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Political Pedagogics and the Utopia of Education

A Comparison between Theodor W. Adorno and Martha Nussbaum

(Paper for the conference on pedagogics and utopia in Copenhagen on November 7th and 8th, 2014)*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When Thomas More wrote his *Utopia* in the beginning of the 16th century, education was an essential element of his portrayal. The society which the fictional narrator Raphael Hydlotheus got to know on the far distant island of Utopia was characterised by the absence of money, private property and class barriers. Because everyone had to work and no one could be idle at other people's expense, it was possible to restrict the number of working hours to six per day. So what did the people do in their free time? They educated themselves. There were various public lectures in the morning to which men and women flocked according to their interests and dispositions. Attendance was voluntary for everyone, except for those working in the scholarly professions. In the evening, after work was done, the Utopians devoted themselves to communal activities, sports and games, music and discussions. Utopia also had a division of labour and different professions, which latter were not separated by strict barriers. Not only was there sufficient time and opportunity to engage with intellectual matters, it was also possible to change from a craft to a scholarly occupation.

Marx, in his major work *Capital*, made honourable mention of the first book of *Utopia* (in connection with the so-called "primitive accumulation"). Even more important from our point of view, however, is the fact that Marx too, in the sparse fragments of his utopia, was in line with the old Humanist. Marx was not interested in many of the details of Utopia, such as the division of

* German version: Politische Pädagogik und die Utopie der Bildung. Adorno und Martha Nussbaum im Vergleich, in: Zeitschrift für kritische Theorie, 21. Jg. (2015), S. 9-25

labour among the sexes, or religion, which he surely also rejected. Central to his thinking, as to Thomas More's, was the idea that the purpose of a classless society was to enable man "education" and individual development. On the basis of necessary work, to be carried out "with the least physical effort and under conditions that are most suitable and appropriate to human nature", an "empire of freedom" would arise, where the development of human forces would be an end in itself.¹ Initially, these two aspects were designated as an "appropriation of the productive forces by united individuals".² Under the conditions of private property, the development of human forces takes the form of capital accumulation which confronts the individual, isolated as a commodity owner, with those forces as something alien, something that dominates him. In truth, however, human wealth was nothing other than the universality of needs and abilities created through universal exchange. Marx's tone becomes almost hymnal: real wealth is the "absolute elaboration of creative dispositions", "the complete elaboration of man's inward nature".³ Nor did Marx imagine Utopia as a fool's paradise or Land of Cockaigne; instead, real freedom was 'travail attractif', the self-realisation of the individual, not amusement, but "the most intense effort".⁴

There can hardly be any doubt that the Marxist Utopia also represents the attempt to establish the humanist educational utopia of all-round development under the conditions of industrialisation. What is more, his specific concept of alienation, which goes far beyond the concept of self-surrender to the object common to Humboldt and Hegel, is almost inconceivable without the contrasting foil of the utopia of education. Vice versa, the neo-humanistic concept of education had socio-philosophical implications that point to the Marxist critique of the modern relations of production. This is most evident in Wilhelm von Humboldt. According to Humboldt, the true purpose of man is the most proportionate development of his powers into a whole. This requires freedom and a diversity of situations,

¹ Karl Marx: *Das Kapital* Bd.3, MEW 25, p. 828.

² Karl Marx/ Friedrich Engels: *Die deutsche Ideologie*, MEW 3, p. 68.

³ Karl Marx: *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, MEW 42, p. 396.

⁴ *Ibid.* P. 512.

a demand which John Stuart Mill, referring to Humboldt, misunderstands as the need for the existence of different classes.⁵ With this demand, Humboldt actually wished to prevent people from being put into “unchanging situations”. Freedom is meaningless in a bourgeois society if a person is bound by monotonous activities. Of course Humboldt knew that one individual cannot “be able to do everything”, and that to develop a particular ability he had to concentrate on the activity on hand. According to Humboldt, one way of encountering this necessary one-sidedness was for people to form a group in which one could appropriate the abilities of the other. What was required was an “association of free men.”⁶ What is more, the individual could cultivate different focal points over time. This required a formal training which the state must ensure. Today we would say, in keeping with the UN declaration of October 1948, that education is a human right. It must be available to everyone, for, to quote Humboldt, “the commonest day labourer and the finest graduate must originally be given the same mental training unless human dignity is to be disregarded in the former, and the latter allowed to fall victim to unworthy sentimentality and chimera”.⁷ Humboldt believes therefore that: “to have also learned Greek could be just as useful for the cabinet-maker as the ability to make tables for the scholar.”⁸

