Prometheus
Vol. 28, No. 3, September 2010, 227–244

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

RESEARCH PAPER

Occult innovations in higher education: corporate magic and the mysteries of managerialism

Felicity Wood*

Department of English, University of Fort Hare, South Africa

This study maintains that, as institutions of higher education have converted themselves into corporatised institutions under managerial governance, they have taken on occult qualities. These tendencies are analysed in the light of Jean and John Comaroff's theory of occult economies: wealth-generating enterprises involved in areas of mystery and magic. Modern universities, it is argued, have become occult economies, and this study examines the ways in which various distinctive features of contemporary academic discourse and procedure have become steeped in areas of ritual and enchantment. Paradoxically, then, although the commodification of higher education has been depicted as a process based on real world principles of rationalisation, cost effectiveness and accountability, it has drawn universities closer to the otherworldly.

This study investigates the occult features of the current corporate, managerial university. 'Occult' denotes mysterious, esoteric knowledge, often involving the supernatural, and shadowy, sometimes perilous, forms of magic. Francis Greene *et al.* (1996) describe the contemporary university as having changed from a Platonic academy to a commercial mall. This study expands on this concept, arguing that universities have mutated from institutions traditionally envisaged as temples of learning initiating novices in the esoteric arts, to emporia peddling snake oil in the form of dubious corporate and managerial magic purported to bestow efficiency, economic prosperity and success. Consequently, academic institutions have become more arcane and sinister and increasingly reliant on ritual, myth, mysticism and magic in the course of their transformation into pseudo-corporate bodies.

The current nature of university policy and practice lends itself to the growth of the occult, as this study will show. As a result, the corporate, managerial innovations in higher education are interconnected with the occult, generating new developments in this sphere. Innovation, Jean Comaroff (1985, p. 253) maintains, often occurs 'in situations of radical structural cleavage – such as result from conquest, proletarianization or the sudden sharpening of contradictions within the hierarchical orders'. In the context of higher education, the imposition of corporatised, managerial systems of governance has brought about new power structures and intensified existing divisions within institutional hierarchies, while also resulting in new imbalances and disjunctures. These, in turn, have given rise to novel forms of mystery and enchantment, while bestowing new dimensions on long-established forms of the occult. When certain forms of management that have become distinctive features of universities

*Email: fwood@ufh.ac.za

ISSN 0810-9028 print/ISSN 1470-1030 online

DOI: 10.1080/08109028.2010.518051
http://www.informaworld.com

today are viewed as occult practices, they acquire a special functionality and significance they would otherwise lack. The corporate restructuring of higher education has long been the subject of much academic research in South Africa and elsewhere. This paper seeks to cast a new light on this phenomenon, by analysing it from a different perspective.

Furthermore, the study of specific forms of magic can direct our gaze back to society, illuminating the socio-political, economic and cultural dynamics from which specific beliefs and practices arise, and within which they are embedded. Peter Pels (2003, p. 16) argues that studies of magic have the potential to draw our attention to 'the practices and power relationships in which these things that we tend to call magic (or label with related terms) are caught up'. This paper considers those forms of ritual and enchantment that cast light on certain key features of the contemporary academic context, focusing especially on South African institutions, although reference is made to universities elsewhere in the world, especially those in the UK. Various important points of comparison exist globally, for contemporary corporatised universities have certain key features in common. Then, for South African universities, the UK experience serves not only as a looking glass, but also as a crystal ball of a kind. Many of the pressures experienced by South African universities have already been felt in the UK, and the current situations in higher education institutions in both these countries are comparable in various significant respects. Moreover, the restructuring of higher education in the UK that took place first under the Conservative, then under the New Labour governments as a dimension of the process of public sector 'reforms' exerted a significant influence on the remodelling of South African universities.

The link between the marketisation of higher education and the occult can be viewed as what Jean and John Comaroff (1999, p. 279) call 'occult economies': 'the deployment, real or imagined, of magical means for material ends'.[1] The Comaroffs apply this term to a range of shady, wealth-generating enterprises which dabble in hazardous magic or have certain strange, mysterious aspects 'that evoke, often parody and sometimes contort the mechanisms of the "free" market' as occult economies (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999, p. 286). These include the ownership of zombies; pacts with the mamlambo: a dangerous wealth-giving spirit; involvement in obscure, dubious ventures that promise to produce extraordinary profits almost by magic, such as pyramid schemes, chain letters and national lotteries; and the muti trade in human body parts (p. 281). However, the Comaroffs neglect to mention universities. The modern managerialised, corporate university could be viewed as an occult economy.[2]

The magic of the market

In part, this development can be related to the fact that universities have entered the marketplace, which is an occult site in certain respects (Wood, 2010). Operating as they do in what Mahmood Mamdani (2007, p. vii), a former Dean from Makerere University, Uganda, describes as a 'market-oriented and capital-friendly era', universities are now hawking their wares in the local and global marketplaces, as part of the knowledge economy, engaged in knowledge production. Mamdani draws attention to this issue in his 2007 study of neoliberal 'reforms' at Makerere University, entitled *Scholars in the Marketplace*. By then, research as well as teaching had become driven by market considerations, both in Africa and internationally. In an effort to prove that they are cost-effective and profit-generating, South African universities have attempted to

reconstruct themselves as corporate enterprises under managerial governance in the hope that this will ensure their survival, as have universities worldwide.[3]

Whether as a specific physical site in which commodities are purchased and sold, or a metaphorical construct denoting forms of global economic influence and control, the marketplace lures many, with its enticing wares and its promises of economic profit. In an article entitled 'Magical market realism', John Saul (1999, pp. 50–51, 57) analyses South African economic trends during the 1990s, arguing that various neoliberal economic practices that have been adopted since the political transition are rooted not so much in a 'new realism', or economic pragmatism, as in 'nouveau market fetishism': faith in the magic of the market. According to convictions of this nature, the market is considered an enchanted space in which prosperity and success are located. Comparable notions have now extended to encompass the marketisation of higher education. As a range of academic commentators have observed, a 'global market utopia' has arisen, in terms of which education is perceived as a profit-making venture (see, for example, Baatjies, 2005, p. 26; Vally, 2007, p. 17). This, combined with other factors, especially the reduction in state funding for higher education, has encouraged the commodification of universities in South Africa and elsewhere.

Various local academics, including Liesl Orr (1997), Eve Bertelsen (1998), James Pendlebury and Lucien van der Walt (2006) and Salim Vally (2007), have observed that a belief in the remarkable efficacy of 'the market university' has become a dominant force shaping academic policy and procedure (for example, Pendlebury and van der Walt, 2006, pp. 81–83). To an extent, a conviction of this nature is comparable to a belief in the workings of supernatural agencies in that both are the assurance of things unseen, not requiring any grounding in empirical fact. Vally (2007, p. 19) comments further upon the appeal of the market in South African higher education:

> There exists a rarely questioned assumption that the market is an appropriate model for education. In the face of mass unemployment, aligning skills to the competitive global 'new knowledge economy' is compellingly seductive and has become the obsession of our national education department.

