https://doi.org/10.18778/1689-4286.39.02

HYBRIS nr 39 (2017)
ISSN: 1689-4286

URSZULA LISOWSKA
UNIVERSITY OF WROCŁAW

POLITICAL LIBERALISM AND POLITICAL EMOTIONS – AN UNLIKELY ALLIANCE? ON MARTHA NUSSBAUM'S APPROACH TO STABILITY[1]

Emotions have a problematic status in modern philosophy. Given the strongly rationalistic character of modernity, the affective aspects of human cognition – sentiments, feelings, passions and emotions – have often been treated with suspicion. This scepticism has been particularly vivid in the history of liberalism – the approach in socio-political philosophy most intimately connected with the modern idea of dignity based on equal rationality of human beings. From this perspective, emotions seem to be more in place in totalitarian regimes, which exercise control over citizens by tapping into the irrational forces lurking in their minds, rather than in the societies devoted to mutual respect and transparency [Nussbaum 2013, 2].

Yet, one the most influential versions of contemporary liberalism alerts us to the relevance of emotions to liberal objectives. In *A Theory of Justice* John Rawls provides his conception of justice as fairness with extensive psychological underpinnings. Drafting a three-stage account of moral development, Rawls explains how citizens of a well-ordered society acquire the sense of justice, the crucial element of this process being the cultivation of proper moral sentiments [Rawls 1971, 1999, 405-425]. Such emotional support, Rawls argues, is necessary if a conception of justice is to remain stable over generations. We need to demonstrate that citizens are indeed able to be motivated by the

[1] The project has been funded by the National Science Centre (Poland), based on the decision number DEC-2013/09/N/HS1/02864.

principles of justice, which, among other things, requires certain emotional responses on their part [Rawls 1971, 1999, 397-405].

However, although Rawls never abandoned this idea, he later bracketed his own account of moral psychology. Ironically, it was the concern for stability that made him suspend this part of his earlier views. For Rawls realized that a liberal society, as it was portrayed in the concept of a well-ordered society, is inevitably characterized by the pluralism of reasonable, but incompatible worldviews. In consequence, any set of principles founded on a particular comprehensive doctrine (as Rawls called such extensive systems of beliefs) would prove unstable, given the potentially divisive nature of such justification. Instead, liberalism should strive to become *political*, *i.e.* based on certain fundamental ideas already present in the political culture and, therefore, acceptable to all reasonable citizens. Rawls's second major work, *Political Liberalism*, aimed at reworking his own conception, which originally relied strongly on Kantian philosophy. Such was also the nature of the moral psychology presented in *A Theory*, which is why Rawls did not include it in his later publication. Although he continued to emphasise the need to supply a theory of justice with psychological background, he failed to work out a detailed politico-liberal account of moral development [Rawls 1993, 1996, 81-88][2].

Therefore, Rawls's legacy helps us recognise that liberalism both requires emotional support and imposes considerable limits on the inquiries about moral sentiments. It is these two challenges that Martha Nussbaum tries to face in her recent research. Most known for her capability approach, the philosopher has been advocating an account of justice which in many ways is alternative to Rawls's. However, Nussbaum declares that she shares his commitment to political liberalism, presenting her capabilities-based theory as its variety. What

[2] It should be noted that Rawls developed his version of political liberalism more or less simultaneously with, but independently from Charles Larmore – the author of the books *Patterns of Moral Complexity* (2001, first edition: 1987) and *The Morals of Modernity* (2003, first edition: 1996). Larmore should, then, be seen as one of the founders of political liberalism as an approach in contemporary philosophy. The reason why I shall primarily refer to Rawls is that the dynamic of his project (its evolution towards political liberalism) highlights the problematic relationship between this variety of liberalism and the issue of emotions.

is more, simultaneously to the development of her socio-political project, Nussbaum has been conducting multifaceted research on emotions. These two lines of inquiry meet in her 2013 publication, *Political Emotions. Why Love Matters for Justice?*. In this book Nussbaum attempts to fill the space left by Rawls by drafting an account of a reasonable moral psychology compatible with political liberalism. That is, her project has to meet two criteria: first, it is to explain which emotional attitudes support a politico-liberal regime, thus ensuring its stability, and, secondly, in so doing, it cannot rely on any particular comprehensive doctrine.

