

meet,
teach,
learn.

.....
If you have a garden and a library, you have
everything you need.

Cicero

.....



Contents

3. Ragged Library
5. Steve Tilley
6. Susan Brown
7. Keith Smyth

If you have are an academic and would like to make a contribution for the Ragged Library, please send the following information in an email to info@raggeduniversity.com

Please include:

Your Name

Your Department and Institution

50 words or more about the book

You will be informed about who bought a copy and where you can find it. Also your contribution of the suggestion will be made available online. Thank you for helping build knowledge into the social landscape !

Ragged Library

Inviting academics to suggest a useful book and getting individuals to buy copies, they can be situated in public spaces

The Ragged project operates in informal spaces. The 'third places' which belong to everyone are those which foster relaxed atmospheres that are needed to generate certain types of dynamic learning environment.

The term 'third place' comes from the work of Ray Oldenburg [1]. He illustrates how certain places are "anchors" of community life and enable dynamic atmospheres in which social interaction can occur without barriers.

Societies are built, in part, by informal meeting places that foster the rich connections necessary for the cultural life of a healthy community. Oldenburg suggests the following as markers of "third places":

Free or inexpensive

Food and drink

Highly accessible

Involve regulars

Welcoming and comfortable

A junction for new and old friends

Ragged is an inclusive social capital project which uses knowledge exchange to build communities and interlink them. As a project it aims to foster these 'un-owned', unregulated, unmeasured spaces by equipping them with resources that can provide a scaffolding for learning and peer led pedagogy.

Drawing inspiration from the educational work of Sugata Mitra, who's hole-in-the-wall educational work [2], engendered trust in people to self learn, the Ragged library will be left without gatekeeper to engender trust in the social landscape thus developing civic behaviours.

The idea of the Ragged Library was introduced by Liz Windsor, who also worked to build the virtual presence of the project. The idea stems from traditions which are found in many cities. Public houses, taverns, cafes and bookshops have provided places for thinkers to work in the amenable informal atmospheres.

The university towns of Cambridge and Oxford are famously known for their public houses and the intellectual life which lives through them. Often books are a 'part of the furniture'. The idea of the Ragged library is to situate texts which have been recommended by academics, in these 'third places'.

This draws on the expertise of people who have invested their lives in knowledge, pedagogy and learning. It is a simple way for academics to contribute to public engagement work with communities in a non-labour-intensive way.

Working with the Beacons for Public Engagement and Edinburgh City of Literature to pilot, the idea is to accumulate a booklist that members of the public are encouraged to buy to be put in social places.

Inside the front cover will be included the information of:

Who suggested the book

What area of academia they work in

The institution where they work

Who bought the book for the public

To invoke the spirit of the Ragged Schools movement, a bookcase made from a pew from Greyfriars Kirk where the Reverend Thomas Guthrie did his social work from is being bought. Holding social enterprises in the kirk grounds, the money will be used to further this ethos through the work of the Reverend Richard Frazer.

All academics are warmly invited to make a suggestion of a book they regularly use or that they think everyone should be aware of.

Equally, everyone is warmly invited to buy a book to go into these public places starting with the Peartree House pub in Edinburgh.



1. Oldenburg, Ray (1989). The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Community Centers, Beauty Parlors, General Stores, Bars, Hangouts, and How They Get You Through the Day. New York: Paragon House. ISBN 978-1-55778-110-9.
2. Sugata Mitra: Hole-in-the-wall self organising education: <http://www.hole-in-the-wall.com/>. Taken 1/06/2013



A great book is like
great evil; a great
library is it's salve



Steve Tilley

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The book I have settled on to recommend for the Ragged Library is much in the public eye just now. F Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is the source of a film just released, and topic for litpundits on radio and TV.

I read it in 1968 for a course on American novels – part of a degree in American Civilization*.

