Conference Melanie Walker

Capabilities and what else? Principles for praxis pedagogies in higher education

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Introduction

Universities have as their core functions research, teaching, professional education and diverse forms of public engagement (including knowledge exchange and partnerships). This technically describes their main functions but gives us little for thinking about justice, nor does it tell us about a normative view of the purposes of higher education which ought to inform education policy, institutional practices, pedagogical processes and global relations. The point to be made is that we do not, any of us, live in the best of possible worlds, and higher education ought to be engaged in leading and responding to the complex human understanding and judgements demanded by what Habermas describes as the 'moral urgencies' of our age in Europe and the wider world. To whom do higher education graduates and higher education institutions owe justice?

Paolo Blasi puts the case well when he writes that:

> the challenge of the European society today is to go beyond 'the knowledge society, and to evolve into what could be called 'the wisdom society'. Knowledge is conscious use of information; 'wisdom' means choosing one's behaviour on the basis of knowledge and shared values, in order to enhance the well-being of all, and the awareness that personal actions have social consequences (quoted in Marga, 2008, p117)

My concern is specifically with what this means for the humanistic and cultural gaols of universities, and particularly pedagogical processes and the acquisition and dialogical co-construction of knowledge by undergraduates in a research environment. What students are able to know, to become and to be through higher education is a critical project for selves, society and global others, while equally significant is that diverse students have equal opportunities through the just design of pedagogical arrangements to become and be what they value.

What is needed is explicit attention to pedagogies of/for human development, defined by the United Nations Development Programme as, 'creating an environment in which people can develop their full potential and lead productive, creative lives in accord with their needs and interests'. The normative goal ought to be that higher education contributes substantially to individual and social quality of life and well being, and to improving human lives and societies through the formation of human capabilities to be and to do what people value being and doing for good lives, to

exercise genuine choices and to participate in equal decision-making that affects their lives. The goal of human development is understood to be 'freedom' to exercise genuine choices and to participate in decision-making that effects people's lives. It is reinforced by human rights which help to secure the well-being and dignity of all people, building self respect and the respect of others. To take up human and social development is also to orient universities to global concerns and obligations to human well being, and not just economic growth at any cost.

I therefore set out to draft three core principles for praxis pedagogies which are transformative, critical, and attentive both to knowledge and to responsible action in society. Such praxis pedagogies which would be shaped by a 'thick' version of equity which seeks to rebalance personal development, economic opportunities and social goals, which fosters equality, which connects universities to society, and which promotes a wide variety of ends in pluralist and democratic societies. Praxis pedagogies would be shaped by two basic principles: that each person is of equal moral worth and dignity (Nussbaum, 2000) and that their educational achievements matter individually and socially in making human lives go better.

Higher education goals

I first turn to the goals of higher education which shape the context and environment within which teaching and pedagogy takes place. In a recent plenary address, Brighouse (2007) made the important question explicit. We need, he argued, a new normative account of higher education, one which asks 'Whose interests is higher education serving?', and of course, whose interests are promoted through pedagogical arrangements in higher education. In her keynote paper to the Human Development and Capability conference in 2007 (Nussbaum, 2008), Martha Nussbaum offered a striking anecdote which captures much of what is wrong with the purposes and direction of higher education today, certainly in the UK. Nussbaum recounts her visit to a Hindu temple in Illinois and the guided tour by a young man recently arrived in the USA from the province of Gujerat in India. As he showed her a round the temple he recounted his own beliefs in the spiritual powers of Pramukh Swami, current head of the Swaminarayn sect of Hindus, distinctive says Nussbaum for uncritical obedience to the leader, whose voice which is taken to be the direct voice of Good. Nussbaum recounts how the young man pointed to the ceiling of the temple and asked her if she knew why it glowed. She continues: 'I said I did not know, and I confidently expected an explanation invoking the spiritual powers of Pramukh Swami. My guide smiled even more broadly. 'Fiber optic cables', he told me. 'We are the first ones to put this technology into a temple'. 'Here you see', writes Nussbaum, 'what can easily wreck democracy: a combination of technological sophistication with utter docility' (2008, p370).

In recent years it seems that higher education has indeed been much more concerned with science and technology and its application. Even creative arts are recast as the creative industries in the drive to expand our knowledge economies and to raise competitive market positioning.

