

From the Belly of the Beast: The Monsters We Can Create from the Zombies and the Hyenas amongst us!

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to address what has always been discussed as the three main elements of the social world. That is, the structure, culture and agency in the management, leadership and governance systems in university education. Such elements, as analytically distinct, arise from the assumptions that their roles, respectively, are values free exercise, asocial, apolitical and, therefore, neutral. Citing a particular case that has been a subject of deep debates and extensive conversations in previous ECMLG 2021, ECMLG 2022 and as part one of ECMLG 2024, this paper subjects, as an immanent critique, the claims that the management of organisations' resources, which generally make for the interface between senior management and the formal governance of the organisation, with all things being equal, can make for forms of efficiency and effectiveness in organisational and management systems. With the title of the paper, *From the belly of the beast, the monsters we can create from the zombies and the hyenas amongst us*, the paper thus adopts a disruptive and transgressive stance about what can always appear as the structural and cultural norms. As such, the paper will argue, by drawing from the post-modernist theories, for example, the social realist theory as anchored on the critical realist philosophy, that it takes the properties and powers both of the knowledge and knower structures for the ideal of university education as the public good, as the case will illustrate, to be a realist reality. By means of a social realist methodology, research data was drawn from organizational records, which was then subjected to critical discourse analysis for identifying the structural mechanisms that could generate the crisis events and processes, and further to how the latter could be experienced and observed over time. Such a methodology therefore foregrounds the value of morphogenesis/morphostasis in a social realist oriented project. Based on what ought to be the theory-methodology-practical program chain, the value of the article is, in itself, and for generalised contexts, thus related to what ought to lie behind the shine of leadership practices, of the management systems, and of the governance structures. That refers to the case of what can be the three headed monstrous situations, and further to the value of the practices as the nexus of research and development, of policy and implementation, and of strategy and leadership.

Key Words: Fees Must Fall, Transformation, Leadership, Governance, belly of the beast, the monsters you made, Walter Sisulu University

1. Introduction

In Burna Boy's song, *The monsters you made*, the song highlights the impact the damages and impact of colonialism and coloniality on the African continent, including the negative impact on education. In this article, I draw inspiration from the song in order to elaborate, as part of what has been a consistent case at the ECMLG series going back to 2021. The case is about a monstrous situation that could play out in particular ways by the actors in MLG systems, thus reflecting whether the characters could be assuming the posture of the zombies and the hyenas, whether inadvertently and/or unwittingly? In one of the ECMLG series, I made arguments about the case of *The Emperor and the New Clothes*. Drawing from the reproduction, understanding and broadening elements in any scholarly project, the emerging question for knowledge advancement was whether the actors in the UNEC case, in an institution which seems to be still mired in the complexity of power relations, in more than 20 years of her history and social relations since her merger of 2005, can still coexist and live peaceably within itself, without the current forms of empiricist thinking? Part 1 of ECMLG 2024, therefore, reported on the claims about *The Empire who would have new clothes but still remain naked!* It is therefore along the same lines that this article emerges. Therefore, the research had its setting a particular case about the Vice Chancellor and Principal (henceforth, The VC-P 2016-2021 (The VC-P) at University of the North Eastern Cape¹ (UNEC). The following extract portrays the case as extensively reported in the ECMLG series (for example, Dwayi, 2022),

¹ Not real name

Table1: The Background to the Case Study

The research focussed on a series of events which would later be captured in the form of an Institutional Forum Report about the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU)-MR X Unresolved Dispute (to be referred to as the IF Report). The events leading to the report dated back to May 2018, and the Report served at the University Council of 8th April 2022. The case had its roots at the very first year of the VC assuming duties at UNEC, which would reflect serious contradictory positions and inherent inconsistencies (of decision making about the case), at least from the critical realist perspective about the nature of complexity in open social systems. Several times since NEHAWU had declared the labour dispute about the case, the Council would remain obfuscating about the case until the new Council came into existence in November 2020, which was then followed by the VC-P ostensibly going on sabbatical leave in January of 2021, and finally vacating the Office in March 2021.

