrast to the metaphysical dignity of man. References to metaphysical arguments, belonging, for instance, to the neo-Thomist tradition, may not always be comprehensible e.g. to people brought up in a completely different tradition and culture. In Nussbaum’s social policy, it is definitely ethical, not metaphysical, sensitivity that matters the most.

The reviewer remarks: “It is a pity that Nussbaum excessively emphasizes the need to gain knowledge, through the MME, on what is disparate in the life of modern societies rather than on what they have in common”. Is Nussbaum’s model of multicultural education (MME) only about emphasizing differences? I believe she reconciles the two goals. If she stressed only what is disparate she would be doing more harm than good to those who, e.g. due to cultural differences, differ from the societies of the

West. I believe those who are objectively different do not merely wish to have their otherness emphasized, since that may lead to hermeticism and suggest that otherness is locked and bolted away as incomprehensible. The main concern of the people who are objectively different is for others to notice that despite being different they are in fact the same as we are: that they have the same rights, the same desires, and the same feelings. When Diogenes of Sinope, whom Nussbaum often refers to, said that he was “a citizen of the world”, he intended to highlight the fact that apart from particular ties connecting us with particular people and with the nation we live in, shaping our identity, there is something more: our identity as people living in a community of similar thoughts, desires, and aspirations – a community of people equipped in the same capabilities. It is this identity that determines our ethnic and social obligations that go beyond local commitments.

What I consider to be a great merit of Nussbaum’s proposal is the fact that she tries to show the complexity of the human moral horizon and the diversity of human beings. In this respect, she departs significantly from other proposals (advanced by ethicists or socio-political philosophers such as John Rawls), which isolate a single ideal out of complex situations and make it the basis for formulating ethical guidelines. Nussbaum’s regulatory idea is the moral development of the human being as an individual rather than the creation of a rigid framework of moral order. Still, as she stresses, human development should be

grounded on a general and universal criterion; in Nussbaum, that criterion is the thick and vague concept of the good and the human being. And this is what the universalism of her thought consists of. On the one hand, then, she underscores the diversity, complexity, and complicated nature of us as moral subjects, but on the other she emphasizes what we share. It is worth remembering that Nussbaum is not an author who merely criticizes traditional ways of understanding man. She also advances a certain positive ethical program that can constitute the philosophical basis of the MME.

Moreover, Nussbaum combines multiculturalism with universalism also by emphasizing, within MME, the kind of education that can be gained from *belles lettres*. In her opinion, literature can explore differences and similarities alike in such a way that it develops our empathy for people who are different from us but at the same time similar to us. I write about this particularly in the context of the Dickensian concept of imagination, used by Nussbaum, as “the ability to see one thing as another, to see one thing in another” (p. 132). Nussbaum’s aim in highlighting the differences primarily to encourage a perspective of empathy, of perceiving the other person as a “home” of emotions, experiences, and plans that may very much resemble our own. This is what compassion requires: putting oneself in the situation of the other person, realizing that you could be someone else or that someone else’s problems are similar to yours; this awareness can liberate you from the chains

of egoism. In this sense, highlighting differences is, I believe, of tremendous importance for the shaping of an ethically sensitive and responsible society.

The reviewer also claims that “Her research interests in the field of literature seem [...] not to reach beyond Western writing”. This is a wrong conclusion since Nussbaum is conversant with the literature and philosophy of India (well familiar with writings of thinkers such as Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi, or Jawaharlal Nehru), to which her book, *Clash Within. Religious Violence and India's Future* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 2008), bears testimony. Her most recent book – *The New Religious Intolerance. Overcoming the Politics of Fear in an Anxious Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts 2012) – shows that the culture of Islam is not uncharted territory to her, either.

Does Nussbaum depart from the roots? Not, I think, in the sense in which Willard Van Orman Quine or Richard Rorty departed from the history of philosophy, believing that the ladder our ancestors used to climb must now be abandoned. Aristotle's ethical works constitute the ethical basis of her thought, but she does not accept them unconditionally or erect monuments to the Stagirite. She is inspired by Socrates and Aristotle, but through the prism of current problems, and in my monograph I ponder over whether the tendency to update does not strip the philosophy of the ancients of what is timeless in it (p. 212). When she puts Socrates forward as the model of her “think academy” she presents him as a man who

had the courage to question the existing social views and to have doubts where others people had none. Thus, her way of interpreting, for instance, the figure of Socrates suggests the paradigm of a philosopher that she holds up to herself as an ideal. In this sense, Nussbaum does depart from Allan Bloom's model of being inspired by the ancients.

According to the reviewer, Nussbaum “restores meaning and dignity to philosophy. Still, she can hardly be credited with restoring its prestige”. I strongly disagree with the second sentence of this judgment. Firstly, Nussbaum's philosophy is – as I stress using Hegel's apt wording – “its time held in thought” (p. 10); it takes shape in front of our eyes and responds to the problems of the exceedingly complicated world. This poses multiple methodological difficulties to historians of philosophy, for it is difficult to describe in a coherent way the thought of a philosopher working in front of our eyes, referring to current problems, and transforming her ideas into hundreds of articles and books. It is also difficult, when evaluating the output of such a thinker, to settle the matter as early as this in favor of an unambiguous value judgment.