As Vally suggests above, the 'compellingly seductive' allure of the market can be misleading, for the promises of economic prowess it extends can prove to be hollow. Indeed, on account of its ambiguous, deceptive qualities, the market has readily lent itself to associations with the supernatural in Africa. For example, certain potentially hazardous wealth-giving spirits, such as the West African Mami Wata and the South African *mamlambo*, are said to frequent markets and busy shopping centres in the guise of expensively attired human beings (Bastian, 1997, p. 125; Wood, 2008b, 2009).[4]

The Nigerian writer, Ben Okri, depicts the supernatural denizens of the market in his most famous novel, *The Famished Road* (1992). His central character, Azaro, part human and part spirit child, wanders alone through a market and observes: 'This was the first time I realised that it wasn't just humans who came to the marketplaces of the world. Spirits and other beings come there too. They buy and sell, browse and investigate' (Okri, 1992, p. 16). It is worth noting that the previous South African Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, used to quote from Ben Okri, possibly because Okri's elusive, multi-faceted images can be interpreted in a variety of ways. Whether or not Manuel was aware that the market took this form in Okri's work is a moot point.

Concepts of the market can take on varied, sometimes unusual, forms, depending on their specific contexts. In an analysis of diverse perceptions of the market in various

different societies and locations, Roy Dilley observes that 'through [a] process of assimilation the market concept becomes transformed, mediated and translated within its new cultural environment' (1992, p. 2).[5] The fluidity of the concept of the market is pertinent here. Moreover, notions of the occult can be just as mutable as views of the market and similarly context-bound, shaped as they both are by various factors, including socio-economic, historical and political dynamics.

The Comaroffs and many other contemporary ethnographers, including Mark Auslander (1993), Ralph Austen (1993), Misty Bastian (1997), Peter Geschiere (1997, 2003), Birgit Meyer (1998), Jane Parish (2001), Francis Nyamnjoh (2001), Henrietta Moore and Todd Sanders (2001) and Peter Pels (2003), discuss the occult dimensions of the marketplace, drawing attention to the way in which 'a dynamic relationship is formed between witchcraft and the idiom of the market, with the expansion of an occult economy alongside the global and cultural forces of modernity' (Parish, 2001, p. 118). Geschiere (1997, p. 2) maintains that throughout Africa discourses on the occult have frequently become interwoven, sometimes in an unexpected manner, with modern developments. He also observes that techniques and products, frequently of Western origin, now form a key component of accounts of witchcraft.[6] This reflects the fact that witchcraft is perceived not as an unchanging remnant of longstanding tradition, but instead as a group of fluid and shifting opinions 'reflecting and reinterpreting new circumstances' (Geschiere, 1997, p. 222).[7] Geschiere explores the way in which this manifests itself in Cameroon, for example. Next, citing Jeanne-Pierre Warnier (1993) in his analysis of contemporary beliefs in occult forces in Cameroon, Nyamnjoh concludes that

> current discourses or narratives on witchcraft in the Grassfields are heavily coloured by the symbols and associations of capitalism … [T]he tremendous expansion of the market economy in recent years 'has given a new impetus to the idioms of accumulation and dis-accumulation through various kinds of leakages'. (Nyamnjoh, 2001, p. 46)

The occult and capitalism are forms of power and control with certain features in common. Both occult agencies and the agents of capitalism seize possession of people's bodies, productive capacities and sometimes even their existences. (The IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, De Beers and the Shell Corporation are typical capitalist agents that have exerted an effect of this nature on individuals, communities and societies in Africa.) Consequently, both witchcraft and capitalism are regarded as the menacing 'appropriation of limited reproductive resources by wealthy individuals' in many African belief systems, as Austen notes (1993, p. 92).

Moreover, various forms of global capitalism could be perceived as occult forces of mysterious power that move in unfathomable ways. The arcane aspects of capitalist jargon might serve to reinforce perceptions of this nature among laypeople. For instance, stock market reports sometimes allude to certain economic states, categories or systems of authority in terminology that is suggestive of the workings of enigmatic, elusive forces. One such example is the phrase that a specific currency, such as the dollar, has 'breached certain technical levels', without casting light on the nature of these levels and who ordained them. In another such instance, a particular currency, such as the rand, may be described as being 'rangebound', suggesting that the rand has been tied in place by unknown forces for reasons that evade direct comprehension. Another comparable instance is the phrase 'authorised financial services provider', which evokes a sense of dominion and jurisdiction, without disclosing the identity of

the authorities in question, or the nature of the services provided. The 'free market' is another enigmatic phrase, denoting the concept of freedom and the notion of marketing, without specifying the nature of that freedom, or the identities of the marketeers.[8]

The inscrutable aspects of capitalism manifest themselves in other ways. Good fortune is bestowed almost at random, and then withdrawn unexpectedly and inexplicably. Nyamnjoh, for example, employs the term the 'hidden hand', which evokes economic theory; neocolonial forms of control exerted by unseen globalised, political and socio-economic forces; and invisible, unaccountable, occult agencies (see also Dilley, 1992, pp. 5–6). Nyamnjoh goes on to contend that 'in reality a hidden hand (of capital, the west, etc.) determines who among the many shall be provided for' (2001, p. 35).

As a result of the nature and extent of the powerful sway that market forces exercise globally, a diversity of occult practices has arisen in both affluent and developing countries, some of which have been mentioned above. The occult aspects that universities have acquired represent one feature of this, arising in part from the notion that marketisation is imbued with a special magic that can generate economic prosperity.

Corporate *simulacra*

British academic Paul Taylor (2003, pp. 2–3) alludes to 'the ungrounded belief in the efficacy of "real-world" (read: non-professional and extra-institutional) management skills' in contemporary higher education. Australian academic Margaret Thornton (2004, p. 162) alludes to this faith in the potency of the corporate sector, observing: 'We inhabit an age in which the market and the relentless pursuit of profits have become dominant imperatives. The corporation is the typical structure through which profit-making activities are conducted'. A more extreme form of this perception of the corporation may possibly account in part for the speed and enthusiasm with which the corporatisation of many universities has taken place, both locally and internationally. The nebulous notion that economic prosperity automatically flows through corporate structures, rather like water streaming through a network of conduits, appears to permeate attitudes towards corporatisation displayed by university managers worldwide. This might be one reason why, in corporate university discourse and practice, the emphasis has been on outward forms and ritual activity, rather than meaningful substance, as this study will show.