Part 2, *From the Belly of the Beast, the Monsters We Can Create from the Zombies and the Hyenas amongst us*, reflects on the complexity of the regime as playing out in the Case post the VC-P departure. The study adopted a desktop research approach, inclusive of a textual analysis of institutional records, which were compared with primary data from the purposefully selected research participants, towards what could be a social realist account about the role of the actors in the MLG systems. Of main interest to the researcher was based on the research question: Which discursive resources did the actors seem to draw on about the case study? The preliminary findings about such a question seemed to point to the dissonances about the case, when the university council took the posture to accept the outcomes of the investigation as policy mismanagement, but rejected the consequences as prescribed per policy. In this article, therefore, the main thrust of the claims was in defence of the idea of university education as the public good. The claims revolved around the main argument as to whether the knowledge and expertise in Law could be used as weapons to wield bullying and hegemony against the insignificant particular other? In an ideal situation, such forms of knowledge and expertise (in Law) needed to be transformed into resources for human flourishing. The means to the latter ought to be about the pursuit of excellence as being “the change we want to see”. Left into their own devices, the unfortunate situation about the MLG systems could be when they become the case of the monstrous situation as evinced in the article.

The claims in this article do not intend to shed any bad light on those involved in the case, but to explain the socio-cultural factors that may have conditioned how they exercised their Agency in their respective roles as academic leadership, management systems and governance structures. Such a position is at the core of deconstructing Colonialism and Decoloniality and the enduring legacy of Empiricist thinking and Western Triumphalism, especially in the context of the new democracies! Therefore, this article reports about the previous case as it has been the subject of the ECMLG series. The rest of the discussion covers the following main sections,

- a. How management, leadership and governance systems , as social practices, are always about the politics of knowledge. In order to illustrate this observation, the paper refers to educational development in university education as the potential soft belly of the beast. This is always the case where the notion of development is contested in power.
- b. The need to dig deeper about the notion of development by questioning what appears as the claims for excellence, by drawing from powerful ways of thinking, of making and of doing.
- c. An illustration about the case about the politics of knowledge where the representation, or the misrepresentation of the MLG systems about it, constituted maladministration.
- d. A social realist account about the case by zooming into what seemed to lie behind the claims about excellence or meritocracy.
- e. The article then propagates for the value of transformative agency in such cases, if the MLG scholarship is to ascend to new trajectories of knowledge advancement.

2. The Politics of Knowledge in MLG Systems

South Africa had seen major developments in the university education transformation project during the last two decades (2004-2024). These developments have included the first phase of the institutional audits (2000 to 2011), which was unfortunately characterised by what would be popularly known as the Fees Must Fall Movement (FMF) of 2015 & 2016. Before the advent of the Fallist Movement, the very meaning of the transformation project had become a subject of scholarly critiques. The main thrust of the arguments, for example, by McKenna & Quinn, (2012) would question the transformational value of higher education that doesn't seem to go far enough to change the sense of who the learners, the academics and even the institutions are, and thus as the measure thereof as quality. For example, for the case under scrutiny, an inference could be made about the incorrect translation of the transformation project as equating to measure of excellence, as if such a measure is a values free and neutral concept. While Boughey and McKenna (2016) response to the

national institutional quality audits, for example, identified such interventions as necessary at the point of them being the structural system, the incompatibilities of the audit became problematic, so the authors argued, at the dimensions of the cultural system. This refers, for instance, to when the policies and strategies could be evidenced to be in place for quality management, and yet the beliefs, value systems, norms and standards thereof remained unchanged at the level of the institutional cultures. It didn't come as a surprise, therefore, that soon after these observation, the FMF movement of 2015 and 2016 would suddenly erupt in the main institutions of South Africa., which proved that the academic project still drew more on the decontextualised and autonomous notions of quality than what ought to have been the elaborative and socially embedded logics.