Despite the fact that Humboldt held high offices within the Prussian State, his ideal of education was never realised without certain features being curtailed. His idea of a university had an impact through the foundation of the first one in Berlin (1809) and thanks to those elements of his concept of education that could function in the interests of social distinction, not least

⁵ John Stuart Mill: *Über die Freiheit*, Stuttgart 1988, p. 101. Cf. Humboldt: *Ideen zu einem Versuch, die Grenzen der Wirksamkeit des Staates zu bestimmen*, Werke 1, p. 64f.

⁶ Humboldt, *ibid.*, p. 142

⁷ Humboldt: *Der litauische Schulplan*, Werke 4, p. 189.

⁸ *Ibid.*

through an emphasis on inner spirituality.⁹ It is for this traditional concept of education that Adorno holds the funeral address in his *Theory of Half Education*. Education was conceived as a subjective appropriation of intellectual culture¹⁰ as opposed to those cultural elements involving the mastery of external nature and the cultivation of external human relations, that is to say, those elements that were subsumed under the heading of civilisation, and which, in Germany, were soon also excluded from the realm of actual culture. Through this illusory independence and the hardened front towards external life, the spirit came into conflict with itself; it claimed to be the realm of reconciliation, which it can be at most denote by remaining conscious of its dependence on social structures.

If, therefore, the bourgeois concept of education became a shell without substance in the course of the 20th century, then a judgement was being enforced which it had long since provoked: in the *Dialectics of the Enlightenment* we read:

“Cultural education spread with bourgeois property. ... But since the real emancipation of mankind did not take place with the enlightenment of the mind, education itself became diseased. The greater the distance between the educated consciousness and social reality, the more it was itself exposed to the process of reification. Culture became wholly a commodity disseminated as information without permeating the individuals who acquired it. Thought became restricted to the acquisition of isolated facts. Conceptual relationships were rejected as uncomfortable and useless effort.”¹¹

This citation contains, in a nutshell, the theory of half education. Half education is an external relationship to the traditional contents of education, a knowing that replaces vital understanding, real experience. Unlike a complete lack of education, half education hypostasises limited knowledge,

⁹ Cf. Humboldt: Über die Verschiedenheiten des menschlichen Sprachbaues und ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts [Einleitung zum Kawi-Werk], Werke 3, p. 401, 409

¹⁰ Cf. Adorno: Theorie der Halbbildung, in: Gesammelte Schriften 8, p. 94

¹¹ Horkheimer/ Adorno: Dialectics of Enlightenment, New York 1972, p. 172.

covers the world with a network of projections. It tends towards delusional system constructs made up of snippets of real or supposed science. Paranoia's drive-economy, which Adorno, like Freud, tried to decipher,¹² is the economy of one's own repressed longing. Whoever has the delusion of being persecuted, wants to persecute, and the person persecuted represents desires which the persecutor is capable neither of satisfying nor of admitting to himself.¹³ Projective mechanisms are part of human cognition and they are deeply rooted in the evolution of the human species. Projection becomes pathic, however, when the capacity to reflect breaks down. As delusion only thrives in the absence of reflection on one's own projective responses, it is also favoured by the social conditions of capitalism which promote a conviction of having escaped from, and being superior to, the dark Middle Ages, the ideas of primitive peoples and the speculations of the philosophers. Those social conditions, however, undermine a thinking aimed at objectivity by degrading education itself, which only thrives under conditions of leisure, to the status of an economic tool. In turn, the objective coherence of society confronts the individual like a foreign power that rejects understanding at the surface.¹⁴ Which is why "the fatal conventicles and panaceas" thrive: theosophy, numerology, astrology etc.