In their process of corporatisation, South African universities looked northwards, drawing on corporate academic models that began evolving in the US and the UK in the 1980s and 1990s. For example, they borrowed and adapted key features of the managerialism coming to the fore at universities in the UK and North America in the 1980s (Southall and Cobbing, 2001, p. 16; Webster and Mosoetsa, 2001, p. 7; Vale, 2009, pp. 1 and 4).[9] They also turned to Australian institutions for guidance.[10]

In itself, there is nothing wrong with attempting to make institutions more economically viable, but problems arise when this involves bedecking universities in the trappings of the corporate world, as if garbing them in ritual regalia which, in many cases, sits uneasily upon them; and adhering unquestioningly to a corporate, managerial ethos. David Coldwell (2008, p. 2; see also Bertelsen, 1998, p. 141; Chetty, 2008, p. 17) draws attention to the fact that, although South African universities are now run as if they are commercial enterprises, the differences between these two kinds of organisations have not been adequately taken into account. In the long run, as Coldwell and many local and international commentators have observed,

attempts to transform universities into corporate institutions have proved damaging to the core business of universities: teaching and research. Some of the problems to which this has given rise will be highlighted here, as the occult aspects of the corporate, managerialised university are considered. First, there is the apotheosis of the market.

At the 1998 African Renaissance Conference in Johannesburg, Thabo Mbeki (cited in Saul, 1999, p. 62) commented on the power that this sphere exerts, contending that the market has been perceived as 'a modern God, a supernatural phenomenon to whose dictates everything human must bow in a spirit of powerlessness'. In the academic sector, the market-driven ethos that universities have adopted tends to result in an unquestioning obedience to the concept of the market, combined with an ongoing, forceful proselytising, comparable to that displayed by new converts to a spiritual cult or religious fundamentalists. South African academic Peter Vale (2004, p. 11) draws attention to the political aspect of this, observing that 'this has managed, through the power of discourse and administrative practice, to present the market as an objective truth by removing it from any social context'. A sacred figure, being or entity occupies a comparable position: placed outside any socio-political or economic framework, it occupies a position of unquestionable holiness.

As we are aware, this has its political uses, for religion can be invoked to underpin specific forms of political power. Thus, when decontextualised and presented as all-powerful, unquestionable and ungovernable, like an act of God or a force of nature, concepts of the market and market forces can be manipulated to serve the interests of those in positions of authority and influence. Dilley (1992, pp. 2–3) observes that '[a]s a displaced metaphor detached from its concrete referent, the term "market" has become a "pocket" whose contents are defined in relation to the uses to which it is put'. Peter Preston (1992, p. 69) expands on the extent to which the inclination to view the market 'as a given', existing beyond human interrogation and control, has given rise to an intellectual and political void, thus creating a climate favourable to the development of right-wing economic theory and practices. In the UK, he observes, '[t]he New Right colonised this space', interpreting the notion of the market to suit their political agenda and deluging those around them with an 'efflorescence of market-nonsense', some of which has seeped into contemporary university discourse. All in all, these politically and intellectually dubious views of the market have permeated the academic sphere.

Various occult practices are employed in academia as forms of corporate magic to create the right conditions for the magic of the market to take effect. They are also intended to weave a mantle of managerialism: both protective garb and cloak of invisibility to ensure that a specific academic institution is not singled out for unwelcome attention by external authorities; and a disguise, concealing the basic fact that there are fundamental differences between an institution of higher education and a business enterprise. These occult phenomena include rituals, invocations and incantations; the accumulation of talismanic, fetishistic objects (most of which take electronic form); an occult hierarchy; ritual sacrifices; and a predilection to consult professional occult practitioners. First, words of power, expressions and incantations deriving from the globalised corporate world, are invoked repeatedly, as if frequent repetition will bring into being that which they denote, or will summon up the divinities of the market to work a transformative magic upon the institution. These terms, which possess a talismanic quality, and an almost voodoo-like potency,[11] include 'quality', 'excellence', 'mission', 'premier', 'benchmark', 'strategic', 'top rank', 'world-class', 'flagship',

'team-building', 'innovation' and 'auditing'. These words are sometimes underpinned by mission statements and policy documents, mythic in their gap between theory and praxis, and appearance and actuality.[12] By employing terminology such as this, with its associations of affluence and commercial prestige, its academic users partake symbolically in the magic of the corporate world.

'Excellence', one of the words used most of all, derives its cachet from the fact that it has long been vested with special potency in the corporate sector. For instance, Tom Peters and Robert Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* (1982) was highly recommended and sometimes mandatory reading for many local and international business executives, assuming a status comparable to that of a sacred text in which seekers after truth are advised to immerse themselves. Accordingly, many universities now aspire to excellence. The University of Syracuse, at which Bill Readings worked, defined the 'pursuit of excellence' as one of its goals, for example (1996, p. 10). However, like the Holy Grail, excellence proves hard enough to pursue, let alone attain. So, the act of striving after excellence is often depicted as an end in itself, just as almost all the knights of Camelot who embarked on the quest for the Grail had to content themselves with the knowledge that they had sought this sacred object, since only one of their number was permitted to approach it. (Thereafter, it could be borne in mind, he was no longer fit for this world.)

Since excellence is difficult to achieve in actuality, universities tend to resort to verbal magic of a sort. 'Excellence' appears to be imbued with special power to bring into being that which it denotes, if repeated often enough. Indeed, as it has often been noted, reiteration can bestow a sense of actuality on that which might otherwise appear far-fetched. For instance, David Cohen (2001, pp. 274, 277, 265) makes a related point, when discussing the way in which repetition can bestow a sense of truth on apparently unreliable accounts by drawing attention to the potency of 'not so much "a truth" or "the truth" but of, rather, *a claim to truth*'. In the academic context, reiteration can make the mythologies of managerialism seem more credible, as Taylor (2003, p. 4) points out, alluding to the managerial strategy of 'repeating false equivalences until they assume unwarranted conceptual weight'. Arguably, then, it is as if universities seek to bestow a quality such as excellence upon themselves partly by means of ritual declarations in which they profess to be in possession of it.

In this respect, universities may be influenced by comparable practices in the corporate world. Kenneth Galbraith alludes to this form of economic magic, describing how Andrew Mellon, a prominent United States banker in the 1910s and 1920s and Secretary of the Treasury in the 1920s, announced the year before the 1929 Wall Street Crash that 'the high tide of prosperity will continue'. Galbraith (1975, p. 44) then remarks that similar statements have been made by many other public figures, contending that it is as if assertions of this nature, however misguided they may seem, are believed to possess a mystical capacity to shape the course of events:

> [T]hese are not forecasts; it is not supposed that the men who make them are privileged to look further into the future than the rest. Mr Mellon was participating in a ritual which, in our society, is thought to be of great value for influencing the course of the business cycle. By affirming solemnly that prosperity will continue, it is believed, one can help ensure that prosperity will in fact continue.

In various related ritual declarations in both the academic and corporate sectors, the notion of excellence is widely invoked for comparable reasons. Consequently, the word has been employed frequently worldwide, indiscriminately, and sometimes

incongruously. For instance, Readings (1996, p. 24, cited in Southall and Cobbing, 2001, p. 40) notes that Cornell University Parking Services once received an award for 'excellence in car parking'. Meanwhile, on an open day at Guantanamo Bay, designed to impress the media, the institution described itself as a site of excellence. (It did not, however, indicate what exactly it was in which the institution excelled.) As a result of all the applications and misapplications to which it has been subjected, the term 'excellence' is beginning to resemble cheap jam: a bland, mass-produced item that can be applied liberally to cover a diversity of surface areas, partially obscuring that which lies beneath.