2.1 The Soft Belly of the Beast

The precarious nature of the academic development work is not a new concept, as it has been noted in the other developed communities (Brew and Peseta, 2008, Holt, Palmer & Challis, 2011), including South Africa (Quinn, 2012; Moyo, 2018). Despite the latter observations, the second phase of the national audits, the focus would be on the value of integrated quality management systems where the enactment thereof would have to have coherence, functionality, responsiveness and meaningful structure (CHE, 2021). The latter would constitute the responsibilities of academic leadership, management systems and governance structures in emergent ways. Against these new developments about the politics of knowledge, and thus the contestations about the concept of quality, were also the macro issues about how the university sector seemed not to be responsive and coherent enough. The UNEC case, therefore, as represented in The Report, seemed to point to how corporate governance and leadership in university education, while necessary, might have been the subject of political decision and thus subjecting a governance structure to the incompatibilities of its decision making events and processes.

2.2 Not Everything That Glitters is Gold!

Both the UNEC Case and The Report have been a subject of analysis in previous academic projects, the ECMLG series. In a nutshell, The VC-P was found to have breached the university policy on job upgrading, and went on to undermine the university statute on the appointment of the executive managers. The nett result of the latter was to single-handedly put a Doctorate qualification as a minimum requirement for the post of SD-LTD. When the Labour Union declared dispute on the matter, The VC-P, as the head of the executive management admitted the policy breach on the basis of cost measures. The subsequent investigative report (The Report) then declared The VC-P as having usurped the University Council powers and also the Council having abrogated its fiduciary duties to the Office of The VC-P. By September 2023, the Human Resources Committee of Council (HRCC), accepted the management of grievance procedures and dispute cases as the causes to the case, but strangely did not admit accountability for the effect. Therefore, the developments between September 2023 to February 2024 shed a new light to what was first identified in the HRCC Report (WSU, 2019) about whether the policies had been adhered to in the appointment of the SD-LTD. For example, the following extracts reflect what would be the silences and superficialities in the management and governance processes about the case,

Table 2: The Changes in the Headship of the Directorate of Learning and Teaching

Dear Colleagues (03/02/2024) As you know, the DLT organogram was revised and the position of Senior Director: Learning and Teaching no longer exists. My contract as Senior Director: Learning and Teaching ended today.....A new position of Director: Directorate of Learning and Teaching was created. I have now been asked to act in the new position while the recruitment process to fill the new position takes place.

Table 3: The changes of the DLT Function by the Joint Bargaining Forum

Dear Colleagues, Following presentation at JBF I submitted the organogram to executive management.. Kindly find attached organogram following management input. The Senior Director position is now redundant and a new position of director has been created

By September 2024, UNEC advertised the position of Director LTD at Peromnes level 5 (effectively a downgrade from Peromnes 4), (WSU, 2024). Such developments seemed to confirm the findings of The Report as briefly alluded to in the introductory section. About the latest development, however, the question remained whether the due process had been followed about a function so strategic for quality enhancement in the academic

project, as earlier claimed for its creation (WSU, 2018; WSU, 2019)? Towards getting to the bottom of this, in my capacity as the researcher in this case, I had to ask for the following information to the current Head,

Table 4: Request for Information on the R&C Project about the Directorate

Dear Prof I am interested in knowing, about the WSU case, whether there were any academic/quality reviews for the changes that ultimately took place at DLT as apparently going on? Whether a Report about those reviews exist and can be made available to me? Whether this matter of the changes was ever a Senate issue? If so, when? Was there any Management Report thereof? Is there any Senate Resolution? Any Minute that I can perhaps access about that? Did the matter serve at Council? Are there any records about this as in Council Agenda? Your positive and constructive engagement of these questions I will fully appreciate.

Response: I'm a bit swamped at the moment training UCDG project leaders Finalising mid-year report and preparation for presentations for the Management Lekgohla in two weeks' time. Will see when I get time.

The Professor never got time to respond to the questions about whether the post down grade, and the consequent advert for post of Director, Learning and Teaching Development (DLTD) was a subject of academic review process, and further to official engagements at Senate (institutional academic board) and all the way for Council approval. In the ideal situation, such a position would have to be based on a comprehensive and credible education research about integrated academic development for a typical UNEC context. The counter explanation to the lack of response per Table 4 would come to surface when one of the Directorate staff declared that, "I just knew the DLT integration was not documented, nor got approved by Senate." In response to the contents per the questions in Table 4, the staff member responded per the following contents in Table 5.