The aim of this paper is to present and assess Nussbaum's project. I shall begin by embedding it more firmly in the context set up by Rawls. Then I will move on to the details of Nussbaum's account, presenting both its philosophical roots and psychological underpinnings. The primary question of this paper will be whether Nussbaum's moral psychology develops or, indeed, rather substitutes Rawls's perspective. In other words: is Nussbaum's intended elaboration of political liberalism in fact compatible with politico-liberal assumptions?[3]

Emotions and the vexed issue of stability

Let me begin with a brief overview of Rawls's remarks on moral sentiments and stability, since these provide both a positive and a negative point of reference for Nussbaum. Rawls argues that the functioning of a well-ordered society hinges on certain affective attitudes of citizens. Therefore, to be stable, the principles of justice which govern such a society need to be psychologically plausible. Rawls's account of moral development explains how the sense of justice compatible with his theory can be acquired [Rawls 1971, 1999, 397-401]. Each of the initial two stages of the process – the morality of authority and the morality of association – involve specific moral sentiments, such as love and trust, as well as fellow feeling and mutual confidence, respectively [Rawls 1971, 1999, 405-413]. These lead to the emergence of the sense of justice in the final phase, *i.e.* the morality of principles [Rawls 1971, 1999, 414-419].

[3] This paper aims to question the political character of Nussbaum's conception, which I myself assumed – but not analysed – in an earlier article (Lisowska 2015).

On the whole, then, Rawls presents sentiments as cognitive attitudes indispensable to a liberal theory of justice. Far from being blind, irrational forces to be taken advantage of by sly political leaders, they are intelligent responses, by means of which citizens can express support to or the rejection of the principles of justice. What is important, as rational, moral sentiments are the aspects of practical reasoning. In the famous argument for congruence, the philosopher demonstrates that the sense justice is compatible with the good of each individual. This is because, firstly, this sentiment reflects our attachments to the people and associations for whom we care and whose good forms a part of our own good. Secondly, by honouring the sense of justice, we participate in the rich activities of a community, thereby enriching our lives [Rawls 1971, 1999, 499-500]. And, finally, on the Kantian interpretation, the adoption of the sense of justice helps us "express our nature as free and moral persons" [Rawls 1971, 1999, 501]. When we act on this moral sentiment, we fully develop our human potential. Thus, the cultivation of the sense of justice facilitates our good and, at the same time, ensures that the principles of justice are effectively exercised. As Rawls saw it in *A Theory*, such congruence between the good and the just (the right) is indispensable for the stability of a conception of justice [Rawls 1971, 1999, 497].

However, it was precisely this connection that later made Rawls question the stability of his theory. The philosopher decided that his earlier views were too deeply rooted in a particular comprehensive doctrine to become a possible object of a unanimous agreement in a pluralist society. This, in turn, undermined the credibility of the moral psychology presented in *A Theory*, which assumed that all citizens share a basic understanding of the good. Such a requirement also seemed to put too much strain on individuals. Hence, in *Political Liberalism* Rawls is much more reticent about the issue of moral sentiments. He only sketches a reasonable moral psychology, from which any account of moral sentiments is significantly missing. Having described this psychology as "philosophical, not psychological", Rawls emphasises that it is enough for this account to be in agreement with his philosophical assumptions (*i.e.* the political conception of the person on which his theory is based) and not in disagreement with the "permissive" evidence of psychology. His later moral psychology, therefore, demands

much less convergence between citizens' attitudes. For the same reason, however, it is also less specified [Rawls 1993, 1996, 81-86].

Rawls leaves us with many cues and few detailed answers, then. Although, in *Political Liberalism* he continues to insists that, to be stable, a theory of justice has to be psychologically credible, he does not elaborate on the sentiments and emotions which this would require. This is to do with his scepticism about the good. For, as we have seen, the congruence argument involves many – Kantian and other, quite Aristotelian – elements[4]. Hence, Rawls's later reluctance to delve into the issue of sentiments is not motivated solely by the self-consciousness about his previous Kantianism. Rather, it stems from a more general conviction, expressed in *Political Liberalism*, that the problem of the good can only be pursued within comprehensive doctrines and, as such, cannot enter politico-liberal enquiries [see also: Larmore 1987, 122-127, Larmore 1996, 42-55].