'Quality' is a comparable term. If the concept of quality is invoked often enough, it seems almost as if, like faith, it will come to cover a multitude of shortcomings. Like faith, too, the notion of quality exists alongside hope, denoting that which one hopes may eventually be brought about through the magic of repetition. In today's disillusioned, dispirited academic world, we may not have much faith left, and minimal hope, so the greatest of these is quality (see Wood, 2010).

In order to assess quality and to gauge whether an institution is entitled to lay claim to excellence, the most frequently conducted ritual in higher education takes place, involving the completion of templates. Like fetishes, templates may appear commonplace to outsiders, but to those carrying out lengthy ritual activities involving these items, they may seem fraught with meaning, sometimes obscure, but very powerful and far-reaching in their possible implications. Like talismans, templates have to be gathered together in large numbers to ward off the evil eye of the external assessors and auditors.

As with the performance of a ritual, the completion of a template depends more on the enactment and form than actual substance. In this, as in many of the other rites of corporate academia, the necessity of following the correct procedure is almost obsessively reiterated. Provided words of power are employed (the specific terminology mandatory for parts of this ritual activity are generally stipulated in sacred texts, such as policy documents) and an appropriate format is adhered to, the ritual act of filling in a template often appears to be of principal importance, while its actual content seems a matter of lesser concern (see Wood, 2010). There are other features of the current academic sector that lend themselves to being interpreted in occult terms. One such aspect is the mysterious, enigmatic nature of university policy and procedure.

Corporate mythologies and the maze of managerialism

The occult quality of current universities feeds on an ever-prevalent sense of mystery. University salaries are a closely guarded secret, while the reasons for new procedures and sudden, dramatic policy changes may seem so enigmatic as to elude full comprehension. Moreover, the reasons why particular edicts are suddenly and unexpectedly enforced may sometimes seem to border on the inexplicable. New sets of commandments (often relating to the performance of various arcane bureaucratic rituals, the practical functions of which appear to be fully comprehensible only to those who have been initiated into the secrets of managerialism) regularly descend from on high, often at short notice. Meanwhile, university policies are subject to sudden changes, with far-reaching implications for sectors of that institution. This has become a widespread academic phenomenon. In his recent novel, *Deaf Sentence*, dealing in part with academic life at a contemporary UK university, David Lodge (2008, p. 27) makes reference to 'the periodic organisational upheavals to which the University's senior

management had become addicted'. As Lodge's comment suggests, the reasons for the frequent changes and disruptions that characterise much contemporary university life are often so incomprehensible that they could be perceived to stem from forces beyond human ken. Moreover, such mutations and permutations, which can suddenly strike without warning, can become a source of bewilderment, reinforcing the idea that the university management is a secret order of the elect and chosen, driven by inscrutable principles of its own. This mystification is compounded by the complicated requirements with which university staff are regularly required to comply, many of which appear to fulfil no rational purpose. Nevil Johnson (1994, cited in Shore and Wright, 1999, p. 567) depicts this as 'the paraphernalia of futile bureaucratization required for assessors who come from high like emissaries from Kafka's castle'.

The work of Franz Kafka recurrently comes to mind when considering the current academic context. There is, for example, the convoluted, obscure nature of the university decision-making process, which can become a Kafkaesque bureaucratic labyrinth in which coherence, efficiency and rational outcomes are lost. One committee meeting may give birth to another committee meeting at another level, which generates yet another in its turn, leading on and on to further meetings thereafter. No decision can be taken until the final committee meets. All this is imbued with ritual solemnity, as the correct procedures, as stipulated by university policies, are dutifully followed. As time passes, and the final pronouncement continues to be awaited, the last, decisive committee meeting becomes an event that takes on almost mystical, even mythic proportions; partly because it presides over the entire process, offering a way in which an outcome can be disentangled from the administrative maze in which it is trapped, but even more on account of the way in which this decisive event can be so long-awaited that it seems to exist in hope and prophecy, rather than in actuality.

Many belief systems, including numerous established religions, spiritual movements and cults, are sustained not so much by the present as by the future, by the expectation of things to come and the anticipation that predictions will come to pass. Indeed, if a devotee can be persuaded to feel that she has a stake in the future at some or other level, her present adherence may be maintained. Possibly, then, university managements may be guided by a similar principle. By directing staff members' attention towards the future through an ongoing process of delays and deferments, the focus of these employees could be shifted away from their current situations and sources of dissatisfaction. Moreover, they might become inclined to believe that their obedience and submissiveness might facilitate favourable future outcomes.

However, the confusing, mutable nature of managerial policy and procedures plays another, more straightforward function, one which tends to remain part of the hidden workings of managerialism, as an 'undeclared policy'. The British anthropologists Chris Shore and Susan Wright indicate that the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) once alluded to it directly, acknowledging that it would be preferable to retain specific performance indicators for a two-year period only, since 'after that time people get wise to them'. Thus, Shore and Wright (1999, p. 569) conclude, the intention 'is to keep systems volatile, slippery and opaque'. They mention that, like many other features of commercialised academia, this draws on American corporate notions. For instance, Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence* encapsulates this principle.

For their part, like Alice in Wonderland, many academics may feel that they inhabit an unstable, unpredictable world within which the ground rules constantly change. This perception is intensified by another factor that seems to turn current

university procedure topsy-turvy – the extent to which the dominant discourses and perceptions appear to be based on myths, fantasy and arbitrary notions. One distinctive occult feature of the corporate university is an unshakeable belief in the power and effectiveness of something that may seem, to all appearances, to exist in the world of the imagination. Even if, empirically, magic does not seem to work, the belief that it does – or might – is the cornerstone of the workings, or perceived workings, of magic. Comparably, a managerialised, commercialised university, with its top-heavy, unwieldy bureaucracy, its lack of administrative accountability, and its chains of command as intricate and rigidly ranked as orders of demons or angels in medieval cosmology (sometimes depicted in university organograms, with each level of authority confined in a box outside which it may neither think nor act) may not necessarily carry out its work more swiftly and efficiently than that institution did in former days, but the belief that it does so is all-important. Thus, the conviction that supernatural or corporate, managerial magic is effective makes it effective, at least in the eyes of those whose world views accommodate one or the other of these forms of potency.

Stuart Macdonald and Jacqueline Kam (2007, pp. 650–51) examine various manifestations of unsubstantiated notions of this nature in the academic context, making reference to the fairy Tinkerbell in *Peter Pan*, who lives only because the audience declares that it believes in fairies. Comparably, they argue, uncritical approval ensures that the dubious beliefs and practices of managerialised, market-oriented academia will continue to thrive, and that the litany of corporate jargon that imposes and reinforces them will continue to be intoned by many of those who are intellectually unprepared to analyse its hollowness. This bears a certain resemblance to the unquestioning belief that has sustained an array of spiritual cults, despite the fact that these have some questionable aspects, and may have caused severe damage to individual and community life.