Internationally and nationally, higher education is regarded as central to the creation of intellectual capacity and the construction of knowledge and skills for participation in an increasingly knowledge-based world economy; (Castells, 2004; Kenway et al, 2004; Kwiek, 2002; Lauder et al, 2006; Jonathan, 2006; Mclean, 2006; Newman, et al, 2004; Teferra and Altbach, 2003; UNESCO, 1998; Walker, 2006; World Bank, 2002). Castells (2004) argues that if knowledge is the 'electricity' of the new

international economy, then higher education institutions are the power sources on which a new development process must rely.

Higher education policy has focused on educational outcomes that support economic growth and enhanced individual incomes - the human capital approach to education which measures the returns to education and applies a cost benefit analysis to decisions about education expenditure and profitability. The assumption is that economic growth and development mean the same thing, and that both equate with individual and collective well being.

That education should equip graduates with the knowledge and skills to participate in the economy is unsurprisingly the aspect that most concerns governments. But the problem arises when there is now a variable and for some, declining 'graduate premium'; when the meaningfulness of economic opportunities and full participation are not debated, and when goals such as intellectual development and democratic citizenship and broader social goods are overlooked. The burgeoning evidence from economists is that doubling GDP in over 30 years in Britain has not made people any happier (Gaspar, 2004). Nor does human capital theory explain why people make decisions to invest in education, or more education, or indeed to gainsay such investment. Human capital cannot, as Robeyns (2006) explains, account for any non-economic goods from education, such as someone wanting to learn poetry for its own sake.

Moreover, we now find ourselves in a time of economic crisis. Yet the focus on human capital outcomes and market policy drivers in higher education over several decades has neither equipped us to avoid such an outcome, nor has it removed continuing inequalities at the heart of society. It is nowhere near to solving resurgent conflicts based on contested identities, cultures and religions.

Reform pedagogy and 'thin' equity

Yet even these times of rampant human capital approaches we find pedagogies underpinned by equity concerns with student learning and widening the access and participation of diverse students in learning. For example, the relationship between research and teaching and pedagogical cultures of inquiry are held to be central to what it is to be a university. Yet taking this research/teaching nexus as an examplar suggests that such pedagogical cultures are embedded in thin versions of equity. In her recent book, Brew (2006) goes some way towards addressing the broader purposes of higher education in so far as she considers the relationship between research and teaching as integral to developing a 'new' higher education grounded in a pluralistic and 'inclusive' approach to understanding the research-teaching relationship. Such a higher education, argues Brew, would be inquiry-based and essential for unpredictable futures and tackling 'some of the world's big problems' (pxiv), such as world poverty. But Brew relies heavily on an enquiry-based education to do this, as if enquiry in and of itself will generate such commitments and concerns. Yet the risk is that a philosophy of critical enquiry might as easily be one which promotes individualism and market values, as the values and attitudes of numerous highly educated graduates remind us. To be fair, Brew does acknowledge that teaching includes inculcating attitudes of mind such as 'showing concern and respect'. She supports 'inclusive scholarly knowledge-building communities' of students and academics in partnership 'in the challenging process of coming to understand the world through systematic investigation and collaborative decision-

making in the light of evidence' (p3-4). These are laudable aims for higher education. However, they do not take us far enough if we do not at the same time articulate a broader set of normative purposes about what coming to understand the world is for, whose interests such understanding ought to serve, and what this means in the face of neo-liberal drivers. The skills of inquiry could as easily lead to technicist forms of higher education and change.

This method of inquiry-based learning might be conceptualised as a reform pedagogy, with a weak framing in equality and weak commitments to moral agency, and to social and human development. It would be characterised by strong commitments to student learning, weaker commitments to underpinning values or orientations to justice. Students would be recognised as having agency in their learning but other than agency for human capital there is no clear guidance of how to evaluate or value this agency, or whether it would encompass agency as democratic citizens. It sits comfortably with a conception of equity that prepares students to perform an economic role (Unterhalter, 2008). Brew's reformist pedagogical approach typifies the absence of a transformative discourse in much of the work on higher education pedagogy which does not ask Luke's (2006, p5) deeply important question: 'What pedagogies are for human being?', nor address Barnett's (2007, p153) educative call for a student 'to stand differently in the world'.