Nussbaum – towards political liberalism

Thus, although Rawls alerted readers to the fact that sentiments are crucial to the stability of liberalism, he refrained from presenting a detailed account of political sentiments. Nussbaum attempts to fill this gap. This, as she declares, requires striking a balance between two extremes, which she compares to mythological Scylla and Charybdis. On the one hand, there is the Scylla of the liberal objections to emotions. These pertain to the alleged irrationality of sentiments and their totalitarian – coercive and homogenizing – character. Nussbaum's task will, therefore, be to work out a cognitive conception of emotions, which leaves enough space for individual liberty [Nussbaum 2013, 211-219].

On the other hand, there is the Charybdis of "watery motivation". Following Rawls, Nussbaum argues that political principles will not be

[4] The first of the reasons named by Rawls refers to the idea of human sociability, which can easily be traced to Aristotle. The second one explicitly draws on the ancient philosopher. According to Rawls, our striving for variety reflects a general feature of human motivation which he describes by means of the so-called Aristotelian Principle: "other things equal, human beings enjoy the exercise of their realized capacities (their innate or trained abilities), and this enjoyment increases the more the capacity is realized, or the greater its complexity" [Rawls, 1971, 1990, 374. See also: 499-500].

stable unless they have become internalized by citizens, which, among other things, requires proper emotional responses on their part. However, Rawls's account, Nussbaum argues, needs improvement because it is too abstract. In *A Theory of Justice* Rawls focused on sentimental attachments to principles; in *Political Liberalism* he was also primarily interested in the motivational force of general conceptions. To this Nussbaum replies that the emotional support of general rules needs to be backed by more local commitments. We need to tap into the resources which these provide to see if they can foster broader attachments [Nussbaum 2013, 10-11, 219-225]. Therefore, Nussbaum attempts to re-evaluate the role of the particular in the cultivation of political emotions.

There is yet another important difference between Nussbaum's and Rawls's project, which seems to have the decisive bearing on the issue of emotions. As I have said, Rawls's reticence about sentiments stems from his belief that political liberalism does not include considerations about the good. Only when we have some rough common understanding of what we should strive for, can we provide a more detailed account of the sentiments supportive of these goals. Therefore, since the former cannot become an object of a politico-liberal consensus, the latter must remain sketchy and general. Nussbaum challenges Rawls's scepticism about the good, however, and offers a partial theory of human good, which, she argues, can be defended as politico-liberal. Thus, her belief that emotions can be studied more thoroughly than it was done by Rawls seems to stem from her own variety of political liberalism.

Although the details of this conception will not be presented in this paper, my objective will be to check whether and, if so, then – how it influences Nussbaum's reasonable moral psychology and, in particular, her account of emotions. This problem is worth analysing for two reasons. In the first place, the problem of stability is not simply a practical issue of determining the methods of supporting political principles. It also pertains to the justification of these principles. The psychological credibility of the conception of justice, which is indispensable to its stability, requires that the conception not violate citizens' basic moral intuitions [Nussbaum 2013, 16]. Only such a theory can count on the continuous support "for the right reasons"

[Rawls 1971, 1999, xxxvii]. In *Political Emotions* Nussbaum appears to frame her argumentation in general terms. She presents an account of the core political values intended to be compatible not only with her project but also with the entire family of politico-liberal conceptions (see below [Rawls 1993, 1996, xlvi-xlvii, xlix; Nussbaum 2013, 118]). As she declares, her intention is to ask the question typical to political liberalism as such, namely: how can we encourage deep commitment to the political ideals designed for a pluralist society, without relying on any particular comprehensive doctrine and without intruding on citizens' freedom to define their life goals [Nussbaum 2013, 5-7]? If, however, we find that Nussbaum's moral psychology is, in fact, tailored to her own philosophical assumptions, it will turn out that it serves the justification of her conception and, therefore, is less uncontroversial than intended.

Secondly, it could be asked whether Nussbaum's conception, polemical as it is to Rawls's scepticism about the good, can, in fact, be defended as politico-liberal. Indeed, I shall argue that Nussbaum's claim to political liberalism is not unproblematic. Therefore, if the influence of Nussbaum's philosophical assumptions on her reasonable moral psychology can be demonstrated, the compatibility of the latter with the family of politico-liberal conceptions will be further undermined.

The core values – social contract vs. capabilities approach

To answer these questions, let me begin with an overview of Nussbaum's understanding of the core values of a just society. The role of emotions in securing their stability is strictly connected to Nussbaum's account of political goals. In theory, Nussbaum's normative assumptions are supposed to be compatible with the entire family of politico-liberal conceptions. However, upon taking a closer look, Nussbaum's ideas appear to strongly draw on the motifs specific to her own project. The question arises, then, whether these can be squared with each variety of political liberalism or, for that matter, with political liberalism as such.