Furthermore, belief in the transformative magic of the corporate academy is sustained by a process of myth-making, generated especially by the divisions of Quality Assurance and Marketing and Communication. This finds partial expression in university strategic plans, mission statements and policy documents, among much else. Various systems of power, both at academic and state level, are generated and sustained by a process of myth-making. Munro Edmonson (1971, p. 232) comments that '[t]he mythology of politics is in some respects its essence'. He analyses the way in which the construction of a political ideology derives some of its mythic qualities from the specific myths upon which it is founded. In the academic context, for instance, various concepts underpinning long-established academic discourse and process have mythic aspects, such as the notion of collegiality. Ideally, this could foster productive, supportive working relationships, yet it has always been characterised by exclusion, cronyism and elitism in its practical form. In his satirical work on corporate English, Carl Newbrook (2005, p. 55) defines 'collegiate' as a 'fabled style of united collaboration'. In this respect and in certain other features of managerialised universities, one layer of myth builds on another. The current managerial myth of collegiality rests upon the older notion of academic collegiality: a fable itself, in certain respects. The documentation propounding the mythos of corporate academia is widely disseminated throughout the university community and frequently invoked at university meetings. Beliefs in other forms of the occult can attain a degree of credibility through comparable means. For instance, in her study of vampire stories in East Africa and various other parts of the continent, Luise White (2000, p. 31) makes specific reference to the way in which narratives with fantastical features can acquire

a quality of truth if they are widespread and well-known. She cites one respondent, who contended that one specific vampire tale was factual, saying: 'It was a true story because it was known by many people and many people talked about it'.

The zombies of the audit culture[13]

At this point, let us consider one of the distinctive features of the occult economies, as defined by the Comaroffs (1999, p. 279): the 'appropriation … not just of the bodies and things of others, but also of the forces of production and reproduction themselves'. As Leslie Sharp (2000, pp. 287 and 295) reminds us, the commodification of the body is a longstanding historical and intercultural phenomenon (one feature of this is slavery, for instance) which was subsequently adopted by the manufacturing and corporate sectors. Further to this, the commodification of human bodies, and the appropriation of human productive and reproductive capabilities are distinctive features of witchcraft in Africa. Among many others, the Comaroffs (1993, 1999), Auslander (1993), Geschiere (1997), Fisiy and Geschiere (2001), Niehaus (2001a) and Shaw (2001) draw attention to this. This tendency has been perceived as being closely connected to forms of colonial and postcolonial control, and it has become interwoven with magical ways of generating illicit wealth (see, for example, Geschiere, 1992, pp. 171, 177; White, 2000, p. 6).

In the corporate world, this reduction of human beings to wealth-generating commodities finds its parallel in the concept of human resources. (Employees are envisaged in a similar light when the phrase 'human capital' is utilised.) This terminology, which has now found its way into higher education, is suggestive of a core feature of occult economies, and also of the market-driven ethos, in terms of which employees can be viewed as resources to be utilised until they are exhausted, downgraded, downsized (or rightsized), and discarded (see Southall and Cobbing, 2001, p. 17).

The concept of humans as resources is epitomised in the figure of the zombie. A group of zombies represents a mindlessly obedient, unquestioning labour force, functioning mechanically and tirelessly, requiring minimum sustenance (thin porridge, in South Africa) and housed in cramped quarters, such as cupboards. In parts of Africa today, the witchcraft of wealth, as Cyprian Fisiy and Geschiere (2001, p. 241; see also Geschiere, 1997, p. 139) note, is related to the 'witchcraft of labour'. For example, certain wealthy individuals who exhibit the trappings of Western-style affluence are believed to have zombie labour forces at their disposal. Zombies have a symbolic resonance in the corporate realm, and consequently in academia.

For instance, there is the contrast between the spacious, shiny domains of corporate management and the inferior, poorly maintained work spaces inhabited by their subordinates – metaphorically sometimes cupboards in comparison. There are also the disproportionate salaries: the rich four-course dinner of managerial packages in stark contrast to the thin gruel doled out to those at the lower levels of the company or institutional food chain. Although this discrepancy derives from corporate practice, it has now become a distinctive feature of the academic sector, underpinned by two parallel delusions. There is, first, the fallacy that inflated salaries will lure managers who will prove to be models of corporate excellence; secondly, the illusion that since employees are drawn to academia out of love for the profession rather than a desire for economic remuneration, they will be content with a pittance. In consequence, as Coldwell (2008, p. 3) has remarked, this has given rise to a state of affairs that led the

previous South African Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, to admit that academic salaries were 'disgraceful'. More broadly, there are certain parallels between the zombie and the corporate body of the university, labouring to further the interests of the market forces controlling it.

Zombies are not in a position to object to their situation, since they exist only to carry out the commands of their owners. Meanwhile, the managerial ethos encourages consensus and obedience. In its most extreme form, it exacts unquestioning submissiveness from employees who become spellbound with panic at the spectre of retrenchment, or disciplinary action that could ultimately provide grounds for dismissal.

Further to this, many academics have come to view themselves in a comparable light to zombies, as depersonalised 'units of resource whose performance and productivity must constantly be audited', becoming 'docile auditable bod[ies]' as Shore and Wright (1999, pp. 559, 563) argue. Thus, they perceive themselves as human resources labouring under the control of the audit culture.[14] In terms of this system of evaluation, the body of academic enterprise is broken up into discrete components to which varying degrees of worth are accorded as they are audited and, as Stephen Gudeman (1992, cited in Shore and Wright, 1999, p. 566) puts it, 'converted into units of currency'. This is comparable to Sharp's description of the way in which the commodified human body has sometimes been fragmented into productive units in the corporate and manufacturing sectors. Charles Dickens depicts one instance of this in *Hard Times*, in which the factory workers are reduced to 'hands' (Sharp, 2000, p. 293). The metaphorical parallels with the muti trade, in which human beings are valued in terms of the way in which they can be reduced to separate, marketable commodities in the form of their body parts, are evident here.

There is, moreover, the way in which ownership of a team of zombies could be viewed as a form of outsourcing. Indeed, one individual who purported to put zombies to work for him described them in this way to the South African anthropologist Robert Thornton (2007). Various large corporations, universities included, have come to rely very much on outsourcing, since it is low-maintenance and cost-effective (provided the human cost this practice entails is not factored into the equation). Not only does outsourcing not require the burden of long-term economic responsibility, but companies that pay their contracted workers a pittance can, in turn, charge less for their services, thus offering attractive, inexpensive contract possibilities to institutions and corporations.

Conclusion: occult ironies

Metaphorically speaking, other supernatural beings, such as malevolent wealth-giving spirits, now haunt academia, while many other elements of mystery and magic feature in other university discourses and practices. All in all, the fact that many features of the supernatural have permeated corporatised, managerialised institutions of higher education gives rise to various paradoxes and incongruities. In their very emphasis on utilitarianism and steel-edged, functional corporate pragmatism, in their very desire to cut through the mysteries of academia with its ideals, its dreams, its visions and its strange quests, contemporary universities have become deeply esoteric and obscure, ruled by complex hierarchies of authority of extraordinary, almost medieval intricacy, and thriving on secrets and mysteries, and strange ritual practices, which can sometimes be best understood in terms of the occult.