Praxis pedagogy and 'thick' equity

Might greater clarity of how we understand justice be of some help? Rawls (2001) argues that as human beings we have a capacity for justice and we have a capacity for a conception of the good and to revise and change this if we have good reason to do so. Justice provides us with a principled basis for deciding what we distribute, to whom and why for just social arrangements and for the design of institutions. Justice also describes the obligations we have towards each other (Brighouse, 2004).

In conceptualising the features of a praxis pedagogy, I am drawn to the idea that justice ought to be understood as the first virtue of a society so that social and educational problems then arise from the gap between educational reality and the demands of justice (Strike, 1989). It is to concepts of justice (not enquiry) that we turn in settling disputes or deciding on moral action so that, 'Appeals to justice actually make a difference as to how disputes are settled or as to what policies are adopted' (Strike, 1989, p18). Our concepts of justice in relation to pedagogy are then of some significance: what are the characteristics of students we are hoping to form; what is the role of higher education in relation to society; what is the role of higher education in distributing the goods and services that education and society produces? (Strike, 1989)

It further points to the importance of work in fostering well being so that work and employment enlarge people's opportunities for ontological security in a fast changing, high risk economy. Thus the importance of real freedoms to achieve lifetime projects for a decent life and decent job in society requires a delicate balance between economic objectives, social aims and social progress. As Salais (2004, p283) writes, 'Work is changing, demanding flexibility and autonomy; its practice raises the issue of effective freedoms and contradicts the logic of subordination'. Thus educating for employment is not inherently problematic; what is problematic is the narrow way in which this is understood and how such narrow conceptualisations

translate into impoverished or 'thin' equity versions of skills-based and training pedagogies.

The difference, Strike (1989) suggests, is between a conception of equity which turns on being trained for a job, and a conception of equity that prepares students to understand the world in which they live (while also being educated for employment). This latter underpinning of equity, requires that students develop their capacity for communicative rationality and autonomous decision meaning, their capacity for citizenship (and justice), and their capacity for meaningful activity in association with others. It may also demand particular attention to the structure of disciplines (like history, politics and biology) as providing unique spaces for developing rational discourse grounded in and adjudicated by the standards and argument forms of those disciplinary traditions (Strike, 1989). This too would take us beyond more accommodative concerns regarding the relationship of the disciplines to the research/ teaching nexus. An alternative approach demands a concept in which education is not only for economic growth, but also for democratic community and contributions to more justice in society and the world.

Two core features of a praxis pedagogy

More interesting then is Barnett's (2005b, p94) argument that not only is research challenged by an uncertain and 'supercomplex' world, but teaching too needs to be oriented to 'the production of human capacities – qualities and dispositions'. Teaching needs to take 'an ontological turn' from knowledge to being, in which teachers take account of students 'as human beings as distinct from knowing beings'. so that students have the possibility opened up to 'come into a new mode of being' (Barnett 2007, p1). Ontology, he suggests, trumps but does not displace epistemology. *Both* knowing *and* being ought to be taken into account in university teaching. A world of uncertainty and change, as Barnett argues, poses curriculum challenges not just of knowing and of right action but also crucially challenges us as beings in the world. How do I understand myself? How do I orient myself? How do I stand in relation to the world? What do I become as a human being as a consequence of what I experience as a learner? If the research/teaching nexus fails to address just these kinds of questions we might want to ask what the point of the debate is.

In response, I now sketch two core features of a praxis pedagogical approach to understanding the value of a research/teaching nexus.

I. Capabilities as the basis for social justice

A praxis pedagogy would be grounded not only in economic opportunities, but also in the broader concepts of human development, well being and dignity in order to insert a language of 'human capabilities' (Sen 1992, 1999, 2003; Nussbaum 1997, 2000) into the space of research and teaching. This would be fundamental, non-negotiable and the basis of equity and justice. All students ought then to have the opportunity to form the valued capabilities made possible by an equal higher education. At the heart of the notion of capability is a conception that a person is able through her education to develop a reasoned understanding of valued beings and doings. This is a powerful argument for forms of education through which an individual can explore her own conception of what it is she has reason to value. If an important normative goal is capability expansion, then higher education is a part of expanding both the

capability to be educated but also in turn the capability to make valued choices in other spheres of life (Unterhalter et al, 2007). Thus Sen argues that, 'the ability to exercise freedom may, to a considerable extent, be directly dependent on the education we have received, and thus the development of the educational sector may have a foundational connection with the capability-based approach' (2003, p12).