It is worth noticing that Nussbaum pointed to the political relevance of emotions already in her earlier publication, *Frontiers of Justice*. In the conclusion of this book, Nussbaum admits that her theory of justice requires certain emotional responses on the part of citizens and

announces her plans to pursue further research in this area [Nussbaum 2007, 408-415, Nussbaum 2008, 425-438]. *Political Emotions* can be seen as the result of these studies. However, in Nussbaum's earlier publication the issue of emotions is placed in a slightly different context. For, although the philosopher expresses sympathy with political liberalism and, as she declares, embraces its spirit, the primary focus of the book is the criticism of the social contract tradition, of which Rawls's political liberalism is a variety. Nussbaum names three problems which cannot be satisfactorily solved within this perspective ("disability, nationality, species membership" [Nussbaum 2007, 14-22]) and offers a different theoretical framework to tackle them. Stemming from Amartya Sen's pioneer work [Sen 1981] and coupled with Aristotelian inspirations, her capabilities approach concentrates on real opportunities (capabilities) of citizens, who are conceived as rational and political animals. Unlike the social contract view, her theory does not represent human beings as "free, independent and equal [in power]" individuals, who seek cooperation with each other strictly for the purposes of mutual advantage. Rather, Nussbaum sees the origins of social interaction in human neediness (rooted in our animality) and the genuine will to form interpersonal relationships for their own sake. Only if we adopt such a political conception of the person, Nussbaum argues, can we overcome the three types of exclusion which haunt contractarianism [Nussbaum 2007, 85-92]. This, however, requires the cultivation of proper sentiments of benevolence, compassion *etc*., which will foster the model of sociability implied by this conception of the person.

Hence, Nussbaum originally takes up the question of political emotions in relation to her own approach to justice, which determines the repertoire of the sentiments recommended to a society. The same seems to be the case with the account presented in *Political Emotions*. That is, Nussbaum's overview of the core values, whose stability is to be secured by the cultivation of requisite emotions, is strongly related to her capabilities approach. Her normative position is based on the idea of equal human dignity, dignity involving both agency (striving) and vulnerability [Nussbaum 2013, 118-124]. Nussbaum imagines a society of citizens who are able to define and pursue their conceptions of a good life, but also, in this very process, depend on external support and

can be harmed by uncontrollable events. However, it will be noticed that this picture closely resembles Nussbaum's argument from *Frontiers*. Like her criticism of the social contract tradition, this model rests on the proposed revision of the Kantian idea of dignity towards a more Aristotelian (*i.e*. appreciative of human animality) account [Nussbaum 2007], 87-89, 159-160]. In this manner, Nussbaum's approach to justice enters her analysis of political emotions. Having influenced her understanding of the core values, it will inevitably define the range of sentiments which ensure the stability of these normative assumptions. Most importantly, however, it motivates Nussbaum's interest in emotions itself.

The claim to political liberalism revisited

The influence of Nussbaum's own capabilities-based theory on her normative assumptions need not necessarily undermine her aspirations to political liberalism. Since she wishes to represent the entire family of politico-liberal conceptions, it might still be possible to demonstrate that her ideas, originally inspired by her own research, could be universalised and become an object of a politico-liberal consensus. Still, for this argument to work, Nussbaum's capabilities approach would have to be truly non-comprehensive in the first place.

Contrary to Nussbaum's declarations, however, this can be questioned[5]. Undoubtedly, over the years, Nussbaum's approach has significantly evolved. Her theory was initially explicitly Aristotelian, with the capabilities list representing an account of "the good human life" (*eudaimonia*) which strongly drew on Aristotle's philosophy [Nussbaum 1992, Nussbaum 1987]. Later, as Rawls and Larmore developed their respective versions of political liberalism, Nussbaum realised that her approach might be too parochial and decided to reframe it in more universal terms [Nussbaum 2000, Nussbaum 2003, Nussbaum 2011a]. Since *Women and Human Development* (2000), she has preferred to speak not of the good human life but of the life compatible with dignity, *i.e.* the existence in which, following Kant, each person is treated as an end. Indeed, the category of dignity seems to

[5] For the criticism of Nussbaum's claim to political liberalism see, for example, Alexander 2014, 414-436, Okin 1999, 115-131.

enjoy cross-doctrinal and even cross-cultural recognition [Nussbaum 2007, 41-54, Nussbaum 2011b, 18-20], which makes it a suitable basis for a politico-liberal conception. Thus, a revised version of Nussbaum's capabilities approach attempts to define the conditions of a dignified life, represented in the form of the catalogue of ten central capabilities [see, for example, Nussbaum 2011a, 33-34]. It is still an account of the good, but it is partial (focused only on the essential requirements of a decent existence) and rooted in universally appealing values.