A situation of this nature is fraught with ironies, some of the most distinctive of which come to the fore when the paradoxical aspects of one of the oft-invoked words of power, 'innovation', are considered. 'Innovation' has acquired an aura of enchantment because, like various other terms, including 'excellence' and 'world-class', this word appears to be endowed with a transformative magic.[15] When applied to the contemporary restructuring of institutions of higher education, 'innovation' sometimes implies that universities have cast off old ways, recreating themselves as forward-looking, 'new-generation' institutions focusing 'on real issues' (Louw, 2010, p. 2).[16] In various respects, however, the opposite has taken place.

The extent to which elements of academia have become medievalised during what has sometimes been depicted as an innovation process is one feature of this.[17] For instance, the complex, hierarchical structures of authority at managerialised universities not only call to mind the hierarchically ranked orders of beings in both the visible and invisible worlds of medieval cosmology, but also the feudal system in the Middle Ages. Newbrook's (2005, p. 9) assertion that corporate power structures are 'based on [levels] of deference that would shame a medieval court' is also applicable to modern higher education.

Next, innovation and antiquity are combined in that both modern sorcery and certain longstanding enchantments have become integral aspects of current university discourse and procedure. Not only has this added a novel, sinister dimension to contemporary occult economies, it has also bequeathed new forms on some ancient aspects of magic and ritual. In these respects, then, the corporate restructuring of contemporary universities, while drawing on certain forms and procedures reminiscent of those of bygone days, has introduced unprecedented features into the shadowy sphere of the occult.

Acknowledgements

A number of the points in this study concerning occult economies and wealth-giving magic originally appeared in Wood with Lewis (2007), *The Extraordinary Khotso: Millionaire Medicine Man of Lusikisiki*; in articles in *Alternation* (Wood, 2008a), *The International Journal of the Humanities* (Wood, 2008b) and the *Journal of South African Literary Studies* (Wood with Lewis, 2005); and in a paper delivered at the International Conference for New Directions in the Humanities (Wood, 2009). Full details are provided in the references below.

Mathew Blatchford contributed a great deal, providing insights and inspiration, and also offering me guidance. Geoff Wood discussed this research with me, suggesting issues worth exploring and making me aware of valuable sources of information, thus enhancing the scope of this study. I owe much to my current student research assistants at the University of Fort Hare, Wendy Muswaka and Abbey Alao, who have been assisting me in my research into wealth-giving beings in South Africa and Nigeria since late 2008.

I am also indebted to Sylvia Tloti, who worked with me for years as my research assistant, for her contribution to my research into the life of the *inyanga* (medicine man) Khotso Sethuntsa, a renowned seller of wealth-giving magic, thereby expanding my insight into South African occult economies. Michael Lewis shared his research on Khotso Sethuntsa with me, equipping me with important information that has helped further my research into southern African occult practices and oral narratives pertaining to them.

Notes

1. The Comaroffs' study has certain limitations, in that it adopts somewhat too homogenous a view of beliefs in the supernatural and socio-political dynamics in Africa. It also emphasises the workings of economic forces, while downplaying the mystical,

magical aspects of the occult economies. Nonetheless, as anthropologists such as Isak Niehaus concede, their argument has much to offer, 'despite the overt economism of their claims' (2001b, p. 203). Indeed, their article has exercised a considerable influence over subsequent ethnographic studies in this area. This point is also made in another study investigating other occult aspects of contemporary higher education (Wood, 2010).

2. The points made in this paragraph and the preceding one also appear in a second study, which analyses some of the other occult dimensions of contemporary university discourse and procedure, also utilising the Comaroffs' theory of occult economies as a starting point (Wood, 2010).
3. Roger Southall and Julian Cobbing analyse this development, mentioning that Rhodes University's former Vice-Principal, Michael Smout, contended that 'universities may not be businesses, "but they need to be more business-like"' (2001, p. 16). For instance, in 1999, the University of Cape Town's Vice-Chancellor, Mamphela Ramphele, describing herself as an innovator, stated that UCT should be 'run as a business committed to balancing its books' (cited in Grossman, 2006, p. 94). It is also worth noting that a prominent collection of essays on the state of South African higher education, edited by Richard Pithouse (2006), was entitled *Asinamali* [we have no money].
4. Two postgraduate student researchers, Wendy Muswaka and Abbey Alao, have conducted many interviews on African wealth-giving spirits, especially the South African *mamlambo* and the West African Mami Wata. In a series of interviews conducted in South Africa and Nigeria since the end of 2008, they have paid special attention to the ways in which these supernatural presences manifest themselves in contemporary South African and Nigerian societies. This has cast light on a number of issues pertaining to modern occult economies, and their research findings are also drawn on here.
5. This is evident, for instance, in the case of one of the most successful African entrepreneurs in South Africa in the earlier part of the twentieth century, the medicine man, Khotso Sethuntsa (1898–1972). He derived much of his wealth from the charms and potions that he sold, particularly *ukuthwala*, a form of wealth-giving magic. In the specific context within which Sethuntsa operated, in which magic was a marketable commodity, concepts of the market incorporate areas of mystery and enchantment (Wood, 2005, 2008a, 2008b; Wood with Lewis, 2007).
6. This phenomenon has frequently been investigated during the last few decades. For example, Luise White (2000) examines the way in which East and Central African vampire stories contain Western features, such as firemen, ambulances and blood transfusions; while Mark Auslander describes forms of 'modern magic' in Ngoni witchfinding rituals in eastern Zambia (1993). In addition, Parish mentions Akan talismans in Ghana, which consist of credit cards upon which objects of traditional significance, such as specific herbs, are plastered, giving the purchaser 'the power to overcome local enemies'. Moreover, 'it places the wearer in an international market place' (2001, p.132). See also Geschiere (1997, pp. 10, 16, 146) and Wood with Lewis (2007).
7. The problematic aspects of the term 'witchcraft' should be acknowledged. As Geschiere himself notes, the word carries with it a strong sense of moral condemnation. Moreover, translating various local African terms as 'witchcraft' can be reductive and misleading, since the original notions may be complex and ambiguous, possessing a diversity of meanings (1997, pp. 13–14). See also Wood (2010).
8. The ideas in this paragraph were suggested by Mathew Blatchford.
9. The points made in this paragraph and footnote also appear in Wood (2010). In Desmond Ryan's critique of the 'Thatcher government's assault on higher education', many close parallels between Thatcherite education policies and South African universities' experience become apparent (1998, pp. 3–32). Various local writers and researchers have drawn attention to this. Peter Vale also describes how the reduction of state support for higher education in South Africa 'drew from the same intellectual well' as Thatcherite Britain. For instance, the theories driving the commercialisation of South African universities were also heavily based on the Thatcherite contention that 'the purpose of higher education was to serve the economy' (Vale, 2009, pp. 1, 4).
10. For instance, Raimond Gaita points out that Australian universities advised South Africa's NCHE and assisted in the drafting of its White Paper on Higher Education (1998, cited in Bertelsen, 1998, p. 139; Wood, 2010). Praising the strides taken by 'new-generation

universities', Alwyn Louw, the Deputy Academic and Research Vice-Chancellor of the Vaal University of Technology in South Africa, said that universities in this country should emulate developments in higher education in Canada and Australia (2010, p. 2). Moreover, drawing on her own recollections of her period as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town in 1994–2000, during the corporate restructuring of the institution, Mamphela Ramphele (2008, p. 203) commends the example set by Australian universities when she remarks that '[t]oday education is one of Australia's fastest-growing export sectors'.

