Book Review

Higher Education Hauntologies: Living with Ghosts for a Justice-to-Come, edited by Vivienne Bozalek, Michalinos Zembylas, Siddique Motala and Dorothee Hölscher

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ABSTRACT

In this review of "Higher Education Hauntologies: Living with Ghosts for a Justice-to-Come," we traverse an anthology that scrutinises the enduring systemic injustices in higher education. Drawing upon post-humanist theories, the book critiques the colonial legacies, Western-centric knowledge paradigms, and neoliberal ideologies that continue to influence these systems. Amid these critiques, it advocates for a future of justice-to-come, urging a transformative shift towards more inclusive and equitable educational models, thereby resonating with the realities and aspirations of the Global South. To imagine the future of justice-to-come, higher education in the Global South must excogitate the place of knowledge in developing a socially just curriculum to address epistemic in/justices.

Brief Review: A Psychological Perspective

"Higher Education Hauntologies: Living with Ghosts for a Justice-to-Come" is an anthology that ventures into the spectral realm of the higher education landscape, particularly within the context of the Global South. The anthology aims to deconstruct the dominant narratives, to look beyond the veil of traditional thinking, and uncloak the institutional 'ghosts' haunting our universities. I aim to offer a brief review, followed by an interview, as a more comprehensive review of the book has already been offered by Taylor and Fairchild (2022).

Each chapter in the anthology is a meticulously crafted exploration, rendering a scholarly narrative of education through the lens of hauntology. The intellectual depth of this anthology is admirable, relying heavily on Jacques Derrida's hauntology and deconstruction theories. This philosophical grounding aids in delving into the complex tapestry of systemic inequities, biases, and colonial remnants deeply embedded within the educational system. As a clinical psychologist working in South Africa, I found these narratives both familiar and enlightening, mirroring some challenges faced in our local context. The authors' multifaceted approach resonated with my profession, extending the discourse beyond the educational sphere, and intersecting with my clinical purview. The commitment of the anthology to giving voice to marginalised individuals is its most striking characteristic. Just as I, as a clinical psychologist, advocate for the recognition of silenced voices and buried narratives, this book places the unheard at the centre, amplifying their stories and experiences. The anthology's employment of post-qualitative methodologies parallels the nuanced, comprehensive approach that I strive for as a clinical psychologist and academic. The subjective experiences and individual realities of the people within these systems are placed under the spotlight, painting an intricate, multifaceted picture of the state of higher education.

While the book's profound reliance on Derrida's and other post-humanist theories might be an intellectual hurdle for some readers, the in-depth exploration within the anthology ensures that even the uninitiated will glean an understanding of these intricate philosophical constructs. The anthology offers a novel perspective on the challenges plaguing higher education in the Global South. It advocates for confronting our educational spectres, questioning the persistent influence of colonial legacies, western-centric knowledge paradigms, and neoliberal ideologies. Beyond a critique, it champions the transformation of these haunting presences, embodying a hopeful call to action for the future of higher education. Upon reflection, this anthology stands as a thought-provoking and vital resource for anyone committed to cultivating a more inclusive, fair, and

responsive model of higher education. As a scholar and practitioner of clinical psychology based in South Africa, I see it as an invaluable addition to the scholarship of teaching and learning. The anthology's intricate and challenging discourse serves as a guiding light towards a reimagined educational terrain.

To enrich our collective interpretation of the anthology, it becomes crucial to integrate insights from varied perspectives. To this end, I invited my colleague and PhD Candidate in higher education studies, Ms Asiphe Mxalisa, who has also recently engaged with "Higher Education Hauntologies: Living with Ghosts for a Justice-to-Come", to share her insights and help broaden our understanding of the implications of this work.

Interview

1.   **How did the book influence your understanding of the systemic issues present in higher education, particularly in the context of the Global South?**

I was captured by the book from the beginning with the introduction by Vivienne Bozalek, Michalinos Zembylas, Siddique Motala, and Dorothee Hölscher (Chapter 1) speaking on the need for higher education to be uncomplacent in order to rethink "justice-to-come" amid all the complexities of the past, the present, and the future. As I engaged with the book, it resonated with me deeply. My PhD project is about navigating the complexities of intersecting systems and social in/justice in higher education, with a particular focus on gender narratives.