At the same time, Nussbaum herself is careful to underline that the concept of dignity is not independent from other elements of her theory, from which it "derives illumination and clarity" [Nussbaum 2011a, 29]. She labels her account of dignity "Aristotelian" [Nussbaum 2007, 59-164, Nussbaum 2014], meaning that she is interested in a dignified existence of humans understood along the lines of the Aristotelian conception of the person. Thus, these two motifs – the original Aristotelianism and the post-2000 Kantian concept of dignity – mutually influence each other. On the one hand, we are endowed with dignity by virtue of being creatures of a certain type – "active and striving"[6]. The Aristotelian conception further specifies these general features, adding vulnerability to our understanding of human activity. On the other hand, the notion of dignity helps us select these human possibilities which seem indispensable to a life in which one is treated as an end in herself. In this manner, the concept functions as the criterion in the process of formulating the capabilities list.

However, in order to provide a political – as opposed to the former, explicitly Aristotelian one – justification of Nussbaum's catalogue, the notion of dignity would have to be separable from its previous comprehensive background. The Aristotelian model of dignity sketched above proves that this is not the case. Although the Aristotelian assumptions are only supposed to explain how we should conceive of ourselves and each other as citizens [Nussbaum 2003, 28-31], this account of the citizenship is rooted in a broader understanding of the human condition. Thus, its universal recognition would require quite a broad agreement between the citizens as to what it means to be not

[6] "Human beings have a worth that is indeed inalienable, *because of* [italics mine – UL] their capacities for various forms of activity and striving" (Nussbaum 2014, 5 [print]).

only a member of a society, but also a human being in general. The scope of this conception seems to transcend the narrower notion of citizens *as citizens only*, which both Rawls and Larmore made the primary focus of their versions of political liberalism [Larmore 2003, 122, 132, Rawls 1993, 1996, 29-35].

Political liberalism and the good

This takes me back to Nussbaum's criticism of contractarianism, in the context of which the problem of political emotions has emerged for the first time. As I have mentioned, Nussbaum originally presented her conception of the person and emotional culture which it implies as an alternative to contractarianism, at the same time declaring to embrace political liberalism present in Rawls's variety of this approach. Yet, although social contract and political liberalism are different ideas, which can be developed separately, they have at least one important thing in common. Namely, they share the reluctance to define the human good. In the contractarian model, the parties negotiate the principles of cooperation with a view to realising their own life goals; political liberalism aims to avoid the imposition of any comprehensive doctrine whatsoever, the ideas of the good life included.

Nussbaum tries to reframe her original Aristotelian account of the good by introducing the idea of dignity. However, this notion is still anchored in a broader concept of the human condition. If she does not want to part with a good-based theory of justice, she has to postulate a rough understanding of what it means to be not just a citizen, but also a human being, and of what such a creature needs to live a dignified life. This, in turn, suggests that Nussbaum's opposition to contractarianism in fact undermines some politico-liberal assumptions as well. It seems that, as long as Nussbaum reasons in terms of the good, her project will not become non-comprehensive and fully compatible with political liberalism

Rather than an expression of a possible object of an overlapping consensus, Nussbaum's account of the core political values is a regulative idea, which, stemming from her own capabilities approach, provides the model of self- and mutual interpretation. It presents a desired type of human sociability, which should guide the process of the

cultivation of emotions[7]. However, even if Nussbaum's transition to political liberalism is incomplete, this Rawls-Larmore's idea still provides the basic framework for her recent publications, determining both her normative position and the scope of reflection. In the first place, as I have argued, it motivates the very interest in political emotions, which Nussbaum analyses in relation to the problem of stability. Secondly, it does influence her account of the core values inasmuch as they represent a model for a pluralist society. Although not fully politico-liberal, Nussbaum's capabilities list indeed has respect for diversity built in in many ways[8].

