Book Review

Reviewer:
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In this book, Burke, Crozier and Misiaszek question the extent to which universities support the participation of diverse groups, or exclude groups through standardising or homogenising practices. They critique dominant conceptions of 'inclusion', arguing that, too often, such efforts are in fact forms of symbolic violence in that they force individuals to conform to dominant values, identities and practices. In place of these dominant conceptions, the authors call for 'pedagogic participation', which requires "'parity of participation' in relation to the social justice struggles of redistribution, recognition and representation" (Burke *et al.* 2017:3). Indeed, these three notions form the cornerstone of their argument: simply redistributing opportunities to communities who have been denied such, while crucial, is meaningless without simultaneously recognising the value that different perspectives and knowledges can bring to higher education, and providing opportunities for these perspectives to gain representation.

A strength of this book is its conceptual depth. The initial chapters, as well as the concluding chapter, provide a lucid and consistent mapping of the forces that have led to higher education becoming complicit in "a politics of misrecognition". These forces (neoliberalism, globalisation, neoconservatism, corporatisation, managerialism, to name only some), coupled with discourses of 'excellence', 'performativity', 'rankings', 'measurement' and 'datafication', have meant that higher education has ignored "deeply embedded and complex histories of misrecognition, creating new forms of inequality, stratification and exclusion" (Burke *et al.* 2017:11). The authors take the position that "pedagogical spaces must be reshaped in relation to broader social justice imperatives, that foreground higher education as an institution that bears social responsibility"; and that "the right to higher education tends to be understood in terms of individual ability, efficacy, potential and hard work, rather than as shaped by structural, cultural and institutional inequalities and misrecognitions"

(Burke *et al.* 2017:132,134). As such, one of the main tenets of their argument is that "transforming pedagogies for social justice relies on equitable distributive, recognition and representation processes that work with and through difference" (Burke *et al.* 2017:134). Throughout the book, there are similar powerful statements that speak to the enormous pressures facing institutions of higher education, and how these pressures are in turn transferred, inequitably, to its participants – teachers and students alike.

Where I found this book wanting was in its methodological claims. Burke, Crozier and Misiaszek (2017:49) introduce readers to 'pedagogical methodology' which, they argue, seeks to create "counter-hegemonic spaces in higher education for social justice pedagogies of and for difference". Such an approach is supposed to allow educators and students to reflect on their pedagogical experiences and locate these within wider social contexts, inequalities and exclusions. According to the authors, this methodology involves generating critical reflection on praxis so as to develop new ways of knowing through new ways of working with people. However, the ways in which data is presented and handled within the book (in chapters four through eight) does little to exemplify these 'new' ways of knowing and working with people. Instead, the authors rely on the traditional forms of individual interviews and focus group discussions. Although one of the appendices speaks to further aspects of the research undertaken (workshops, student engagement sessions), these sites of engagement do not appear to make their way into the authors' text.

As such, when one participant lecturer admits that he is "intimidated by the group of Black boys at the back" (as part of a lengthy quote and discussion in chapter four), there is little sense of how the transformative impetus behind 'pedagogical methodology' has, or might have, engaged this teacher in critical reflection regarding his perception of his black male students as 'dangerous' and the disrespect he shows by referring to them as 'boys'. Similarly, it is unclear where and how this lecturer might "deepen [his] understanding of gendered identities, inequalities and pedagogies and to feed in to the process of developing inclusive practice" (Burke *et al.* 2017:140). As a result, it is unclear what the basis is for the authors' conclusion that the spaces opened up by 'pedagogical methodology' are constituted both "through and *beyond the research*" (Burke *et al.* 2017:135, emphasis in original). The idea of pedagogical methodology seems to be a promising one, but its exemplification herein perhaps fails to demonstrate how it differs from traditional observational methodologies.

One of the challenges facing texts of this nature is the need to offer practical implications, for policy and for practice. Much has been written regarding the pervasive marketisation of higher education; yet, despite the reams of paper devoted to this topic, the neoliberal agenda continues apace, perhaps stronger than ever. Students, teachers, policy-makers and university management increasingly 'buy-in' – sometimes reluctantly but often not – to the measurement discourses used to evaluate and rank higher education institutions, their staff and, more indirectly, their students. This is due, in part, to the dearth of practical guidance offered within the literature. To this end, Burke and colleagues do offer some practical advice: the need for a "structured framework to tackle issues of pedagogical exclusions and inequalities"; the need to embed discussions of race, class and gender within higher education curricula; and the need to pay close attention to spaces, physical and virtual, within higher education and the ways in which they constrain, or enable, pedagogy and 'belonging' (Burke *et al.* 2017:141). These are useful suggestions, but it obviously remains for readers to reflect on the suggestions the authors proffer and the usefulness thereof within a range of particular contexts.

Burke, Crozier and Misiaszek (2017:141) argue that higher education needs to interrogate "neo-liberal and other intersecting political forces that are seeped in the perpetuation and widening of inequalities". They continue: institutions need to give "attention to the politics of knowledge, representation and meaning-making to address complex questions of epistemic access ... [through] inclusive pedagogies and curriculum that recognise the experiences, histories and knowledges of those communities that have been historically marginalised in and excluded from higher education" (Burke *et al.* 2017:142). As such, this book speaks to debates raging across the 'global South', despite the fact that its origin is the United Kingdom. This book reminds us that teaching and learning is about "ways of being and doing that are shaped and reformed through gendered, classed and racialized practices" (Burke *et al.* 2017:138).