I recall my strongest response then was to the book's boundaries– a short poem, an ending; then, as now, touchstones for my feeling and thinking (in that order)

Epigraph:

“Then wear the gold hat,
if that will move her;
If you can bounce high,
bounce for her too
Till she cry ‘Lover, gold-hatted,
high-bouncing lover
I must have you!’
Thomas Parke D’Invilliers”

Ending:

“Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that’s no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms further... .And one fine morning ----- So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.”

Layers of romance, play and illusion in the epigraph (the poem by Fitzgerald; D’Invilliers a pseudonymous poet in an earlier Fitzgerald novel) prefigure Gatsby’s complex pursuit of a lost love, Daisy. But for me now as when I first read them, the imaginative stratagems for landing love stand (mid-air) on their own.

And the final words, echoing a key symbol in the novel, invite us to community with those whose gestures, large and small, defy the present and the past’s perverse direction.**

- Gatsby: vital document, too, for any who ask: “‘American Civilization’: is there any?”

- Interesting site to follow up: http://reading.cornell.edu/reading_project_06/gatsby/glimpses/glimpses_past.htm



Susan Brown

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According to many digital pundits we are moving into a multimedia age. The age dominated by written text (either printed or on screen) is ceding to an age where increasing bandwidth and, connectedly, software innovations are spawning sophisticated graphical and multimedia interfaces. Games, immersive virtual Worlds, three dimensional video graphics are all forging pathways back to multimedia worlds.

There are, no doubt, numerous teachers who would argue that we never left those worlds. Teachers, they say, have always used visuals, graphs, photographs etc and aural tracks to help develop their students' thinking. A stroll round Manchester Museum the other day reminded me of the sophisticated three D models that lecturers have used in the past to convey to students aspects of the world not readily accessible to the human eye, models you can touch, take apart, look inside. Multimedia has been a part of many a learner's experience.

This said, the digital age is offering significant opportunities for teachers and learners alike to create powerful learning content with multimedia. The relative ease with which both teachers and learners can now create and edit sound files, videos and animation and the significant possibilities for creating interactive multimedia learning content is likely to ensure increasing exposure

to multimedia learning. The opportunities are there but this does not mean they are always effectively exploited by educators. Standards of multimedia learning content are very variable. Sometimes you see very sophisticated 'wow factor' technical content but with little evidence of understanding of the ways that people learn. Or you see multimedia content which though it has the seeds of thoughtful pedagogy makes rudimentary errors in usability.

This is where Richard Mayer's book *Multimedia Learning* (2009: Second edition) comes in. It offers a rich but pithy guide to crafting multimedia materials that can facilitate learning. Starting with a useful summary of different ways of construing the nature of multimedia, it goes on to explore the potential of multimedia for learning and also the potential pitfalls. We have, Mayer points out, limited capacity for dealing with a lot of multimedia information in one go. Our facility to process different combinations of written text, aural text and pictures, are not as significant as we might think. Mayer lays out principles for dealing with those limitations for the reader and for making the most of the potential of multimedia for learning. These are rules of thumb rather than edicts for effective learning. They can guide not only teachers in multimedia learning design, but also anyone using multimedia to engage others.

Multimedia learning is one of those books you keep on your shelf and dip into. It needs to be read in conjunction with many other texts on multimedia but it is a very good starting point for doing so.



Keith Smyth

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Published in 2010 (paperback 2011), *The Marketisation of Higher Education and Student as Consumer* presented a timely, and still invaluable, critical consideration of the state of Higher Education in the UK set against a backdrop of post-war education sector reforms and within the context of government policy being introduced as we entered the current decade.

The initial expansion of UK Higher Education resulting from the publication of the Robbins Report in 1963 has, in the last two decades, been followed by a further period of growth that has seen the number of UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) rise from around 60 in the mid 1980's to over 140 today. As is reiterated throughout *The Marketisation of Higher Education and the Student as Consumer*, the government policy that has driven the expansion of UK HE, including the widening access agenda and the principle of fair access, has resulted in a more educated workforce and increased equality in the opportunity to benefit from HE. At the same time it has also led to heightened competition between HEIs and the increased adoption of market mechanisms.