The cognitive value of emotions

Nussbaum's theory of political emotions develops, thus, against a complicated background. In *Political Emotions* Nussbaum refers mainly to contemporary psychological studies, illustrating her theses with examples from empirical research. The neutrality of this appeal to science, however, is partly undermined by the fact that Nussbaum's interpretation (and probably selection) of evidence reflects her philosophical theory of emotions. In her earlier books, *The Therapy of Desire* and *Upheavals of Thought*, the philosopher presented an extensive account of emotions, drawing mostly on Aristotle and the

[7] I follow Flavio Comim in this interpretation. However, Comim denies that such specificity of Nussbaum's position is contrary to political liberalism. He advocates Nussbaum's claim to political liberalism, pointing that her conception is not fully but only partially comprehensive (*i.e.* it names only these elements of a dignified values which citizens, qua citizens, have the right to claim; it does not speak about any other items which citizens may value on the basis of their fully comprehensive doctrines; Comim 2014, 132-135, see also Nussbaum 2007, 352). Indeed, Rawls makes such distinction as well. For him, however, the scope of comprehensiveness does not distinguish political conceptions from those non-political. For even if we limit a theory to constitutional essentials, as long as we cannot justify it without referring to a particular reasonable doctrine, it will remain comprehensive [Rawls 1993, 1996, 13]. This seems to be the case with Nussbaum's capabilities-based account of the good.

[8] Nussbaum mentions the following assumptions which secure the pluralist character of her approach: 1) the list of capabilities is open-ended and subject to revision, 2) the list is vague and general, 3) the list focuses on capabilities and not actual functioning, 4) the list protects all major liberties, 5) she separates justification of the list (which she offers) from its implementation (which she refrains from specifying) [Nussbaum 2007, 78-80].

Stoics. Although she only briefly summarizes these assumptions in her 2013 publication [Nussbaum 2013, 399-403], her broader philosophical perspective remains in the background of her inquiry. Most importantly, I will argue that the very fact that Nussbaum recognizes the relevance of emotions is largely due to her political conception of the person (drafted above), which later determines the details of her approach as well.

In terms of contemporary psychology, Nussbaum sympathizes with the cognitive approach, which sees emotions as intelligent responses to reality. However, what she derives from empirical research is, mostly, specific examples of emotional cognition. These she interprets by means of philosophical – Stoic and Aristotelian – tools which enable her to define the nature of emotions in general. Like Hellenistic philosophers, she *identifies* emotions with judgments of particular type, *i.e.* evaluative judgments in which we state that, because of their intrinsic worth, certain items are crucial to our flourishing (*eudaimonia*) [Nussbaum 2008, 19-36, Nussbaum 2009, 371-372]. Following Aristotle, in turn, Nussbaum underlines that, thus understood, emotions are crucial elements of our practical reasoning [Nussbaum 2009, 91]. This is because Nussbaum believes that emotions are usually directed at vulnerable goods [Nussbaum 2008, 42-43]. If emotions state the indispensability of certain internally valuable things to our *eudaimonia*, they are, more often than not, the admissions of certain lack and dependency on external factors [Nussbaum 2008, 42-43]. By allowing for emotions in our practical reasoning, we thus allow ourselves to be affected by uncontrollable events[9].

Obviously, then, Nussbaum's re-evaluation of emotions reflects her conception of the person. Human rationality is a rationality of an animal. When reasoning about our good, we have to take into account our vulnerability and, hence, make room for emotions. One of the most important spheres of emotional attachments is constituted by interpersonal relationships. This, given the eudaimonistic character of sentiments, means that, when directed at other people, emotions broaden our understanding of the good so that it includes the good of

[9] I focused on the connection between vulnerability and practical rationality in my earlier paper (Lisowska 2015).

others as well. Through emotions, we express the belief that, because of her intrinsic value, another person is crucial to our flourishing. Thus, Nussbaum's appeal to emotions reflects her ideal of human sociability presented in *Frontiers*. Rather than a mere system of the exchange of mutual advantage, society is the extension of our need to form interpersonal relationships for their own sake. These, in turn, are reflected by emotional attitudes. In this sense, Nussbaum's conception of the person motivates her interest in political emotions. Emotions record the awareness of vulnerability, which stems from human animality, and express the commitment to other people, thereby providing an outlet for human sociability.

The key political emotions

On the basis of the above considerations, several emotions emerge as necessary for the stability of the core values of a just society, as Nussbaum understands them. As I have suggested, this normative framework will prove viable only when citizens treat each other in a certain manner. Namely, they need to be capable of both respecting each other's dignity and of recognizing the vulnerability which goes with it. They have to acknowledge that their fellow citizens can be harmed while pursuing their ideas of happiness and, therefore, may need some external support to carry through their plans. These attitudes seem to be most aptly represented by three emotions.

