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Boyte, H. C. (Ed.). (2015). *Democracy's education: Public work, citizenship, and the future of colleges and universities*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press. 288 pp.

Review by Tami L. Moore and Jon B. Horinek

In 2012, the White House Office of Public Engagement (OPE) convened the American Commonwealth Partnership (ACP) with Harry Boyte as facilitator. OPE charged the group to "revitalize the democratic story of higher education, [itself] in danger of being replaced with the story that higher education is mainly a ticket to individual success and achievement" *(Boyt, 2015, p. xi)*. ACP partners worried that global and market forces were separating civic work and civic activity. As a result, they argued, civic work has been relegated to voting, and thereby citizens are forgetting their power to act as community problem solvers. This is true in communities facing issues such as violence, poverty, or underperforming schools. In the professions, individuals have lost their sense of responsibility. Going forward, colleges and universities must recognize their capacity as "crucial anchoring institution[s] of citizenship," in that

> [higher education] spreads conceptual frameworks that structure work and social practices of all kinds[,] socializes people in professional identities, shapes students' plans for their careers and lives, and helps to define the meaning of "success" in society. *(p. 3)*

In short, ACP members suggested, colleges and universities in the United States are facing two challenges: (a) Colleges/universities must accept the role of anchor institution, and (b) colleges/universities must socialize toward a collective rather than individualized notion of accomplishment and good.

Boyte and his collaborators analyze these challenges in *Democracy's Education*, and they offer potential blueprints for the change they seek. The narrative about the role of the academy in society is neither permanent nor irreversible and for the authors, the mantra is simple: Higher education leaders/constituents "will either be the architects of change, or they will be its objects" *(p. 28)*. Faculty and administrators, the contributors presume, are simultaneously scholars and citizens, capable of engaging in public problem solving. As citizen-scholars, they have a role to play in "the collective labors of solving public problems and building shared

resources" through "careers filled with public purpose; and…work that deepens and expands democracy" *(p. 15).* Citizen-scholars can, Boyte argues, facilitate change in the guiding values and in the way the academy actually functions in order to meet the challenges identified by the American Commonwealth Partnership.

Contributors to Part 1 of this volume use common narratives to relay higher education's democratic story. David Mathews's opening chapter describes a "looming" *(p. 37)* battle for the soul of higher education. The author argues that neither ignoring current criticisms nor disengaging with constituents offers a way forward, as pressure mounts to do more with less and prepare job-ready graduates. In Chapter 2, Scott Peters reminds readers that the fruits of higher education labor are both "liberal and practical… support[ing] the development of civic and democratic professionalism" *(p. 46).* The results of this commitment have thus far been mixed because, in his assessment, institutions "are not always democratic in their behaviors and attitudes" *(p. 48).* Extending this idea in Chapter 3, political philosopher Albert Dzur calls democracy "counternormative on today's campuses" *(p. 53).* Peters and Dzur agree that the difficulty of addressing the challenges facing higher education should not be underestimated. Academic politics can be bitter, Dzur notes, and such squabbles can blind faculty and other stakeholders to the real costs of the undemocratic status quo and block the way to a more democratic professionalism among academics.

Parts 2 through 5 draw out ideas from college and university presidents (Part 2), faculty (Part 3), students/alumni (Part 4), and community organizers (Part 5) to be incorporated into blueprints for changing higher education. College and university presidents past and present consider senior administrators as "architects of change" *(p. 63).* Martha Kanter opens Part 2 by articulating a shared responsibility among K-20 institutions, other partners, and the federal government to continue to support civic learning in the college curriculum. Chapters by Nancy Cantor and Robert Bruininks and their coauthors highlight indicators that public work principles are taking root in promising practices among citizen-scholars and receiving institutional support. Judith Ramaley focuses more specifically on the college curriculum, emphasizing the capacity of a liberal education to motivate active citizens and inculcate civic virtues in college graduates headed to the workforce. In the final chapter of Part 2, Adam Weinberg offers a snapshot from his institution, Denison University, where emphasis is on preparing stu-

dents for the workforce by, among other things, encouraging them to pursue "careers that matter" *(p. 104)*.

Essays in Part 3 situate the faculty experience vis-à-vis changing attitudes toward scholarly work. Maria Avila offers a realistic portrait of "engaged faculty" who sometimes depart the civic engagement discussion jaded and tired, possibly without the energy to engage in the strategic, collective work necessary to transform the academy. Romand Coles and Blase Scarnati respond, encouraging faculty to embrace a "craftsmanship ethos" *(p. 115)* to escape the cynicism Avila describes. Kerry Ann O'Meara frames the struggles of faculty in terms of the conflict among, and unequal valuation of, the public work of engaged scholarship, research, and service. These are the conflicts that mark colleges and universities as what Timothy Eatman calls "inhuman places" *(p. 137)*. Publicly engaged scholarship, he argues, can humanize higher education for citizen-scholars who place high value on civic work.

Authors of the chapters in Part 4 challenge what it means to be a student, graduate, and alumnus/alumna in an increasingly disengaged world. Jamie Haft describes an immersion experience for New York University arts students. Participants gained new understandings of possible careers as "citizen-artists"; however, the program provides no academic credit for this experience and exhibits elements of the inhumanity Eatman described in Part 3 by remaining focused on cultivating individual artistic genius rather than art as a public good. Cecilia Orphan takes a critical look at the role graduate education plays in socializing future faculty and administrators toward or away from the citizen-scholar identity. In his chapter, David Hoffman advocates for instilling civic agency among students and provides programmatic examples for doing so. He argues, "Students must be involved in the process as agents rather than objects" *(p. 159)* of change. In this way, they are well served by the curriculum and mentored into their responsibilities as citizen-professionals. Through Citizen Alum initiatives described by Julie Ellison, alumni citizen-professionals mentor civically engaged students, preparing them for public work.