For Adorno, the economisation of education initially meant that cultural commodities take on the form of goods produced with a view to their commodity function. Half education is the term that corresponds to the culture industry, and no one can eschew it. The economic principle had long since been represented in the educational institutions themselves, in the very objective of education: what was learnt had to be useful for a later profession, for gainful employment. Since the late 1960s, a change has taken place in those institutions – I am speaking here about conditions in

¹² Cf. Sigmund Freud: Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse, 16 Kapitel, sowie ders.: Psychoanalytische Betrachtungen über einen autobiographisch beschriebenen Fall von Paranoia [Schreber], in: Studienausgabe Bd 7, esp. P- 172, 189f.

¹³ Horkheimer/Adorno: Dialektik der Aufklärung, Frankfurt 1969, p. 208 f.

¹⁴ Cf. Adorno: Meinung, Wahn, Gesellschaft in: Gesammelte Schriften 10, p. 579.

Germany – a change which was still only on the horizon in Adorno's time. Professional education (Ausbildung) has asserted itself to the disadvantage of education (Bildung). The humanities are disappearing from universities, as Martha Nussbaum indicated for the United States in her book *Not for Profit. Why democracy needs the humanities*. Professional education produces a commodity, the manpower of the graduate or school-leaver. It is the task of schools and universities to regulate their output in keeping with commercial objectives. Education itself is becoming an economic production process, involving the application of principles of rational production management: the cost-benefit ratio must be right. This end is served by regulated standard study durations and study fees. What is more: teaching itself has been subjected to economic categories, without inquiring whether or not such a subsumption does justice to the process of appropriating scientific knowledge. Since its introduction around 1800, the marking system has been an instrument for promoting competition among students with a view to their later professional prospects. The introduction of ECTS Grades was intended to close the last loopholes and intensify the administrative sorting of the respective human material. The learning process is subjected to abstract time, as if it were an activity similar to factory or office work. Many of the new achievements amount to pure ideology, which still does not correspond to reality, and, like the dreadful work-load, resembles the villages of Prince Potemkin. Yet the ideology still has its impact, and the indirect syllabus is no secret: all those involved should learn to view their activities in economic terms, according to the categories of usefulness and instrumental rationality, exchange value and competition. These developments must be seen as an intensification of the problems which Adorno examined. All this has nothing whatsoever to do with education in the traditional sense.

According to Adorno, the traditional concept of education has a heuristic function, irrespective of its irrevocable erosion. Remembering the wrong past (wrong because linked with privilege and power-supported inwardness) facilitates a closer scrutiny of the wrong present. For Adorno, implementing a utopia of education, in the sense of More, Humboldt and Marx, was no

longer a practicable goal. Which does not mean, of course, that he ascribed no practical significance to the realm of education, or that he would pursue no practical aims with his theoretical considerations on education. On the contrary. Adorno certainly raised his voice in the late 1950s, when Swastikas were being increasingly daubed on Jewish cemeteries in the Federal Republic, for example, and when attitudes to the Nazi past became a topic in the public domain as a result of the Auschwitz Trial from 1963 to 1965.¹⁵ His views were collected in a series of essays published under the heading *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit / Education for Maturity and Responsibility*, which is surely Adorno's most widely read book. In place of a utopia of education is a political pedagogics of prevention, whose aim is to ensure that Auschwitz is never repeated. The main objective of this pedagogics is the capacity for self-reflection. The concept of responsibility contains the old bourgeois aspiration to autonomy through enlightenment. Meantime however the more modest hope was that people would no longer be willing to lash out blindly.¹⁶

Adorno's proposals on education policy are in keeping with his earlier analysis, in the 1940s, of personality types with hostile attitudes towards ethnically or socially designated groups. Whereas his concrete proposals for action are specific to his time, his general objectives are still binding. What Adorno regarded as "most important of all" was to "counteract the blind supremacy of all collectives".¹⁷ Man's "powers of reflection, self-determination, non-cooperation" had to be promoted.¹⁸ This applied initially at the ideological level, at which the effectiveness of nationalism deserved particular attention. But it also applied at the level of everyday practice, where painful initiation rites played a role: one has only to think of the military, of sports clubs and school classes. The aim of such initiation rites is to make the individual feel the power of the collective. They strengthen the

¹⁵ Cf. Klaus Ahlheim, Mattias Heyl (Hg.): Adorno revisited. *Erziehung nach Auschwitz und Erziehung zur Mündigkeit heute*, Hannover 2010. Vgl. ebenso Thomas von Freyberg: *Tantalus und Sisyphos in der Schule. Zur strukturellen Verantwortung der Pädagogik*, Frankfurt/Main 2009.