Table: 5 A Perspective to an AD practitioner,

"It has been driven by individuals with their personal intent.. But the relief of late is that, at least they seem to be coming back to us as PAL coordinators to ask for guidance..... All this aspects you mentioned were not considered, especially the emotional impact on the staff that got relocated. As we speak most of them are not welcomed in the Faculties, because there was never a proper process to introduce them into faculties"

3. Engaging the Tight Boundary Objects and Gatekeeping

Calling on the critical realist philosophy and the social explanatory program suggests for the kind of scholarship that can dig deeper, that is, beyond what could be the surface ontology about the Case. Such a process would include the following steps,

- a. Identification of the main actors as the case unfolded in the ideal context of the academic project. Such a project ought to be about the principles that any credible MLG system would hold dear, namely, justice, fairness, empathy and democracy while mediating the potential misuse of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability.
- b. Delineation of the actors in terms of their roles, functions and responsibilities. For the case under scrutiny, that meant a critique of the management systems (offices of executive managers) and the governance structure (the university council) which, as the custodians of the university policies and statute, can take decisions that seem to reflect the lack of clear thinking about the matters of the case.
- c. Further delineation of the actors in terms of their embedded knowledge as beliefs, norms, standards and values about their roles, functions and responsibilities. It is at this point of the assumed cultural capital that then scholarship about the case would come alive. That is, whether the actors can disassociate their materialist interests, as dialectically related to power relations, and in ways that they can still defend the academic project.

As reported in other articles, (namely WSU, 2019, WSU, 2022), the UNEC Council had instructed the HRCC to investigate whether policies had been adhered to in the appointment in the SD-LTD. In 2023, after subjecting the case to two Legal Opinions, the HRCC recommended for a Council decision a resolution that seemed to defeat the very existential value of a governance structure. That the Council accepts the case of policy breach and lacks in the dispute resolution procedures, but reject the consequences of such a breach! It were such observable contradictions and inconsistencies that invited critical realist questions about whether governance structures could have the appetite to deal both with maladministration and the undermining of well-established codes of corporate governance and leadership? Practically, the analysis would have to identify the discursive resources that the MLG actors could draw on in resolving what seemed to be straight forward mismanagement cases. The preliminary answer to such a question was that such cases could ensue when the University Council,

as a governance structure, appears to be obfuscating about the issues of social justice and equity. The case, as it has been reported in the previous ECMLG series, related to how a preoccupation with the discourse of excellence, blindly defined as the requirement for a Doctoral qualification in the appointment to the SD-LTD post, could be compromised by means of a policy breach about talent management to the point of undermining the very statute that governs the university. It was the case of that nature that could set the whole system into a monstrous situation. What could be the discourse that were capable of generating such complexity, then, where the main actors could be described as having assumed the identities of the zombies and the hyenas.?

4. The Monster "You" Created!

Drawing from critical realist perspective, for example, Sayer (1999, p.20), that ‘much of what happens does not depend on or correspond to actors’ understandings; there are unintended consequences and unacknowledged conditions, and things can happen to people regardless of their understandings”. With the benefit of the previous insights, for example, Dwayi (2022), further to Archer, (1995) and Bhaskar, (1989), emerging were the discourses about the UNEC case as outlined below,

