

Book Review

Walker, M., Boni, A. and Velasco, D. (Eds.). 2023. *Reparative Futures and Transformative Learning Spaces*. First Edition. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

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This book weaves a powerful tapestry of resistance, hope, and educational possibility across diverse learning spaces. By acknowledging past oppression as a necessary step toward transforming and repairing the future, it brings together experiences of sustainable, decolonising human development that share participatory methodologies as pathways for expanding capabilities and advancing emancipation. With the premise that “repair” is not merely the restoration of a damaged past, but a proactive intervention aimed at remaking a more just and equal world, the book invites readers into an imaginative journey toward alternative futures.

As a higher education academic director in a Chilean university, I am often expected to define educational success through graduation rates, efficiency indicators, and employability outcomes. Although my institution’s mission aspires to equity and justice, prevailing managerial logics and their metrics leave limited room to pursue what I understand as the core purpose of higher education: the socialisation of accumulated knowledge and the illumination of new epistemologies. In this book, I found a clear and constructive proposal for alternative models that articulate education as a reciprocal process of transformation—one that integrates mainstream indicators with decolonising frameworks. By responding to the question “so what can be done?”, the international cohort of authors opened my mind to strategies and learning spaces where education is enacted as emancipation. Most importantly, the book made me feel part of a broader community of hopeful educators committed to building relationships and co-constructed knowledge as forms of resistance, reparation, and collective creativity for imagining and bringing forth a world that can be otherwise.

The key contribution of the volume is the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 1. Drawing on experiences in universities, government agencies, multilateral organisations, and community settings, the editors operationalise Amartya Sen’s and Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach while incorporating a critical, reparative orientation toward inequality and injustice. They propose a three-dimensional, intersectional framework that places sustainable human development at its center, influenced by reparative futures, transformative dialogic decolonised learning, and combined capabilities. *Reparative Futures* address the need to heal injustice through methodologies that foreground relationships - with others, with communities, and with the planet - to recollect history and imagine a more just, equitable, and dignified world. The *transformative dialogic decolonised learning* dimension recovers classical critical education



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theorists to argue that transformative learning requires shifts in understanding that extend beyond the individual, occurring through social interaction and community engagement that empower collective action. Such action demands inventions and re-inventions of knowledge systems beyond hegemonic Western epistemologies, that is, an epistemic decolonisation. The third dimension, *combined capabilities*, refers to the basic freedoms and foundational conditions that, when coupled with opportunities, enable human beings to lead flourishing lives – conditions that lie at the heart of sustainable human development.

Anchored in this framework, the collection of chapters expanded my imagination regarding learning experiences that rarely find space in higher-education management or conventional definitions of success. Concepts such as pedagogies of affective solidarity (Chapter 2), reparative praxis that enables students to embody “repairing human-ness” (Chapter 3), *epistemic resilience* (Chapter 4), *resilient futures* (Chapter 8), co-production of knowledge “from below” (Chapter 6), collective learning with the voices of excluded groups (Chapter 7), education for peacebuilding (Chapter 9), *reparative threads* (Chapter 10), and *flourishing education* (Chapter 11) collectively opened new avenues for thinking about alternative futures.

Each chapter also illuminates experiences situated in diverse learning environments, ranging from universities and schools to small community projects, healthcare settings, and international policy networks; thereby offering a multilevel system of concrete examples of transformation and sustainable human development. These experiences are animated by multiple voices: student leaders in South Africa; school, undergraduate, and graduate students from Africa, Spain, and the United States; educators engaged in curriculum development; community researchers and policymakers in Latin America and the Caribbean; participatory action researchers from Catalonia; student activists from Colombia; LGTBQ+ defenders in Honduras; and practitioners working in international cooperation and transformative innovation policy across Africa, Latin America, and Europe.

I highly recommend this book to readers engaged in interdisciplinary research on global social justice, as it provides empirical diversity and conceptual depth to themes such as decolonising knowledge, human development, and participatory methodologies. I also recommend it to academic leaders like myself, who may not be fully familiar with specialised terminology but are seeking spaces of resistance and creativity within systems marked by bureaucracy, structural inequalities, and entrenched forms of power. This book offers both inspiration for our daily work and a sense of connection to a global community of colleagues committed to participatory, reparative, and decolonising approaches to imagining a different world.

Overall, this collection succeeds in integrating a robust theoretical framework with grounded, applied research, illustrating alternative pathways emerging through collective learning, expanded capabilities, and hopeful, agentic action in educational spaces. It leaves the reader with the challenge – and the invitation – of considering how these practices might be scaled in order to multiply the transformative and reparative learning spaces to which so many still lack Access.

Reviewed by
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(*) An AI-based writing assistant was used to refine the academic language and improve the overall clarity of the text.