¹⁶ Adorno: *Education after Auschwitz* p.87

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 92.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 90.

fatal mix of masochism and sadism that is expressed in the “ideal of harshness”.

“The lauded harshness means indifference towards pain at all (...) Whoever is hard with himself earns the right to be hard with others as well, and avenges himself for the pain whose manifestations he was not allowed to show and had to repress. This mechanism must be made conscious, just as an education must be promoted that no longer sets a premium on pain and the ability to endure pain.”¹⁹

For Adorno, the inability to identify, to feel sympathy, is the most important psychological prerequisite for what is called tagging along, being a fellow traveller.²⁰ As we shall see, Martha Nussbaum devoted a lot of attention to promoting empathy, more than Adorno, who did not go beyond a general recommendation to remain open-minded about the needs of the child.²¹ But his explanation of the capacity to sympathise refers to the social relations in which private property and competition play a decisive role. What is called “fellow travelling” was primarily business interests: not standing out, maintaining one’s advantage.²² The unusual combination of economic individualism – Adorno speaks of “isolated monads” – and politico-ideological collectivism is characteristic of the modern world, whose capitalist production takes place in the framework of a nation state (or the community of nation states). One must ask oneself, for example, if nation states are not perhaps necessarily dependent on exclusive collective ideologies, both outwardly and inwardly. They require an enemy and an inner class of people who do not belong, because there is no other way of unifying those subsumed in that class. What is termed constitutional patriotism – to which Nussbaum also adheres – could quickly turn out to be a pleasant illusion, an impossible distinction. Adorno did not pursue this question, although he firmly rejected the distinction between nationalism and chauvinism.²³

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 93.

²⁰ Ibid. p. 98.

²¹ Ibid., p. 99.

²² Ibid. p. 98.

²³ Adorno: Meinung, Wahn, Gesellschaft l.c. p.589

Adorno has described a particular type of the authoritarian personality described as a “manipulative character” in his studies on authoritarianism.²⁴ This type of personality is willing to treat others as an amorphous masse to be manipulated. This person’s features include activism, lack of emotion and an exaggerated realism: he wants the world to remain exactly as it is, glorifies nature as the realm of the struggle for survival. People with a manipulative character are always ready and willing to organise something, they are “obsessed by the will to do things”.²⁵ (94) Their god is efficiency, their consciousness reified. The concept of reification goes back to Marx, who used it to signify that relations between individuals can take on the objective form of a social relationship between things, namely, commodities. If only the features of the relata can become active in a relationship, according to Marx, then the social relationship is also reified in the individual commodity. The concept that lends this expression is termed “fetishism”, meaning that social functions such as value, universal exchangeability and surplus value are ascribed to the individual commodity, to money, to capital. In the wake of George Lukacs, who made the concept of reification known, it was extended to all modes of thinking and behaviour in which the social origin of an object is concealed. Furthermore, and alluding to psychology, one can now also speak of fetishism in the context of everything that has been charged with emotion (cathexis). The fetishisation of technology is socially relevant as it exhibits an autistic element. Love which has run cold towards people can be absorbed by machines and appliances: cars, high-speed trains, computers, airplanes, etc. “The means – and technology is the essence of the human species’ self-preservatory means – are fetishized because the end – a dignified human life – is concealed and cut off from consciousness”.²⁶

Supposing that a dignified life is a name for utopia, we can recognise that the utopian notion is a contrast foil for discovering essential elements of the present society. In fact, criticism and utopia are connected very closely. They

²⁴ Adorno: *Autoritäre Persönlichkeit*, Frankfurt 1973, p. 334 ff.