- a. The Crisis of Legitimacy in Law Discourse. Much as The Report was quite scathing about how the case had been managed, with the recommendations for restorative justice, the HRCC report to Council would depend on the two legal opinions, which vindicated the executive management on how it handled the case. That then gave rise to what I could identify as *The Crisis of Legitimacy in Law Discourse*. The decision was antithetical to the KIV Code of Corporate Governance and Leadership (KIV, 2016), with special reference to ethical practices. The social realist description in defence of such a discourse had its source the values, norms and standards (cultural system) that the HRCC seemed to be calling upon in its decision making, further to its roles, functions and responsibility (structural system) as represented by the management systems and governance structures.
- b. The Blind Pursuit of Meritocracy Discourse. The Report was quite explicit that the matter of a Doctoral qualification, as a minimum requirement for assuming the position of SD-LTD, while might have been necessary, its logic became questionable at the point of implementation, which constituted the undermining of the university statute and policy breach. In that case, not even the performative discourse could serve as a frame of reference about the victim in this case. That, then, foregrounded *The Blind Pursuit of Meritocracy Discourse* as yet another dimension of a cultural system, thus making decision making to be constitutive of the enduring legacy of colonialism and white supremacy in South Africa, along race, class, power and privilege.
- c. The Policy as Pretentious Discourse. Dialectically related to last two discourses as reflective of the maladministration practices, were The Report findings was quite scathing about the choices and none choices about the case, which seemed to border on pretence, grand standing and political posturing. Pretence, in that case, became pronounced when the actors themselves, the management team, were custodians of the institutional policies and with delegated powers from the university council, a governance structure. *The Policy as Pretentious Discourse* therefore provided yet another dimension both to the *Blind Pursuit of Meritocracy Discourse* (cultural system) and of *The Crisis of Legitimacy in Law Discourse* (structural system), but now with emphasis on the actors, the point about human agency and social action (human system) in the MLG practices in the social world.

Therefore, the combined effects of these discourses, developed as the synchronous and structural mechanisms that generated the events and processes about what can be the dysfunctional governance structures and leadership, played out in dynamic and emergent ways, and, over time. For a typical university education context, that also referred to three performance levels about the case, all of which seemed to defeat the ideal of transformative agency, and in turn, surfacing the silences and superficialities of MLG systems in the idea of university education as the public and the common good.

- a. Firstly, the hyenas acts in academic leadership whether by omission or commission, would be when the actors seemed to draw on particular discourses about the systems of domination and control in the academic project (*Blind Pursuit of Meritocracy Discourse*) than what could have been the alternative.
- b. Emerging from the latter point, and very characteristically about the university education context, where the discipline authority resides with the professoriate, would be the apparent monsters acts at the level of the Management Systems. The VC-P and his executive management team (*Policy as Pretentious Discourse*) was found to have usurped the University Council powers in the appointment of SD-LTD as the case in point, and in the processes responsible for subverting the policy as a structure!

- c. At the governance structure level, reported was the case of a University Council which abrogated its fiduciary function to that of the Executive Management level. Such a finding of The Report was evidence of how a governance structure could be complicit in perpetuating the historical and structural disadvantage (*Crisis of Legitimacy in Law Discourse*), and thus constituting the character of the zombies (confusion and complexity from the combined effects of the discourses as outlined above).

Therefore, the UNEC case, per the critical realist orientations (critical discourse analysis) provided a compelling case about the adage that 'every picture tells a story'. In this case was the story about the precarity of the academic development practitioners (Section 2 of this article), which played out in very unique ways, due to the actors in the case. Concerns about how the transformation project suffers is well documented. For example, McKenna, (2020) highlights the dangers both of the patriarchal management and compliance based managerialism. In the UNEC case, a 'white' male did not only bully the university council by usurping its powers. He went on to demonstrate opaque forms of leadership, and thus subjecting the academic project into a smokescreen. The worse form of a smokescreen was the Good Bye Message (WSU, 2021, P1) whose contents seemed to have been refuted soon after the VC-P departure (WSU, 2022). The Good Bye Message declared that the author was most grateful and hoped that "in return I have some justice to general expectations". The Report, however, called for restorative justice out of a case that stemmed from the maladministration practices as presided over by the VC-P.

5. Three Headed Monstrous Situation!

The logic about the monstrous situation, as analysed above, could be explained in terms of how the case was ameliorative, or at worse reproductive, about the social ills that can constrain the pursuit for social justice and equity. Identifying the discourses of use by further delineating them according to the three performance levels at UNEC allowed the researcher to finally arrive at the clearer picture about the reproductive dimensions about agency. This is what I preferred to aptly refer to as the Inaction-Indifference-Silence logic about the Actors.