Part 5 features essays by three community organizers reflecting on their work with higher education institutions. Collectively, the trio offers useful insights into partnering with, rather than trying to fix, communities. Jenny Whitcher writes as a self-described citizen-scholar whose career spans the university/community boundary. She integrates a commitment to public problem solving into her faculty work. Reflecting on experiences as a community organizer, Whitcher reminds readers to move carefully with atten-

tion to building strong relationships because careless scholarship and rushed associations can do great harm. The next chapter complements Whitcher's cautionary essay, as long-time community organizer Robert Woodson points to the importance of intellectual humility and a proper understanding of one's status as insider/outsider for engaged scholars. Finally, activist and author Sam Daley-Harris brings excerpts from his classic *Reclaiming Our Democracy (Daley-Harris, 2013)*, translating concepts developed through citizen-led public work in the antipoverty movement to higher education. The tone of these three chapters contrasts with that of Parts 1 through 4 and may seem out of place if this book is approached strictly as a traditional academic text. In addition to the difference in tone, this inclusion of popular authors in Part 5 provides the diversity of perspectives regularly called for in the scholarship as well as the practice of community engagement. This contrast bears out points made in Adriana Kezar's *(2011)* discussion of the cultural and operational differences between community organizations and university administration and serves as a reminder of the disconnect between higher education and public work that will need to be addressed intentionally if community–university partnerships are to be part of the solution to the problems that Boyte and his colleagues raise for our consideration.

The essayists in Part 6 consider what could be if scholars and administrators reconnected to the public purposes of higher education as a foundation for their professional practice. Benjamin Barber sees a departure from the classic liberal arts curriculum that he blames on a digital market ideology which "leaves educators out in the cold" *(p. 202)*. Peter Levine suggests that colleges and universities can help the economy if they produce graduates who do civic work, and John Spencer asks faculty to reconsider expertise and to discover how civic science can create new partnerships for meaningful work. Chapters by Shigeo Kodama and Xolela Mangcu translate public work as citizenship to the contexts of Japan and South Africa, countries also in need of a new awareness of democracy and citizenship. Lisa Clarke encourages faculty to include public work in course learning outcomes, to think of their students as emerging professionals who might also bring a strong commitment to public work to their new place of employment, and to intentionally prepare students as what Boyte and others refer to as "citizen-professionals." The essays in Parts 5 and 6 are fundamentally different from those in the rest of the volume because they attempt to tell a story that is still being written. This is where the real work necessary to realize the vision of *Democracy's*

Education is found. These are dispatches from the front lines. Their content may be less seasoned, but nonetheless they provide a frame for the scope and urgency of the task ahead.

Realizing the democratic futures suggested in Part 6 requires addressing the interlocking problems presented by greater demands on the academy for workforce development in a context of narrowing definitions of democracy, politics, and citizenship. In Part 7, chapters by Paul Markham and Harry Boyte summarize the volume's key ideas. The fight for the soul of the university described by David Mathews in the first chapter is linked to a call for embracing democratic practice. Fortunately, infrastructure and resources exist to support engagement. The problem, the authors suggest, is one of perspective: Administrators continue to think of public work as a program, when in actuality it is central to institutional survival itself. Further, the challenges facing higher education cannot be resolved by individual action alone. The authors call on readers to understand that "revitalizing the democratic purposes of higher education" calls for efforts from all constituents.

The first three parts of this book offer an artful, impassioned assessment of what the authors see as the slow decoupling of higher education from its democratic purposes, followed by thoughtful discussions about how university leaders and citizen-scholars might respond. In subsequent parts, contributors position faculty and university leaders as architects of change and offer wisdom for effecting this change. Boyte et al. have not presented a collection of best practices, nor is this a book about community–university engagement per se. Rather, the authors pull together four decades of thought about building democratic communities. Their collection invites readers to embrace intentionally the public purposes of the academic profession. New in this volume is the idea of academics and administrators as citizen-scholars who have the opportunity and the responsibility to engage with one another and our stakeholders in remaking higher education in the tradition of citizenship and public work.

With *Democracy's Education*, Boyte and associates contribute to the discussion of democratic engagement started by John Saltmarsh, Matt Hartley, and their colleagues (*2011*) in *"To Serve a Larger Purpose": Engagement for Democracy and the Transformation of Higher Education.* All of these voices are taking up a central set of questions: What would it mean to remake higher education in a different vein, one more capable of and inclined toward a return to its original democratic purposes? How might an institution's leaders do this? Why would they choose to do so? To what end?

As it addresses this last question, *Democracy's Education* also has a place in the anchor institution movement literature (*Hodges & Dubb, 2012; Taylor & Luter, 2013*). On this point, Boyte is emphatic: "Higher education is, in short, a crucial anchoring institution of citizenship" *(p. 3)*. Where architects of that movement emphasize more traditional notions of community economic development led by universities in partnership with community organizations, Boyte is talking about the role that institutions play in educating citizens and preparing students/graduates to participate in the life of their communities.

The volume is simultaneously inspiring and somewhat depressing. The movement's philosophers paint a beautiful picture of the possibilities even as their colleagues present a fair assessment of the challenges—many daunting—facing those willing to engage in the work required to realize that vision. Boyte and his associates have presented the field with a purposeful compendium, full of important ideas about why, and to some extent how, scholars and community builders need to bring change to their professional practice. *Democracy's Education* is well worth reading by anyone thinking about the future of higher education and interested in the possibilities inherent in a public work approach to the inevitable changes.

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