First of all, there is the emotion of compassion, that is – a painful response to another creature's suffering, whereby the plight is judged as grave, undeserved and relevant to one's own flourishing [Nussbaum 2013, 142-146, Nussbaum 2008, 304-327]. However, a person's understanding of *eudaimonia* and the related scope of compassion are all too often narrow and exclusive. The other two key political emotions answer to this challenge. Therefore and secondly, there is wonder, "as non-eudaimonistic as an emotion can be" [Nussbaum 2008, 55]. As Nussbaum understands it, wonder consists in taking delight in an object for its own sake, without referring to one's previous idea of flourishing. Following Bendik-Keymer, we could say that, when directed at another person, wonder is the recognition of her dignity, *i.e.* her autonomous, non-instrumental value [Bendik-Keymer 2014]. In this sense it is "non-eudaimonistic". However, once we have *wondered at* a person, admiring

her inherent value, we may come to include her in our idea of a good life. We start to care for whom we find wonderful and in this way wonder can inspire eudaimonistic judgements [Nussbaum 2008, 54-55, Nussbaum 2013, 173-174].

Finally, love, helps us come to terms with our vulnerability. Drawing on psychological research, Nussbaum finds the origins of this emotion in a relationship between an infant and her parents (caretakers). The lovable behaviour of her parents gives the child the sense of security and enables her to approach the world with trust [Winnicott 1987]. She knows that, in spite of her weaknesses, there is something outside her that can be counted on. This basic experience is necessary if we are to accept human vulnerability and respond with compassion to somebody else's suffering. At the same time, we learn that political objectives hinge on intimate interpersonal bonds. Abstract principles *alone*, Nussbaum argues, would never teach us to treat other people in this manner. Since they do not give us such a sense of stability as the loving attention of another person does, they cannot facilitate the recognition of human vulnerability. We only begin to learn the values, which can later be abstracted in the form of principles, in concrete, emotion-infused relationships [Nussbaum 2008, 206-208, Nussbaum 2013, 174-177].

What is important is that these three sentiments – love, compassion and wonder – should all be cultivated in conjunction. This way, they can support, but also control each other. And so, love, to start with, cements communities, such as nations. Just as we gain first moral insights in the context of intimate relationships, so, too, we learn to broaden the scope of our concern in a nation, which binds citizens by means of familiar symbols, narratives and a common history [Nussbaum 2013, 205-256]. At the same time, compassion teaches love that it should be sensitive to any token of common humanity. In this way, it can both enrich one's understanding of the nation (by showing that previously excluded groups and individuals deserve to be included simply by virtue of their humanity) and extend the scope of concern towards other nations.

The third of the crucial political emotions – wonder – also needs to be checked by the other two. What political objectives require is not a purely contemplative type of wonder, which consists in simply rejoicing in the beauty of an object without taking any action in its support. On

the contrary, when citizens wonder at each other, they also have to see each other as valuable, needy human beings, for whom they care and whose objectives they are willing to aid. These insights are provided by love and compassion. At the same time, wonder influences the extent of these two sentiments. It teaches us that, by virtue of her dignity, another person deserves love and, in the event of a tragic event, compassion.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper has been to present Nussbaum's theory of political emotions and, at the same time, to assess her claim to political liberalism. Although the former is intended as the necessary completion of the latter, I have argued that Nussbaum can provide a detailed account of emotions only inasmuch as she transgresses the scope of political liberalism. The rough understanding of the human good implied by the Aristotelian conception of the person goes beyond the limits of the politico-liberal focus on citizenship alone. However, it is this conception that allows Nussbaum to include emotions – defined as the forms of practical reasoning – into her project. Emotions emerge as the attitudes expressive of our nature of rational and political animals. As such, they seem necessary for the stability of the political values tailored to the human condition, as Nussbaum understands it.

Thus, contrary to politico-liberal reservations, a more comprehensive background need not result in a potential instability. If anything, the account of the emotions supportive of Nussbaum's project provides it with robustness, which she rightly found missing in Rawls's conception. At the same time, her understanding of the good is pluralist enough to neutralize the charge of non-liberalism. The focus on dignity defined as each individual's right to pursue her own life goals and the central role of this value in the emotions of compassion and wonder speak of respect of pluralism. Therefore, it seems that, although Nussbaum does not meet all requirements of political liberalism, she lives up to its most important normative commitment.