- a. Academic leadership: At this level, general scholarship ought to constitute intellectual activism against any forms of brutality, pretence and political patronage. Therefore, the silences and superficialities in the case implied the inaction of those who should have acted in the case.
- b. Management systems: At this level, policy implementation, further to academic leadership, even in the best of the circumstances where the institution could be made of the knowledgeable, the consequences could defeat the very ideal of university education. Therefore, the case was quite illustrative of what can be the indifference of the professoriate when it should have known better about the very discipline they had been trained on: policy making as the enabling mechanism for social justice and equity.
- c. Governance structures: Further to the two levels above, this level is about policy custody. The Findings about undermining a university statute, coupled with the policy breaches, could be declared as a compelling case of how the silence in the voice for social justice and equity can be louder than what could have been otherwise.

Each of the points about the extent to which ethical practices could be compromised at systemic levels, and as emergent and over time, represented the three headed monstrous situation delineated as the as Zombies and Hyenas about the case! The case made for how university transformation can just be about surface ontology. The case about the default position and the faulty consciousness of being and becoming, the de-ontological positions and the self-referential explanations. This was the case about the MLG systems where the actors could assume the characters of the Zombies (confusion and complexity in policy implementation as espoused values and those of uses) and of the Hyenas (the materialist interests that stem from the confusion). From a critical realist perspective, the knowledge properties and powers about such ethical values seemed inaccessible to the actors for implementation. Even when they did, the actors seemed to draw on the privileged forms of knowledge, which fed more into the systems of domination and control and their dominant explanations about social justice and equity, than what could have been the practical alternative. For example, the monstrous about the case was directly expressed in the internal communication by the SD-LTD (Table 2). At face value, such an action, when cross checked with Tables 3 and 4, defeated the very logic about what was declared as need for a Philosophical Framework, and hence the job upgrade. As evidenced in the data (Tables 2 to 4), the case was unfolding under the watch of the very incumbent who had benefitted enormously from the appointment, which was as a result of the maladministration and a social unjust process, per The Report findings. The consequence was that the post was subsequently downgraded, while the incumbent was appointed in the less than 12 months contract.

[“The tragic paradox of the electoral route to authoritarianism is that democracy’s enemies use the very institutions of democracy—gradually, subtly, and even legally—to kill it.” \(Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, 2023\)](#)

Therefore, as this case so illustrated, the disjuncture between the espoused and the enacted values, against the ideal of the transformation project measured as quality, could easily reproduce the very outcomes it seeks to change. In this case, white supremacy, the empiricist and the western triumphalist views, which are always at the core of colonialism and coloniality. At common cause, The VC-P left the unfortunate monstrous situation as discussed in the previous sections. Emerging in such, and in other similar cases, was therefore the question of the required cultural capital as the quality measure in any academic project in university question. Such an ideal needed to problematise the logics of decision making in MLG systems, especially the rationality that must challenge the mainstreamed ways of thinking, of making, and of doing! Such ways thus needed to be troubled, for potential resolutions, at the points of the sociology of learning and of knowledge making. It is for the latter reason, then, that the discussion in this article turns to the question of transformative agency. That is, what could be done, if any, in order to ensure that a proper integration of the MLG systems could be emergent and over time in defence of social justice and equity?

6. Transformative Agency, Being in the World of the MLG Systems

The case, as discussed in this article, confirmed the social realist observation, as alluded to in Section 4.

Table 6: A Perspective about the Context of the Zombies and Hyenas

“We live in a time of political cults, where the rule of law only further incentivises charismatic ghouls to crawl from their graves over and over and over again, intent on chowing flesh. The stench of the crypt reminds us that something has gone badly wrong with liberal democracy (Richard Poplak, 2024).