Sen elaborates both intrinsic and instrumental dimensions to education. Having education is then a valuable achievement in itself; but education also helps a person to do many other things that are also valuable such as getting a job; it enhances freedom to achieve a range of valued functionings that may follow from earning an income. While in the capability approach a human capital basis for education is useful, it is also limited. Sen (2003) does not reject human capital outright; indeed he sees synergies in so far as human capital and the capability approach are both concerned with the role, agency and abilities of human beings. But a focus on economic growth, Sen argues, does not tell us why economic growth is important or what wealth is for. Thus education ought not to focus only on human capital and the 'usefulness' of human beings to the exclusion of valuable non-economic ends and more expansive understandings of what is valuable in human lives. The direction of current higher education policy in the UK would therefore be problematic for Sen, as would a research/teaching nexus in which valuable lives were not debated.

Capabilities for Sen (1992, 1999) comprise the real and actual opportunities, that is, substantive freedoms that people have to do and be what they value being and doing. But it is important to understand that capabilities do not mean skills or internal capacities (Burchardt and Vizard 2006). This would shift the focus to individual success or failure, whereas the capability approach directs us to the social arrangements - for example pedagogical conditions or normative purposes of universities - that enable or diminish capability formation.

Human development consists in expanding the capability set from which each student makes life and career choices, through 'the removal of various types of unfreedoms that leave people with little choice and little opportunity of exercising their reasoned agency' (Sen 1999, pxii). Valuable beings and doings, or functionings, are constitutive of human well being; a capability is a *potential* functioning. Functionings might include taking part in discussions with peers, thinking critically about society, being knowledgeable, having an ethical disposition, having good friendships, being able to understand a plurality of perspectives on an issue, and so on. Educational development in such terms means the widening of human capability and achievements to be able to chose a good life of wellbeing, from among various alternatives. Choosing from among genuine alternatives is itself 'a valuable feature of a person's life' (Sen 2003, p8). The focus is on what matters to people, on the important things in each person's life that they can actually do and be, formulating, choosing and pursuing their own goals.

i) Functional capability as strong evaluators

But, while various capabilities might constitute an individual's capability set and such valuable capabilities might be formed through pedagogy (for example the capability of critical thinking, or the capability of imagination, or the capability of voice), Sen's capability approach has little to say on what capabilities ought to be promoted in and through higher education, or why functionings (achievements) matter as much in education as capabilities. Nor does Sen explore the content of agency, so that 'the

choosing, reasoning individual' is central, ' but with little further specified content of being human' (Des Gaspar, 2002, p451). The formation of persons' is only lightly treated' (Des Gaspar, 2002, p451). In education this is simply insufficient. Nussbaum (2000) is of more help in providing a list of 10 central human capabilities, many of which bear directly on education, and in my own work I have drafted and redrafted what might constitute important higher education capabilities (Walker, 2006).

However, I do not plan to explore her list or my own. Rather I wish to make the general point that in order to develop a picture of rich and complex human being we need to give some thought to the capabilities higher education ought to foster, and which it would be reasonable to expect students to exercise (Wolff, 2007).

I therefore find Charles Taylor (1985) helpful. He introduces an explicit ethical dimension (arguably absent from the capability approach) to such choosing by conceptualising human beings as self-interpreting, 'strong evaluators' able to evaluate some ethical values or ideals or goods to be more important than others. To develop students' capability as strong evaluators is to develop them as subjects able to reflect on and to be able to re-examine their valued ends, when challenged to do so. They reflect on what is of more or less ethical significance in the narrative interpretation of their lives. I have in mind a strong version of reflexivity which enables individuals to change themselves by reflecting on what they most care about, even under conditions of constraint (Archer, 2003). Such reflexivity is agentic, involving 'questioning ourselves, clarifying our beliefs and inclinations, diagnosing our situations, deliberating about our concerns and defining our own projects' (Archer, 2003, p103). It means reflecting on one's own valued functionings and valued gaols, and having the agency to bring about, or indeed change, such goals.