Secondly, Nussbaum herself describes her concept of good as “thick” and “vague” (112nn). Why thick? Because its aim is to specify, comprehensively and as broadly as possible, the goals of human life. Why vague? Nussbaum uses this term in a positive sense because it comprises many individual specifications based on which – in Aristotle's words – it is possible “to describe the Good in outline” (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a). The

primary task of political theory, argues Nussbaum, is to provide that nebulous, vague sketch, outline, or scheme of good life because – as she follows Aristotle in saying – it is better to be right in drawing on vague argumentation than to be wrong in drawing on precise arguments (pp. 101, 208, 212).

Thirdly, it is impossible not to notice the way in which Nussbaum works towards restoring to philosophy its due authority in the humanities and in society. Even though philosophy is a field evoking no great response in the contemporary social and political arena, Nussbaum shows, through her academic as well as social activity, that the situation can be reversed. Often quoting Seneca's words that philosophers should be advocates of humanity, she believes they are necessary as participants of every academic discussion on social policy (p. 199). Nussbaum emphasizes that Socrates *was for* Athens rather than Athens for Socrates – the philosopher is for society, not society for the philosopher. The task of philosophy is to give a clear and comprehensible account of which point in the development of mankind we are at as well as to offer a critique of those beliefs that have been distorted under the influence of society, not to stay in university offices where the world is categorized from behind a desk rather than in terms of real problems. Philosophy is to order the world and at the same time to speak in a well audible and truly human voice. That is the kind of voice Nussbaum's philosophy speaks.

Fourthly, it is worth noting that Nussbaum is highly regarded as a philosopher

by numerous circles, including non-academic and non-philosophical ones. She has been named “the woman of action of contemporary philosophy” by the British daily *The Times* (mainly on account of her social work for the rights of women in India, where she goes every year); she was included by the *New Statesman* in the list of twelve modern thinkers who strongly influence the world; she was listed by *Foreign Policy* as one of the hundred most highly regarded present-day intellectuals (p. 7). As a philosopher, Nussbaum enjoys the recognition of scholars from other fields (which is shown by her cooperation with many experts from outside the field of philosophy, e.g. economist Amartya Sen or legal scholars Cass Sunstein and Catherine MacKinnon), and she lectures at the University of Chicago Law School, arguably the best law faculty in the world. In 2009, she was awarded the prestigious Henry M. Phillips Prize in Jurisprudence. This was an acknowledgement of her achievements in philosophy, law, and religion as well as of her work for the implementation of the capabilities approach.

Let me conclude with an anecdote. As a young university teacher, Nussbaum heard words of encouragement from an experienced philosopher. The philosopher was John Rawls. In a sleazy hamburger bar, over a cup of coffee, he said to her: “If you have the ability to influence people, it is your obligation, do it”. It would be difficult to say that Nussbaum fails to use all her abilities to make philosophy a recognized authority in the modern world.

I believe the world needs such advocates of philosophy today.

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Lyubomyr Boyakivskyy: *The Place Where East and West Meet in Central Europe. Old and New: Past, Present, and Future of the Post-Communist World, 15–18 July 2012, Warsaw*

The Ninth Annual Session of Warsaw East European Conference was organized by the University of Warsaw's Center for East European Studies. Based on recent trends, Eastern Studies is becoming more common for academic discourse, especially after the last EU enlargement and discussion about its future.

What is Central and Eastern Europe? In what way does its past involve its present and future? The conference participants focused on these and other questions.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the formerly communist world began to transform from one-party systems with planned economies into Western political and economic systems, albeit on different trajectories. This was the main focus of the event with special attention paid to the memory, identity, as well as the political and economic transformation of nations.

The conference was organized according to the classical American conference system and English was the official language. 400 participants from Central and

Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Central Asia, and North America discussed and confronted the past, present, and even future of region. The majority of the guests hailed from Poland, Belorussia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Georgia, and Russia. 150 speakers on 37 panels presented different points of view and regional concepts of what the post-communist world has become.

The keynote guests this year were Helene Carrere d'Encausse (France), Richard Pipes (USA), Alexander Rondeli (Georgia), Asim Mollazade (Azerbaijan), and Borys Tarasiuk (Ukraine).

Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, the permanent secretary of the Académie Française and a historian specializing in Russian history, opened the Conference and started discussion about effects of collapse of the USSR.

During the first day, participants were focused on the socio-political transformation in Central Asia, the activity of the International Visegrad Fund, Jerzy Giedroyć's ideas, media in the post-communist world, and regional changes in CEE. After six discussion panels, the first day concluded with a roundtable discussion on the "The Conflict of Historical Memories in the Region". Participants discussed the forms of historical memories in the region, their conflicts, and development scenarios.

The second day of the event was dedicated to Central and Eastern Europe, and the post-communist world in general. Participants could attend panels and discuss the EU and its neighbors' problems, energy