REFERENCES

Alexander, John M., 2014, [in:] *Social Justice and Nussbaum's Conception of the Person*, [in:] F. Comim, M.C. Nussbaum (eds.), *Capabilities, Gender, Equality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 414-436;

Bendik-Keymer, Jeremy, 2014, [in:] *Social Justice and Nussbaum's Conception of the Person*, [in:] F. Comim, M.C. Nussbaum (eds.), *Capabilities, Gender, Equality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 175-191;

Comim, Flavio, 2014, [in:] *Social Justice and Nussbaum's Conception of the Person*, [in:] F. Comim, M.C. Nussbaum (eds.), *Capabilities, Gender, Equality*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 131-153;

Larmore, Charles E., 2001, *Patterns of Moral Complexity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

Larmore, Charles E., 2003, *The Morals of Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press;

Lisowska, Urszula, 2015, *Vulnerability as a perceptual category – Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach from the perspective of political aesthetics*, "Hybris" 28, pp. 116-140;

Okin, Susan M., 1999, *Reply*, [in:] J. Cohen et alt. (eds.), *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?,* Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp. 115-131;

Nussbaum, Martha C., 1987, *Nature, Function, Capability: Aristotle on Political Distribution Political Theory*, WIDER Working Paper 31;

Nussbaum, Martha C., 1992, *Human Functioning and Social Justice: In Defense of Aristotelian Essentialism*, "Political Theory", 20/2, pp. 202-246;

Nussbaum, Martha C., 2000, *Women and Human Development*. *The Capabilities Approach,* New York: Cambridge University Press;

Nussbaum, Martha C., 2003, *Political Liberalism and Respect*, "Sats – Nordic Journal of Philosophy", Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 28-29

Nussbaum, Martha C., 2007, *Frontiers of Justice. Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press;

Nussbaum, Martha C., 2008, *Upheavals of Thought. The Intelligence of Emotions*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2014;

Nussbaum, Martha C., 2009, *The Therapy of Desire. Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press;

Nussbaum, Martha C., 2011a, *Creating Capabilities. The Human Development Approach*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press;

Nussbaum, Martha C., 2011b, *Perfectionist and Political Liberalism*, "Philosophy and Public Affairs" 39, no. 1, 2011, pp. 3-45;

Nussbaum, Martha C., 2013, *Political Emotions. Why Love Matters for Justic*e, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press;

Nussbaum, Martha C., 2014, *Human Dignity and Bioethics: Essays Commissioned by the President's Council on Bioethics*, https://bioethicsarchive.georgetown.edu/pcbe/reports/human_dignity/chapter14.html, accessed: 31-10-2014;

Rawls, John, 1971, 1999, *A Theory of Justice. Revised Edition*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press;

Rawls, John, 1993, 1996, *Political Liberalism*, New York: Columbia University Press;

Sen, Amartya, 1981, *Poverty and the Famines. An Essays on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford: Clarendon Press;

Winnicott, Donald W., 1987, *The Child, the Family, and the Outside World*, Cambridge, MA: Perseus Publishing.

ABSTRACT

Political Liberalism and Political Emotions – an Unlikely Alliance? On Martha Nussbaum's Approach to Stability[10]

The paper offers a type of internal criticism of Martha Nussbaum's liberal political philosophy. On the one hand, Nussbaum's claims to political liberalism (as defined by Rawls) are questioned. It is argued that her capabilities-based liberalism remains committed to a broader, primarily Aristotelian account of the human condition. As a result, it exceeds the limits imposed by political liberalism with its focus on citizenship and non-comprehensive foundations of political regimes. On the other hand, the paper argues that Nussbaum's project can meet the basic normative objective of political liberalism. That is to say, it offers a convincing solution to the question: how can liberal values be stable in a society, given that liberalism endorses the plurality of acceptable normative doctrines? Nussbaum is able to address this issue, because her rich philosophical commitments allow her to complement liberal tenets with a compatible account of practical reasoning complementary. The paper focuses on one of the elements of this conception, i.e. Nussbaum's theory of emotions and their role in a political culture.

KEYWORDS: political liberalism, emotions, stability, dignity, human good

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: liberalizm polityczny, emocje, stabilność, godność, ludzkie dobro

[10] The project has been funded by the National Science Centre (Poland), based on the decision number DEC-2013/09/N/HS1/02864.