11. This phrase is adapted from Ryan (1998, p. 16), who observes that 'in the general rhetoric of the market used by the Thatcher government, the incantation "manufacturing industry" bore almost voodoo power'.
12. Many of the points in this paragraph detailing the general features of the occult university and their overall functions are also made in another study (Wood, 2010). However, each of these papers examine different aspects of occult academia (except where otherwise indicated).
13. The phrase 'audit culture' is adapted from Shore and Wright (1999, p. 557); also from Michael Power, who depicts the expansion of an audit culture in *The Audit Society* (1997).
14. In 2008, when members of the University and College Union (UCU) at Keele University, UK, embarked on 'action short of a strike', they resisted being reduced to auditable bodies. Their action included non-cooperation in an audit for the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, and non-participation in teaching and learning committees. These bodies serve the interests of the audit culture, periodically acting as agents for managerial authority. The action short of a strike was triggered by impending staff cuts and an investigation into an MBA offered by the School of Economic and Management Studies (Beckett, 2008; UCU Press Release, 2008).
15. Richard Pithouse (2006, p. xix) discusses one instance of this, maintaining that 'excellence', like 'world-class', is used to justify commodification, transmuting it into an admirable, productive academic process.
16. The Vaal University of Technology in South Africa recently hosted a conference on new-generation institutions of higher learning. The Deputy Academic and Research Vice-Chancellor, Alwyn Louw (2010, p. 2), commended this concept, indicating that in their combination of academic and vocational training, and theory and practical application, new-generation universities meet the needs of industry, '[providing] solutions to competency requirements in the knowledge society'. In a promotional newspaper insert, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg recently lauded this academic model too, depicting his institution as a new-generation university, intent on 'building a winning brand' (Rensburg, 2010, p. 3).
17. My thanks to Professor Nhlanhla Maake from the University of Limpopo, South Africa, for drawing attention to this point when this study was presented in the form of a paper at the regional conference of the Southern African Folklore Society at Rhodes University in 2009.

References

Auslander, M. (1993) '"Open the wombs!" The symbolic politics of modern Ngoni witchfinding' in Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. (eds) *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL and London, pp.167–92.

Austen, R. (1993) 'The moral economy of witchcraft: an essay in comparative history' in Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. (eds) *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL and London, pp.89–110.

Baatjies, I. (2005) 'The neoliberal fantasy and the corporatisation of higher education in South Africa', *Quarterly Review of Education and Training in South Africa,* 1, 12, pp.25–33.

Bastian, M. (1997) 'Married in the water: spirit kin and other afflictions of modernity in southeastern Nigeria', *Journal of Religion in Africa,* 27, 2, pp.116–34.

Beckett, F. (2008) 'Clash of cultures', *Guardian,* 1 April, available from http://www.guardian.co.uk [accessed January 2009].

Bertelsen, E. (1998) 'The real transformation: the marketisation of higher education', *Social Dynamics,* 24, 2, pp.130–58.

Chetty, N. (2008) 'In favour of free minds', *Mail & Guardian,* 21–27 November, p.17.
Cohen, D. (2001) 'In a nation of cars … one white car, or "a white car" becomes a truth' in White, L., Miescher, S. and Cohen, D. (eds) *African Words, African Voices,* Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, pp.264–80.
Coldwell, D. (2008) 'Defending our freedom to think', *Mail & Guardian Higher Learning Supplement,* November, pp.2–3.
Comaroff, J. (1985) *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. (1993) 'Introduction' in Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. (eds) *Modernity and Its Malcontents: Ritual and Power in Postcolonial Africa,* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL and London, pp.xi–xxxvii.
Comaroff, J. and Comaroff, J. (1999) 'Occult economies and the violence of abstraction: notes from the South African postcolony', *American Ethnologist,* 26, 2, pp.279–303.
Dilley, R. (1992) 'Contesting markets: a general introduction to market ideology, imagery and discourse' in Dilley, R. (ed.) *Contesting Markets: Analyses of Ideology, Discourse and Practice,* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, pp.1–37.
Edmonson, M. (1971) *Lore: An Introduction to the Science of Folklore and Literature,* Holt, New York.
Fisiy, C. and Geschiere, P. (2001) 'Witchcraft, development and paranoia in Cameroon: interactions between popular, academic and state discourse' in Moore, H. and Sanders, T. (eds) *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities: Modernity, Witchcraft and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa,* Routledge, London, pp.226–46.
Galbraith, K. (1975) *The Great Crash 1929,* Penguin, Harmondsworth.
Geschiere, P. (1992) 'Kinship, witchcraft and "the market": hybrid patterns in Cameroonian societies' in Dilley, R. (ed.) *Contesting Markets: Analyses of Ideology, Discourse and Practice,* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, pp.159–79.
Geschiere, P. (1997) *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa,* University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, VA.
Geschiere, P. (2003) 'On witch doctors and spin doctors: the role of "experts" in African and American politics' in Meyer, B. and Pels, P. (eds) *Magic and Modernity: Interfaces of Revelation and Concealment,* Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, pp.159–82.
Greene, F., Loughridge, B. and Wilson, T. (1996) *Models of University Organisation: From the Platonic Academy to the Commercial Mall,* British Library Research and Development Report 6252, available from http://informationr.net/tdw/publ/hodsin/Chap02.html [accessed December 2009].
Grossman, J. (2006) 'World Bank thinking, world-class institution, denigrated workers' in Pithouse, R. (ed.) *Asinamali: University Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa,* Africa World Press, Trenton and Asmara, pp.93–105.
Gudeman, S. (1992) 'Markets, models and morality: the power of practices' in Dilley, R. (ed.) *Contesting Markets: Analyses of Ideology, Discourse and Practice,* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, pp.279–94.
Lodge, D. (2008) *Deaf Sentence,* Harvill Secker, London.
Louw, A. (2010) 'Universities ready for a sea change', *Mail & Guardian Higher Learning Supplement,* February, p.2.
Macdonald, S. and Kam, J. (2007) 'Ring a ring o' roses: quality journals and gamesmanship in management studies', *Journal of Management Studies,* 44, 4, pp.641–54.
Mamdani, M. (2007) *Scholars in the Marketplace: The Dilemmas of Neo-Liberal Reform at Makerere University, 1989–2005,* Codesria, Dakar.
Meyer, B. (1998) 'The power of money: politics, occult forces and Pentecostalism in Ghana', *African Studies Review,* 14, 2, pp.15–37.
Moore, H. and Sanders, T. (2001) 'Magical interpretations and material realities: an introduction' in Moore, H. and Sanders, T. (eds) *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities: Modernity, Witchcraft and the Occult in Post Colonial Africa,* Routledge, London, pp.1–27.
Newbrook, C. (2005) *Ducks in a Row: An A–Z of Offlish,* Short Books, London.
Niehaus, I. (2001a) *Witchcraft, Power and Politics: Exploring the Occult in the South African Lowveld,* David Philip, Cape Town; Pluto, London.