²⁵ Adorno: *Education after Auschwitz*, p. 94

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 97

can sharpen each other. When we try to realize concepts like dignity or liberty, equality or maturity we may reach certain social limits. In those situations we have two opportunities. We can blame the human nature in general or we can transform these ideas in utopian concepts requiring a change of property-relations and therefore a change of society as a whole. In the famous conversation with Ernst Bloch (under the heading “Something is missing”) Adorno emphasizes three issues. First: no single concept like freedom can designate utopia, necessary is a connection of concepts. Second: it is not allowed to depict a utopian state, and third: the “abolition of death” (“Abschaffung des Todes”) is an essential element of utopia.

Let me make two notes. Concerning the second issue Adorno is quite in line with Marx, who required confidence in the workers movement. Every depiction of utopia denies, according to Marx, that the realisation has to be a concretisation of the ends by men and women realising them. If there is no confidence in a real movement, the matter is completely changing. So Adorno refers to the old religious prohibition of making an image of God, when he speaks about the prohibition of depicting utopia. We see the same attempt to bring the social utopia in a religious context, when we regard the third issue, “the abolition of death”. Certainly, death is a crucial problem in human existence and the consciousness of death or the repression of it is also an issue of social philosophy. Furthermore, dying can be a political matter in many concerns. Nevertheless, the abolition of death is no practical end for human beings; if it is an essential element of utopia, the realisation of the best society is definitely impossible.

Back to the ends of education, it is interesting it is interesting to see a similarity with Adorno in the reflections of Martha Nussbaum, one of the most productive philosophers of the present day. Also for Nussbaum, education has a political function: to counteract the willingness to think in friend-enemy categories and to dehumanise and reify others. Nussbaum also avails of psychological insight, especially the psychology of early childhood. Her aims – principally the capacities for introspection and empathy – coincide largely with those of Adorno. These similarities should not really surprise us, for although the concrete situation today differs from that of the

1940s to 60s in important aspects, not least in the degree of global economic interpenetration, nonetheless, the mechanisms which have to be reckoned with psychologically, are essentially the same. Even the groups at which the hostility is aimed have partly remained the same, although in European countries mass immigration from less developed countries is relatively new. As Adorno often emphasises,²⁷ the structure of ethnocentric phenomena is the same, should Jews or Blacks, Roma or others be effected. The brutal rejection of people in need belongs in the same context.

The first common point in the goal setting concerns introspection. The concept of introspection or self-reflection in Adorno is certainly influenced by psychoanalysis, while Nussbaum's "self-scrutiny" signifies a "Socratic self-examination" aimed at grounding and argumentatively defending one's own attitudes and intentions with a view to the common good.²⁸ Yet there can be no doubt that Adorno's "self-reflection" also implies an argumentative self-examination: the path from rationalisation to rationality. Vice versa, the Socratic examination of what we consider to be self-evident is also dependent on the critical observation of our own motives. "Although logic will not get us to love one another, it may get us to stop pretending that we have rational arguments for our refusals of sympathy."²⁹ Between Adorno's "self-reflection" and Socratic self-examination there is not only a complementary relationship, but also a necessary connection. If Socratic self-examination as understood by Martha Nussbaum has the task of questioning customary ways of thinking and of seeking alternatives to the conventional,³⁰ then the critical questioning of the categories (modes of thought) of the market, which Adorno both undertakes and advises, must be part of such a challenge. After all, the ability to recognise fallacies in public debates and to maintain a critical distance towards mainstream opinions is not only the goal of "Socratic pedagogics", for which Nussbaum pleads, but also an essential feature of what Adorno understands by maturity.

²⁷ For example: *Zur Bekämpfung des Antisemitismus heute*, Gesammelte Schriften 20, p. 373

²⁸ Cf. Martha Nussbaum: *Cultivating humanity*, p.25

²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 36

³⁰ Cf. *Ibid.* p. 22

Promotion of the capacity for pity, the second goal beside the Socratic attitude, has to start in early childhood, in the interaction between child and caregiver. However, possibilities of promoting that capacity still exist later on. Nussbaum's point of departure is the claim made by Rousseau in his *Emile* that, in addition to the natural disinclination to see others suffer, a certain amount of imagination is required to be capable of pity. And what could better promote the powers of imagination than literature, both in dramatic and in epic form?