This, and a recognition of the potential impact of the latest government cuts incoming during the authoring of this text (in the lead-up to the Browne Report) provide the general context for a rich and in-depth exploration of

challenges, concerns and implications by a range of leading educationalists.

Organised across three themed sections, Section 1 tackles the Marketisation of Higher Education and begins with an exploration of the characteristics of Higher Education markets by Roger Brown. The consideration offered around key factors including institutional autonomy, institutional competition, price and information is a pragmatic one. Brown outlines the complexity inherent in the marketisation of higher education, and this complements well the chapters by Nick Foskett and Ronald Barnett addressing the HE sector as a politicised 'quasi market' characterised by significant government influence and increased competition for resources between HEIs.

Section 2 addresses *The Marketised Higher Education Institution*, and in the chapters by Helen Sauntson and Liz Moorish, Chris Chapelo and others we can find, to varying degrees of strength, a clear warning against where the 'commodification' of Higher Education might lead us in terms of standardisation, the constraining of creativity in learning and teaching, and the implication, as described in Frank Ferudi's excellent introduction to the text, that if the student as customer and consumer is always right then we had better give them what they want. As highlighted at several points elsewhere

in the volume, this view is in stark contrast to the outlook many academics hold around the need for education to be challenging, perspective-broadening, and ultimately about personal growth.

As Sauntson and Moorish conclude at the end of their chapter, the emphasis universities place on marketing and prestige, league tables and branding, and increasingly on notions of 'product', sees the sector in a position whereby "there are very few universities, it seems, that choose to portray themselves in harmony with the ethos of those academics who work within their walls" (p. 84). Sauntson and Moorish suggest this indicates that the dominant, but now tainted, neo-liberalist rhetoric is not without challenge in HE.

This is certainly evident across several chapters in Section 3 *Students, Consumers and Citizens*. Here, amongst a series thought-provoking contributions, Johan Nordensvard argues convincingly for citizenship as an alternative metaphor for reconceptualising what it can and should mean to be a student in Higher Education. Elizabeth Nixon and colleagues then consider how curriculum models founded on well-intentioned principles of learner choice, autonomy and personalisation might, without opportunities for critical engagement in the self, be contributing as much to sustaining the 'student as



consumer' metaphor as they are to effective learning.

Within the text as a whole, the challenge to the neo-liberalist perspective in HE is arguably at its strongest and most political in Mike Neary and Andy Haygard's chapter on the 'pedagogy of excess'. Central to this argument is that the transformative potential of HE, and the potential to transform HE, requires a more radical addressing of research-teaching linkages than we are currently dealing with in the sector, and one that can "transcend the constraints of consumerism by overcoming the limits of what it is to be a student in higher education" (p. 210). With an emphasis placed on "collaborative acts of intellectual enquiry" and the lessons that can be learned from the 1968 student protests in France, Neary and Haygard offer an ultimately optimistic view of the possible, and of the intellectual power that lies in academics connecting with undergraduates as intellectual partners in research and scholarship.

However, as an aside to this review, Neary and Haygard's perspective does not merely put forward a rhetoric of the possible, and interested colleagues seeking to grasp how this might look in practice are directed towards the Student as Producer initiative the authors instigated at the University of Lincoln

<http://studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk/partners/>

Within the current climate in UK Higher Education, and within the broader social and political climate in the UK generally, the editors and authors for *The Marketisation of Higher Education and Student as Consumer* are to be commended on the breadth and depth of their collective discourse. This book does not offer a complete decrying of the marketisation of Higher Education, and there is a careful consideration of the role this has to play alongside the more overtly radical arguments put forward. However the book is ultimately challenging in exactly the way that is currently needed in the sector right now, asking us difficult questions about what Higher Education is for, how we have come to this point, and where we might go in the future.

At a time of unprecedented uncertainty and change within UK HE, when the actions and decisions of our institutions and educators count for everything, *The Marketisation of Higher Education and Student as Consumer* is recommended reading for HE leaders and educators in general, and on Postgraduate Certificate programmes in academic practice for new lecturers.