Considering Derrida's notion of hauntology, the position of higher education in the Global South is located in the relationship between the past and the present. In the case of higher education in the Global South, the representation of the past and the present would be located in the dynamics of knowledge production and the knower.

In the Global South, structural and systematic issues often overlap in higher education and have different but linked historical contexts. Inequality prevalent in higher education is calling us to find ways and practices to rethink the purpose of higher education and rewrite that of imperialism. For example, in South Africa, amidst the call to transform and decolonise universities came new questions posed by the advent of COVID-19, which yet again exposed issues of social justice. The book chapters written by Evelien Geerts (Chapter 10) and Vivienne Bozalek and Dorothee Hölscher (Chapter 11) discuss higher education reconfigurations in crises such as COVID-19. I then

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reflected on how these temporal reconfigurations exposed inequality during COVID-19 in South African higher education. During the pandemic, many institutions started implementing online learning that was not in consideration of pedagogical and ontological issues such as the digital divide and language. So, indeed, the book opened me up to the global reflection of inequality which intersects with many other systemic issues.

2.   **Which narratives or case studies resonated with you the most, and why?**

The narratives in the book have a sequential flow, making the book tell a flowing story. Two connected chapters that I related to were those of Kirsten Hvenegård-Lassen and Dorthe Staunæs (Chapter 3) and Lize van Robbroeck (Chapter 7), because of the work that I am doing in my PhD looking at intersectionality in higher education. These chapters reflect on the emergence of race and racialisation politics in higher education. The narratives in these chapters are intertwined with the experiences at South African universities. The book shared insights on how whiteness silences and results in the invisibilities of non-white bodies. In South African institutions, transformation, access, and diversity are reflected through opening physical access for non-white bodies in higher education institutions; however, whiteness is still present systematically. It is whiteness you do not necessarily need to see but feel through the institutional cultures, processes, and student-lived experiences.

Another chapter that resonated deeply with me is Chapter 9 by Melina Porto. In it, she reflects on language education, beginning with a powerful depiction of hauntology within this field. Drawing on Zembylas's work, she evokes the profound feelings of loss, shame, resentment, and defeat carried by those who have been part of a traumatised community. This contemplation led me to reflect on how marginalisation results in embodied suffering, the roots of which lie in past traumas and lived experiences. Moreover, these embodied lived experiences serve as reservoirs of knowledge. As such, literacy education needs to be both representational and inclusive. It should put students— particularly those from marginalised backgrounds—at its heart, for their stories, ways of knowing, and historical experiences matter significantly.

3.   **The book heavily uses Derrida's philosophy and hauntology theory. How well do you think these frameworks were applied to analyse the challenges in higher education?**

Hauntology is well applied in the book throughout all the chapters. It mirrors diverse narratives that highlight the ontological view of higher education. The use of hauntology in understanding higher education is necessary as higher education in the Global South grapples with Western-centric paradigms, which contribute to epistemic violence and epistemic exclusions. Racial tensions in higher education, which intersect with class, gender, ability, language, and sexuality, can be carefully focused on using Derrida's philosophy. The last two chapters closed the book by reflecting on another complexity that higher education globally faces, which requires a reframing of what it means to engage with pedagogy and the university as a social and physical space.

4.   **The anthology aims to give voice to marginalised communities. Upon concluding the book, do you believe this objective was successfully met? Were there any perspectives or communities you felt were underrepresented or overlooked?**

The book had diverse narratives globally, which are significantly integrated into Derrida's philosophy. The narratives covered marginalised voices globally with relatability in those parts/countries that were not covered, as the issues raised through analysing the narratives are global phenomena. As racialised systems that impact experiences in higher education were discussed, it would have been interesting to see how race intersects with other oppressive systems such as class, gender, and ethnicity. The previously mentioned systems are evident, particularly in the past and present of the Global South higher education.