

Review Of Boni, Alexjandra And Walker, Melanie, (editors), *Human Development And Capabilities: Re-imagining The University Of The Twenty-first Century*. Routledge, Abingdon, 2013.

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In these times of turmoil, social institutions can surreptitiously shift their purpose and aspirations, under the guise of responding to the turbulent situations. Education is one of those social institutions, and the purpose of education in society is changing from the public, social and common good, to becoming the handmaid of the market economy. Higher education, with the intrinsic dividends to graduates, academic personnel, the HE institutions, in cultural as well as economic terms, is particularly prone to these shifts. Boni and Walker's collection is timely in grappling with the issues of the encroachment of the neo-liberal agenda, at the expense of the social responsibilities of HE institutions to respond to the challenges of social injustice and inequality.

This collection frames these discussions around human development and the capability approach. Human development is embedded in the humanistic tradition, underpinning human rights and ultimately, human well-being. The concept of capabilities is closer to the Maslow's self-actualisation, embedded in humanistic psychology. It has the advantage over Maslow's thinking in that it focuses on what makes a person's life valuable, in contrast to achieving that person's potential, regardless of ethical considerations.

URL: <http://ojs.aishe.org/index.php/aishe-j/article/view/127>

The collection provides arguments on the various facets of this framework, from the theoretical, through the implications for policy makers and finally, exploring the issues in implementing the human development and capabilities approach within higher education. The articles consider the centrality of higher education in human development, but also, significantly, the public and social good. This is a vital argument, as egalitarians argue that the humanistic approach institutionalises individualism at the expense of the social and collective, and in many ways, creates the environment for neo-liberalism. Walker and Boni look at the subject from the perspectives of how we think about higher education, how we frame human capital, the status of higher education and finally, the epistemological challenges of inequality in knowledge: access, production, dissemination and use. This is a vital contribution, and it fortifies the collection with its exploration of fundamental principles underpinning higher education.

The strengths of this collection include the global perspectives that ensure that the discussions within the articles are relevant across time and space. In her chapter on capabilities and global identity, Crosbie examines the constructs that inform her work: power, pedagogy and participation. She underpins this exploration with the Freirean lens of reading the world in all its complexity. This perspective is humanistic, congruent with the overall thrust of the book, but it is also radical, with the intention of changing the world, rather than merely recounting it. This is in contrast with the discussion on global citizenship, (Landorf and Doscher) which is subject to the discourses surrounding interconnectedness and interdependence, instead of the analysis of power and influence. Inequality and oppression flourish while attention is focused elsewhere, but in turn, this is addressed somewhat in the chapter by Unterhalter, who poses the vital question: what is wrong with global inequality in higher education? This discussion is vibrant with the underlying question that this book poses, the social emancipatory purpose of education.

The collection is filled with thoughtful and reflexive perspectives. In particular, the use of tables is illuminating. Table 3.2 on page 37 conveys the complexity of pedagogy. Pedagogy is the key interface between the institution and the population and the notion of pedagogic rights is very powerful. However, another telling nugget is Table 16.1, page 222, which shows the complexity of the capabilities approach, and again integrates the micro/personal with the macro/structural and institutional. But in this case, it conflates employment and income with civic discussion and action. This conflation echoes my concerns when the role of education is considered. We have witnessed how easy it is to take emancipatory theoretical perspectives and practices and tame them for the market place, in the guise of responding to changing conditions, from widening access to economic collapse. This collection goes a long way towards highlighting that it is possible to have economic progress as a subset of social development, rather than the other way around.