We want, after all, to encourage students to choose to function in ways which are valuable and worthwhile, rather than trivial or worse. Being a strong evaluator is then both a matter of knowledge, skills and also a 'moral capability' (Van Staveren, 2001).

This inflects towards an ethical and praxis discourse rather than the more reformist question as to how a culture of inquiry is fostered or how inquiry-learning or active learning might be developed. Quality in student learning would requires integrating learning the subject and developing reflexive judgement about what makes life good for that person, that is their well being and agency. We might then argue that pedagogies ought to be evaluated in terms of whether the substantive freedoms that students have are expanded so that they are able to become and to be ontologically secure, having the capabilities to make well-reasoned, critical and reflective choices in an uncertain world about what makes life good for them. Such a view of moral agency would also view community membership as central to being, not instrumental as appears to be the case in Sen (Des Gaspar, 2002). In analysing learning and pedagogy we therefore ought to look for evidence of along axes of self, others and society. We should underestimate the importance of the emphasis on the development of each person in the capability approach – this is fundamental to higher education but also recovers the individual as a participant in policy processes and not just the passive recipient.

To take an example of selecting functional capabilities, in my current project on professional education in South Africa we are participatively developing a draft of

human development professional capabilities and the functionings that flow from these (see Walker, et al, 2008). In turn both have implications for pedagogical approaches. We have in the first instance consulted Nussbaum's list, but also spoken to lecturers and students involved in professional education. We have taken TaYlor's idea of strong evaluators and presented it in this way:

Human development professional capabilities	Professional goals and qualities as functionings
Graduates who are 'strong evaluators'	• Having the capability for practical reasoning (to do the right thing, at the right time in the right circumstances). • Able to evaluate some ethical values or ideals or goods to be more important than other. • Able to reflect on and to be able to re-examine their valued ends, drawing on theory and academic knowledge.

Figure 1

Because pedagogy and student development is institutionally framed, and because there are institutional dimensions to inequality of capabilities (which we can call social exclusion), we have further begun to develop institutional dimensions and more specific 'indicators' which point to the social arrangements that shape capability development. Both institutional context and pedagogical sites need to be held together. One of the examples we are developing in thinking about this is:

Dimension	Indicator
Connectedness	• University is connected to society and society in turn is connected to the university, change in one influences change in the other. • Both critical scholars/hip and public intellectuals; • Research and teaching address the 'moral urgencies' of the city, region and country; • Leadership 'speaks truth to power'

Figure 2

The first core feature of a praxis pedagogy is therefore that it expands students capabilities and functioning achievements to be and become strong evaluators; praxis pedagogies also have implications for institutional arrangements and contexts.

ii) The functional capability of critical reasoning

In further reflecting on what functional capabilities might be especially significant in higher education, its is helpful to note that higher education generally places a premium on the development of critical thinking and critical thinking skills in students. However, under current conditions it often seems as if such competencies are seen to enhance not the capability to be educated, but employability in a knowledge economy. This is exemplified by Simons (2006) in his account of being educated through research. As Simons (2006) explains, in the European context the starting point for policy is not the older Humboldtian perspective of the edifying potential of academic inquiry, but the economic demands of society. Research is reframed as yet another teaching 'method'.   But to reframe education through research in this way as a set of competencies to be achieved is, argues Simons, to diminish scholarship and the pursuit or duty of truth. As Simons (2006, p43) asks, is there still 'an academic duty or a normative orientation in research that allows for a reflection upon "education through research" that is different from the reflection inaugurated by the needs of the knowledge society and the operationalisation of research as a "teaching method?"'.

Papestephanou and Angeli (2007) explicate the problem. They point to two different discourses that shape critical thinking which tends to feature prominently in lists of desirable research competences or skills.   On the one hand there is the skills paradigm (found in discourses and practices of key skills, generic skills, transferable skills, and graduate attributes) embedded in Habermasian purposive rationality, technicism and instrumentality, which is 'relevant to the roles of the customer and consumer of services and goods, and not to the active participant in the possible transformation of the public sphere' (p609). The idea is to optimize outcomes, in the case of UK higher education human capital outcomes but these ends are not themselves open to critique. What counts is 'effectiveness, outcomes and performance' (p607). Ends and meaningfulness are not questioned, nor goals revised; in this way higher education, and its fundamental claim to foster critical thinking, is captured by the neoliberal project, while ironically seeming still to serve its own values and purposes to develop 'higher order thinking'.