"... colleges and universities must give a central role in the curriculum to the humanities and the arts, cultivating a participatory type of education that activates and refines the capacity to see the world through another person's eyes."³¹

Nussbaum takes up the determinants of Aristotelian poetics and highlights the great tragedies, such as the *Trojan Women* by Euripides or *Philoctetes* by Sophocles, along with examples from the present and the more recent past. It is no coincidence that tragedy, which Aristotle claims awakens fear and pity, blossomed in Athens, where people were proud of their democracy and their equality. And as Rousseau recognised, pity contains an element of equality. Nussbaum writes:

"In a compassionate response to the suffering of another, one comprehends that being prosperous or powerful does not remove one from the ranks of needy humanity. Such reminders ... are likely to lead to a more beneficent treatment of the weak."³²

Socratic self-examination and critical argumentation, as well as empathy with others, as practised in the production and reception of literary works, are not recent inventions. The unavoidable question however is, why, over two and a half thousand years, these capacities have not led to the promotion of democratic relations, and to the prevention of a relapse into barbaric behaviour patterns. According to Nussbaum, anthropological factors have to be taken into account. "The sources of irrationality in human

³¹ Nussbaum: Not for profit. Why democracy needs the humanities, p. 96.

³² Nussbaum: Cultivating humanity, p. 91.

life are many and profound.”³³ Although she mentions the effectiveness of political and legislative institutions,³⁴ her thoughts remain quite general at this point. Of course, we may not forget that Adorno too, in the face of the fascist horror, placed his concept of social calamity at a very deep level, namely, in the very roots of culture and civilisation. But his conception, as grounded in the *Dialectics of the Enlightenment*, remains a socio-philosophical, and above all, a historically reflected conception, formed around the centre of the production of human wealth, i.e., around the social forms of self-preservation. While no concept of political economy and social dominance is to be found in Martha Nussbaum, Adorno pointed clearly to the limits of education. Those limits lie, above all, in the economic structures, in the authority of the conditions that rehearse obedience to the representatives of those conditions. “The most complete possible adaptation of the subject to the reified authority of the economy” is the character of reason in the bourgeois society.³⁵ Consequently, the problem of authoritarianism may not be restricted to those violent and hate-filled characters who are the products of an authoritarian upbringing and from among whom the rank and file of persecution are recruited.

Nussbaum sees the main cause of social calamity in the psychological situation of the small child, respectively, in a certain form of that situation which represents an anthropological constant. She refers to research on infants, to authors like Fairbairn, Winnicott and Daniel Stern. According to her analysis, hostility towards certain groups (foreigners, homosexuals, minorities, the handicapped or socially declassed) is due to an interplay of narcissism, shame and disgust. In its early stages the human situation is characterised by a unique mix of helplessness, cognitive competence and blissful satiation. The striving for this state never dies, but it is thwarted by the experience of helplessness and dependence. The small child reacts with the desire to transform his or her parents into slaves of his or her needs. The outcome of this existential conflict, inherent in the human condition and so

³³ Ibid. p. 27

³⁴ Nussbaum: *Upheavals of thought*, p. 226

³⁵ Horkheimer: *Autorität und Familie*, in: *Gesammelte Schriften* 3, p. 336 – 417, p. 372 f.

dangerous regarding an education for democracy, is the result of a humiliation that forbids one to confess to his own weakness. We thus arrive at the “ideal of harshness” of which Adorno speaks. It coalesces with the feeling of disgust, which does not seem to emerge before a child’s third year of life.³⁶

“In disgust ... we reject as contaminating those things – feces, other bodily waste products, and the corpse – that are the evidence of our own animality and mortality, and thus of our helplessness in important matters.”³⁷

This disgust can then be projected onto others “as contaminating or defiling, turning them into an underclass”.³⁸ So the pathetic projection is also given due attention by Nussbaum, but without consideration of its ideological character and its aggressive addiction to persecution.