Niehaus, I. (2001b) 'Witchcraft in the new South Africa: from colonial superstition to postcolonial reality?' in Moore, H. and Sanders, T. (eds) *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities: Modernity, Witchcraft and the Occult in Post Colonial Africa,* Routledge, London, pp.184–205.

Nyamnjoh, F. (2001) 'Delusions of development and the enrichment of witchcraft discourses in the Cameroon' in Moore, H. and Sanders, T. (eds) *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities: Modernity, Witchcraft and the Occult in Post Colonial Africa,* Routledge, London, pp.28–49.

Okri, B. (1992) *The Famished Road,* David Philip, Cape Town.

Orr, L. (1997) 'Globalisation and universities: towards "the market university"?', *Social Dynamics,* 23, pp.42–67.

Parish, J. (2001) 'Black market, free market: anti-witchcraft shrines and fetishes among the Akan' in Moore, H. and Sanders, T. (eds) *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities: Modernity, Witchcraft and the Occult in Post Colonial Africa,* Routledge, London, pp.118–35.

Pels, P. (2003) 'Introduction' in Meyer, B. and Pels, P. (eds) *Magic and Modernity. Interfaces of Revelation and Concealment,* Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, pp.1–38.

Pendlebury, J. and van der Walt, L. (2006) 'Neoliberalism, bureaucracy and resistance at Wits University' in Pithouse, R. (ed.) *Asinamali: University Struggles in Post-apartheid South Africa,* Africa World Press, Asmara, pp.79–92.

Peters, T.J. and Waterman, R.H. (1982) *In Search of Excellence,* Harper & Row, New York.

Pithouse, R. (2006) 'Introduction' in Pithouse, R. (ed.) *Asinamali: University Struggles in Post-apartheid South Africa,* Africa World Press, Asmara, pp.xv–xxviii.

Power, M. (1997) *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification,* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Preston, P. (1992) 'Modes of economic–theoretical engagement' in Dilley, R. (ed.) *Contesting Markets: Analyses of Ideology, Discourse and Practice,* Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, pp.57–78.

Ramphele, M. (2008) *Laying Ghosts to Rest: Dilemmas of the Transformation in South Africa,* Tafelberg, Cape Town.

Readings, B. (1996) *The University in Ruins,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA and London.

Rensburg, I. (2010) 'Reflections on the new generation university', promotional insert, *Mail & Guardian,* May, p.3.

Ryan, D. (1998) 'The Thatcher government's attack on higher education in historical perspective', *New Left Review,* 27, pp.3–32.

Saul, J. (1999) 'Magical market realism', *Transformation,* 38, pp.49–67.

Sharp, L. (2000) 'The commodification of the body and its parts', *Annual Review of Anthropology,* 29, pp.287–38.

Shaw, R. (2001) 'Cannibal transformations: colonialism and commodification in the Sierra Leone hinterland' in Moore, H. and Sanders, T. (eds) *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities: Modernity, Witchcraft and the Occult in Post Colonial Africa,* Routledge, London, pp.50–70.

Shore, C. and Wright, S. (1999) 'Audit culture and anthropology: neo-liberalism in British higher education', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute,* 5, pp.557–73.

Southall, R. and Cobbing, J. (2001) 'From racial liberalism to corporate authoritarianism: the Shell affair and the assault on academic freedom in South Africa', *Social Dynamics,* 27, 2, pp.1–31.

Taylor, P. (2003) 'Humboldt's rift: managerialism in education and complicit intellectuals', *European Political Science,* 3, pp.1–7.

Thornton, M. (2004) 'Corrosive leadership (or bullying by another name): a corollary of the corporatised academy?', *Australian Journal of Labour Law,* 1,2, pp.161–84.

Thornton, R. (2007) 'Marginal utilities, time and the "hidden hand" of zombies', paper delivered at the *European Conference on African Studies (AEGIS),* University of Leiden. (Subsequently published as 'Marginal utilities, time and zombies', *African Ethnologist,* 34, 3, pp.437–39.)

University and College Union (UCU) (2008) 'Keele lecturers vote for strike action', Press Release, 8 February, available from http://www.keele.ac.uk/socs/ucu/local/sems2008/pressrelease4.html [accessed January 2009].

Vale, P. (2004) 'Transformation in higher education is long overdue', *Mail & Guardian: Lessons from the Field: A Decade of Democracy,* November, p.11.
Vale, P. (2009) 'Servants or savants', *Mail & Guardian: Getting Ahead,* 6–12 February, pp.1–4.
Vally, S. (2007) 'Higher education in South Africa: market mill or public good?', *Council for the Development of Social Science Research in South Africa,* 5, 1, pp.17–28.
Webster, E. and Mosoetsa, S. (2001) *At the Chalk Face: Managerialism and the Changing Academic Workplace 1995–2001,* available from http://chet.org.za/webfm_send/318 [accessed April 2009]. A later version of this article appears in *Transformation,* 2002, 48, pp.59–82.
White, L. (2000) *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa,* University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, CA and London.
Wood, F. (2005) 'Blood money: an analysis of the socio-economic implications of oral narratives concerning wealth-giving snakes in the career of Khotso Sethuntsa', *Journal of Literary Studies,* 21, 1–2, pp.68–92.
Wood, F. (2008a) 'The occult, the erotic and entrepreneurship: an analysis of oral accounts of ukuthwala, wealth-giving magic, sold by the medicine man Khotso Sethuntsa', *Alternation,* December, pp.48–54.
Wood, F. (2008b) 'The mermaid woman in the twenty-first century: oral narratives concerning the wealth-giving mermaid woman, the *mamlambo*, in their contemporary South African context', *International Journal of the Humanities,* 6, pp.30–36.
Wood, F. (2009) 'Wealth-giving mermaid women in Africa today: a comparative study of the South African *mamlambo* and the West African Mami Wata', paper delivered at the *International Conference for New Directions in the Humanities,* Beijing.
Wood, F. (2010) 'Sorcery in the academy: universities and the occult rituals of the corporate world' (unpublished).
Wood, F. with Lewis, M. (2007) *The Extraordinary Khotso: Millionaire Medicine Man of Lusikisiki,* Jacana, Johannesburg.