But Papestephanou and Angeli further argue that 'there is a surplus of critical thinking that cannot be canalized in the skill talk' (p618) – this would constitute education through research. They employ Habermas's concept of communicative rationality, which is oriented to human potential and actions for mutual understanding, formative dialogue, self-analysis, and transformation of ends so that 'that goals are not there simply to be achieved or approximated, but first and foremost to be checked in introspection, but more appropriately in deliberation' (p609).   Critical   thinking   is   then   morally   pertinent.   (2007   p609).   A communicative rationality view of critical thinking would argue that, 'a critical thinker cannot just be one who carries out an action successfully, but chiefly one who considers and, when necessary, questions the appropriateness or moral relevance of the action' (Papestephanou and Angeli 2007, p608).

As Strike (1989) argues, while critical thinking is a democratic virtue, egalitarian justice demands more than the ability to reason well. It also requires the ability for dialogic listening, for fair interpretation of the perspectives of others, for respectful disagreement and for successful participation in the complexities of democratic decision-making. Translating education through research into competencies, 'tends

to forget that the edifying potential of research is always something that cannot (yet) be mastered' as a set of technical competencies' (Simons,2006, p47). While it is not inherently a problem that employers want graduates with the skills to undertake research, we need to understand this critically and understand why this has rapidly risen up the agenda as a policy concern in the UK.

The second core feature of a praxis pedagogy would involve not just critical thinking skills, but being educating through research so that students develop the capability for communicative reasoning and moral agency in and through their deliberations.

II. Fostering pedagogic rights

Secondly, integral to a praxis pedagogy would be students having specific 'pedagogic rights' (Bernstein, 2000) without which they will not develop the functional capabilities to have equal and effective participation in society and to live well in a democracy (Walker, 2006). Capabilities (minimally to be strong evaluators and critical reasoners) would secure, implement and evaluate these rights beyond policy and rhetoric (Nussbaum, 2000). Bernstein argues for three integrated rights which encompass the self, others and society and are underpinned by assumptions of ethical obligations beyond self-interest to defend or promote each person's pedagogic rights (Bernstein, 2000; Sen, 2004). The rights in questions are: 'enhancement' involving critical understanding and seeing new possibilities which is the key to the formation of confidence and agency. The second right, is 'inclusion' the right to be included socially, intellectually, culturally and personally, which is fundamental to 'communitas'. The third is 'participation' in shaping and transforming political outcomes ('civic practice'). These rights would be integral to relations of pedagogical intersubjectivity characterized by human dignity and the realization of each person's full potential in acquiring knowledge. The capabilities 'identified and privileged in the formulation of the rights in question' (Sen, 2004, p321) would have to be expanded through research/teaching pedagogies to secure these rights.

A focus on rights directs us also to the process aspects of freedom, including pedagogical processes. Sen is clear that while capability is important for evaluating the opportunity aspect of freedom, 'it cannot possibly deal adequately with the process aspect of freedom, since capabilities are characteristics of individual advantages, and they fall short of telling I us enough about the fairness of equity of the processes involved, or about the freedom of citizens to invoke and utilize procedures that are equitable' (2004, p336), so that 'the process through which things happen may also be of importance in assessing freedom' (2002, p585).

To those who argue that notions of pedagogic human rights in education, and the ethical obligations that we owe to each other simply are not possible under contemporary neo-liberal conditions, we might respond, following Sen, that because such rights are not fully possible or even possible at all under present conditions, 'does not entail anything like the conclusion that these are, therefore, not rights at all' (2004, p348). He reminds us that the absence of such rights points us to the work needed to change prevailing institutional and policy circumstances. Moreover, to say that pedagogic rights are also human rights is to say that educational institutions that fail to promote or protect those rights in any practical way are defective.

The second core feature of praxis pedagogy would thus be specific pedagogic rights.

Praxis pedagogy

Taken together, these two core features: of functional capabilities as strong evaluators and critical reasoners and pedagogic rights, would direct our evaluations (and our development) of pedagogies and e/quality in student learning and learning achievements. Rights and the specification of valuable capabilities would act in partnership with the capability approach to generate rich personhood rather than the thinnner version of Sen's work (Des Gaspar, 2002). They sketch something beyond choice alone (because we can make bad choices and because what we choose is important) to indicate the thick but vague (Nussbaum, 2000) parameters of a good human live and good lives for others (Des Gasper, 2002).