Unfortunately, Nussbaum’s statements on social psychology are not consistent. There are three objections. First I think that the emphasis on humiliation or making someone ashamed leads to the neglect of important aspects in upbringing. Where is the hostility aroused by the parental action, in particular by prohibitions and refusal to fulfil the child’s desires? The mechanism of projection of negative properties onto out-groups must remain a riddle, with not making reference to the displacement of hostility. The second objection is: When dealing with the psychology of early childhood Nussbaum does indeed take permanent personality structures into account.³⁹ But as regards the famous experiments by Milgram and Zimbardo, she comes to the conclusion that “bad behaviour is not just the result of a diseased individual upbringing or a diseased society. It is a possibility for apparently decent people, under certain circumstances.”⁴⁰ This thesis, which probably alludes, among other things, to Erich Fromm and Adorno’s studies of authoritarianism, raises the question: How to explain the remarkable percentage of people who did not allow themselves be

³⁶ Cf. Nussbaum, *Upheavals* p. 204

³⁷ Nussbaum: *Not for profit*, p. 32.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Cf. *Upheavals in Thought*, 174-237.

⁴⁰ Nussbaum: *Not for profit*, p. 42

seduced into bad behaviour through the conditions of the experiments?⁴¹
 There is no automatic relationship between circumstances and conduct. Instead of blaming the seductability of human beings in general, it would be necessary to identify those personality traits which enable non-cooperation and strengthen the ability of saying no.

My third objection is: Although Nussbaum remarks that “particular social and political structures make a big difference to the outcome”⁴² of the early childhood crises, she seems to be caught in the same psychologism trap which had already denied Freud deeper insight. The institutions seem to have a psychological origin: “... the narcissistic child’s original desire to turn parents into slaves finds fulfilment – by the creation of a social hierarchy.”⁴³ Adorno had rejected as misguided Freud’s claim that sociology was nothing more than applied psychology.⁴⁴ The family circumstances in which the psychological drives are formed undoubtedly shape the way in which adults also feel and act, but they do not explain social categories such as property, exchange and production conditions, dominance or state. To put it more pointedly: When disgust projects the repulsive features onto a particular group, then the existence of that group as a lower class is not the result of the projection, it is its prerequisite. Slavery and colonial rule produce racism, not vice versa. If workers are rare at shareholders’ parties, then the problem is not exclusion, but the fact that there are workers and shareholders. Prejudices against Sinti and Roma are not the reason why they live on the periphery of society in many European countries, but because they are ostracised they are suitable as the object of projections.

That Nussbaum ignores economic categories like property and competition is a serious flaw in her otherwise so instructive considerations of narcissism,

⁴¹ Cf. On „personism“ and „situationism“, the essay by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr on the critical theory of psychic and political authoritarianism, in: Ruschig/ Schiller (eds.): Staat und Politik bei Horkheimer und Adorno, Baden-Baden 2014, pp. 41 - 59

⁴² Nussbaum: Not for profit, p. 30.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 33

⁴⁴ Cf. Wissenschaftliche Erfahrungen in Amerika, Stichworte 135 as well as Freud’s Introductory Lectures to Psychoanalysis, Chapter 35, p. 606

shame and disgust. The ideal of harshness has military connotations, but it is also an economic ideal. So as to be able to focus without illusion on the economic conditions, what is required is a distance which only a utopia, a gaze from nowhere, can facilitate. The absence of analytical stringency is also an absence of utopia. In Book IX of Plato's *Politeia*, Glaukon summarises that the state they have designed is to be found nowhere on earth (oudamou). It is a non-place, ou topos. Yet the design, as Socrates says, is binding. This is the place to which More refers when coining the term "utopia". When the fictional narrator Raphael sees himself confronted with scepticism as to whether social injustice, the division into poor and rich, can ever be changed, he transitions to his narrative with the words: "I'm not surprised that you think that way; you cannot form an image, or only a false one."⁴⁵ Today the images are worn out, and constructions like Plato's have to stand up to the criticism of being elitist and not doing justice to the modern demand of freedom in a utopia. The fact is that the "association of free men"⁴⁶ is the best formulation that can characterize utopia today. It implies the abolition of class barriers, as conceived by More and Marx. The utopia thus described requires historical concretisation in emancipatory practice. Adorno was of the opinion that such a practice was not possible for the time being. So it seems all the more important to secure the utopian hopes of the past, and to realize that education, in a very comprehensive sense, is an integral component of utopia.

⁴⁵ Thomas More, *Utopia*, p. 57

⁴⁶ Marx: *Capital*, vol. 1, MEW 23, p. 92