In [Table 6](#), Richard Poplak alludes what can be the plethora of social ills as the result of the enduring legacy of colonialism. In the UNEC case, as discussed in this article, it then became the case of how democracy, and thus the idea of university education as the public good, could die. Such social ills are not natural acts, but arise due to the frivolity of the human nature. Such ought to be the call for mediation if the public and common good is to achieved in pursuit of social justice and equity. Further to the discussion in the second section of this paper, the institutional quality audit report (CHE, 2023) would recommendation that “all the policies related to the QMS should be updated after the implementation of the new structure so that policies are aligned with the new organogram of the University and the performance management system to ensure coherence” (CHE, 2023, p.33). This recommendation was despite the fact that performance management constituted one of the critical key performance areas for all Senior and Executive Managers as part of the institutional regime (2015-2019). Therefore, such a Recommendation could still be critiqued from a realist perspective as pretentious, grandstanding and political posturing. What could be the realist way of addressing the social ills as discussed in this article suggested for an improved understanding of academic leadership functions in emergent ways and over time, and beyond the call for policy frameworks. Therefore, the merits of the case, potentially defeated at the altar of political patronage, whether inadvertently and/or unwittingly, called for the practical, impactful and sustainable alternatives towards what could be the reimagining and promotion strategies for transformative agency. For the case as discussed in this article, McKenna, 2020 provides what can serve as the practical wisdom in the form of shared responsibility of the academic project, with the management systems and governance structures as explicitly anchored more on academic identities (the cultural capital), than what can come with their positions (structural system). In practical terms, the case called for questioning what can emerge as the serious crisis of legitimacy in law, where the fiduciary duties of the governance council can be reduced to the legal opinions. The case also challenged the whole notion about transforming university education if such efforts could continue to draw from the black box mentality and pragmatic logics, expressed as the privileged ways of doing. The alternative, as surfaced in The Report, ought to have been the elaborative and socially embedded logic about the matter of talent management, when transformation can be more about the medium and long term effects of decision making. It was quite ironical and shameful that the post of SD-LTD could be tenable only for a single term (five years), whereupon it was then a subject of a down grade. In fact, this sudden change of events raised a very pertinent question about what kind of reality must have informed the very call for the upgrade, in the first place, when such a decision could be reversed within such a short space of time. That question goes beyond what seemed to be the potential error of maladministration as The Report indicated in its Findings. Furthermore, the critical realist question then ensues as to whether Law, when it comes to corporate governance and leadership, becomes more of an embodied or disembodied knowledge or a variation of those?

As it were, and based on the Reproduction-Understanding-Broadening-Advancement Logic (ref the introductory section), this case study sought to advance knowledge by broadening the MLG related issues which had been a subject of inquiry in the particular case of UNEC. Given that, globally, universities are confronted with similar transformation challenges, and in line with the generalizability principle, such contexts are encouraged to question the significance of what can be purported to be MLG Systems based on principles of ethical and moral practices in university education in the face of encroaching the new public management discourse.

7. Integration, Reflections and Conclusions

This article discussed the significance of the MLG systems where the voice of the marginalised need to be made loud in defence of social justice and equity. The silenced continue to be on the receiving end of neoliberal thinking and economic rationality by the systems of domination and control. Such systems thrive on the sheer brutality, the patronising tendencies and the condescending attitudes which feed into the hegemonic logic of which colonialism and coloniality are the central organising principles! As such, in this article, as a sequel to the other cases before it (ECMLG series going back to 2021), I had to deal with the writer's agenda in the form of engaging my own prejudices, the preferences and personal sentiments about the MLG forms of in the idea of university education as the public and the common good. The case as discussed in this article invoked a series of events as the result of what can be the dehumanizing tendencies on the part of the powerholders. In order to ensure the balance between the claims in support of the main arguments about the Monsters we can create in MLG Systems, I had to draw on the analogy of the Zombies in order to portray what can be the intensity of confusion and complexity in decision making processes and the actors in such processes, whether by omission or commission. The latter, as a consequence, can unleash another layer of complexity, the case of the hyenas, on the part of the main actors in the case.

Being serious about the case as a scholarship project, thus, surfaced the critical question. That is, whether things can be different than what they turned out to be? To assume that there would be no practical alternatives about the case would be to defeat the very purpose of MLG and the need for socially self-organized systems. In search for the new ideas in the context-specific conditions about MLG Systems, the case about the monsters we made challenge in two ways the complexity of power relations in politics of knowledge. Firstly, the actors in MLG Systems, when they can deliberately create confusing and complex situations through their dehumanizing tendencies, the case about the Zombies. The Hyenas, those who can benefit undeservedly from power abuse. Such an account about similar cases in other contexts seeks not to blame and shame the actors, but to name the specific issues of power relations in the Social world, in ways that the practical alternative can be reclaimable!

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