The achievements that such a praxis pedagogy fosters are captured by Paula, a final year history student in research-intensive English university as she describes some of her valued functionings:

> …it made me more aware of looking at my own viewpoint and the way I look at news stories and things like that and the assumptions I make, because I come from a very white middle-class background, I come from a town that's, you know, there's not racial tension because there are only white people really and things like that, so it's very easy to make assumptions or hold views that you never have to test because you are only surrounded by sort of the same kind of people as you and I think maybe that's part of coming to uni as well, but this course has made me reassess and think about my own prejudices and my own stereotypes and stuff. I think this has given me more confidence in a certain kind of debate. Debate was always quite big at my school, but everyone held the same opinion ….That said, I have no idea what I want to do….so, it could be difficult matching my ideals against the reality of the world, I'm not sure….I think the way it's made me reassess my prejudices because that's very much, I mean, your judgements and your prejudices make you, very much characterise the way you deal with the world and deal with people, read things, interpret things, things like that and by having to look at that and challenge, those being challenged. (quoted in Walker, 2008, p36) [1]

In the history class that Paula attended, the lecturer's pedagogy was shaped by pedagogic rights: students developed their individual confidence through good teaching; they participated with others in knowledge formation and critique; and they developed at least a modest sense of their civic agency. The importance of this right of 'civic practice' is captured by Peter Otto, their lecturer who explains of his own pedagogical practice:

> I'm not telling them what they should be, Left or Right, I mean I have my preferences but that's not my task and as a teacher it's not my job and I shouldn't say, "This is the right perspective on the world". What I rather try to teach them is "Look, it's difficult and sometimes there are contradictions which can't easily be solved and you have to make a decision, but you have to make a decision based on choices and each decision has moral implications and you have to know that and you can't just say the way I live is the best

way to live and it's the only way to live and therefore it's a great way to live and I'm not responsible for the consequences. (quoted in Walker, 2008, p32)

The formation of civic agency, even if modest that this enables is captured by his student Paula when she says, 'I don't think I've changed in any dramatic sense, but it's made me just more aware of the way I look at the world…. I think it is something that could, you know, if you choose the right thing, I don't know, maybe make a difference'.

Conclusion

A praxis pedagogy probably has to acknowledge that, strategically in current times, universities have to respond to market opportunities. But they also have commitments to student development and to society, grounded in responsible teaching and truthful enquiry. The graduates they educate gain individually, but they are also bearers of the public good through the knowledge they have acquired. With this needs to go a critical spirit and democratic values which a praxis pedagogy seeks to nurture as integral to gaining knowledge so that we not only acquire knowledge to be scientists or social workers, engineers or historians, but that we also form a moral perspective on how to exercise that knowledge to improve lives in society.

University education, argues Nussbaum (2006) should be construed not merely as a producing technical skills but also, and more importantly, 'as a general empowerment of the person through information, critical thinking and imagination'. She explicitly links democracy and education because, 'Democratic citizens can also fail to think critically about what they hear, putting anger, fear, and power ahead of reason' (p3). The democratic mind is a <u>human</u> mind (and as human beings we are imperfect, embodying in each of us dark and light) it can be 'careless, prone to hasty and irrational thinking' (p3) We need an education 'that cultivates human beings and their humanity, rather than producing generations of useful machines'. (p15). At the very least there is still a debate to be had, even in the face of market ideology, about the normative purposes and outcomes of universities. Alternatively we can go ahead with producing graduates from higher education with technological, scientific, vocational and research skills, who are at the same time lacking critical faculties and imagination and an openness to participation in democratic public life. The praxis pedagogy sketched in this chapter both challenges this view and offers a framework for imagining an alternative in relation to core university functions of research and teaching and their transformative pedagogical interconnections.

Notes

1. The interviews were part of the project 'Ontology, identity formation and lifelong learning outcomes: theorising the relationship between discipline-based research and teaching', funded in 2006-2007 by a research grant from the Higher Education Academy. The HEA's financial support is gratefully acknowledged.

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