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The ghost of capitalism: A guide to seeing, naming and exorcising the spectre haunting the business school

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Abstract

The aim of this article is both a pronouncement of doom and an offer of hope for the Western business school. Both come from the recognition that business schools are haunted and that the haunting spectre is none other than the capitalist ideology. We ground our thinking in the established rich 'ghostly' academic literature where the metaphor of the ghost is used to reveal the powerful agency of the unspoken-of and the unseen. Using three fictional ghostly tales as interpretive lenses, we make three arguments. First, we argue that capitalism is a ghost in the walls of the business school. Second, we suggest that capitalism's ghostly nature prevents the business school from offering a curriculum that serves more than the growth of financial capital. Third, we propose that naming of capitalism is integral to the exorcism of its ghost and the creation of curriculum that engages with the social and environmental challenges of our times.

Keywords

Business school, capitalism, ghost, haunting, literary analysis, naming, reflexivity, spectre

Introduction

A spectre is haunting business schools – the spectre of capitalism. All the powers of the business education establishment have entered into an alliance to keep it in its spectral form. Capitalism pervades business schools as a largely invisible presence. It informs the curriculum but does not

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feature in syllabi or the learning outcomes. It can be glimpsed within the business school walls, but it is rarely discussed. It is the thread that makes up the fabric of the business school, but yet evades the direct gaze of the business school inhabitants. Instead, it lurks in our peripheral vision – it is the unsaid, the missing word in the course names. The invisible 'Capitalist' in '*Capitalist* Introduction to Economics', '*Capitalist* Strategic Management' and in '*Capitalist* Management Finance'. It is speaking but not spoken of.

Of course, it could be argued that it is no more necessary for the business school academics and students to name capitalism than it is necessary for us to name the cement in our classroom walls. Is it not the very function of the business school to be the mouthpiece of the capitalist system (Fotaki and Prasad, 2014; Vaara and Faÿ, 2012)? Is not the teaching of capitalism the very reasons of our, the academics', presence within the business school? Or does capitalism present itself as the one and only reality, using ideas, narratives and, indeed, 'fairy tales' to create such impression (Szahaj, 2014), closing off diversity in teaching and practice? Having considered some of the tentative explorations of alternative modes of organizing (Kostera, 2014; Parker, 2012), we believe the latter to be the case.

Ours is, thus, not a disinterested inquiry. With Wright (2010, 2019) and Freire (1996), we believe not only that there are serious problems with capitalism itself, but also that social science and education should be emancipatory: our role as social scientists is to analyse the shortcomings of the current order, to question apparent certainties and to exercise Mills' (1959) celebrated sociological imagination to broaden the field of discussed solutions.

Ours is a deeply critical view of the capitalist order. But, barring a Panglossian attitude of being absolutely certain of living in the best possible world, the ghostliness of capitalism in the business school presents a problem. Serious global issues, from climate change through wealth inequalities and pandemics, all require development of new ways of cooperation and concerted action. All such developments require the possibility of questioning the extant order. Apparent invisibility of capitalism prevents any such discourse.

In other words, pretending that ghosts do not exist is dangerous. Like a memory that a victim of a trauma is trying but not able to erase, ghosts come back to haunt us again and again (Derrida, 1994). To disrupt the endless return of the very same capitalist logic which has brought humanity to the verge of extinction (Klein, 2014), an exorcism is needed. And as the only way to begin the exorcism is to face the ghost, its invisibility poses a significant problem. Invisibility of capitalism is the problem we propose to rectify in this paper. This is a radically reflexive learning proposition (Allen et al., 2019), not only questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions of the learner, but problematizing the entire frame of reference, including that of the teacher and the teaching institution itself.

We aim to expose the silence surrounding capitalism in business schools and to explore how it can be addressed through naming, with the aim of radically changing the business school. To this end, we employ the toolset of literary analysis, and specifically that of Fisher's (2016) and Gordon's (1997) ghostly text analysis to focus our attention on the different facets of the presence, power and ghostly nature of business school capitalism. We have chosen three stories, all of which have been described as ghost stories, though they do not follow a single template, concerned with the links between ghosts and their naming. Through eponymous *Wolves in the Walls* of Neil Gaiman's narrative, Rebecca de Winter of Daphne du Maurier's tale and J. K. Rowling's Voldemort, we explore the ghost as an unsayable, unbelievable and unbanishable presence, and the possible ways of dealing with it. Themes of silence, recognition and voice will be central to our argument.

Ghosts in social and organization studies

There seems to be a ghostly turn unravelling in social and cultural studies, where ghosts are treated as (structural) semi-presences equipped with agency in the broader social context (e.g. Derrida, 1994; Drenda, 2016; Fisher, 2014; Gordon, 1990, 1997). The word 'spectre' is etymologically associated with visibility (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, 2013). The Merriam-Webster dictionary reminds us that it comes from the Latin 'spectrum' or 'appearance' and 'specere' or 'to look'. A spectre is an apparition. It is invisible most of the time, but then makes an appearance at certain points. It leads an existence between presence and absence.

The ghost is also more than a mere apparition. It acts upon its environment. It haunts. A haunting is a presence attached to something or someone that is at times dormant and at other times makes itself known and creates a disturbance. It is a recurring activity where the ghost returns again and again to torment whatever or whoever it is haunting. Fisher (2014) presents haunting as a kind of premonition directed backwards. It is not nostalgia, which is a longing for a past, but the desire for something unfulfilled or not entirely attended to. Quoting Derrida and his hauntology, Fisher adds an own take on it, which we adopt in this paper: hauntology is about the Derridean tension between *absence* and *presence*, but also about *agency* (Fisher, 2014: 18), involving the nonmaterial, disembodied in a conversation – something this paper is dedicated to.

Despite the power of the ghost concept to focus our thinking on the agency of the unseen, there has been little interest in ghosts in organization studies. Most of the time ghosts are used by organization scholars in a metaphoric way to denote things hidden and/or forgotten, for example, past organizational leaders (Haveman,1993), social processes and theories that so far escaped researchers' attention (Boonstra and Nhung, 2012; Holden, 2001) and hard-to-monitor illegal or semi-legal business activity (Heidelberg, 2015).

Some studies, however, use the notion of ghosts to describe something not merely hidden but also possessing agency – legacies of past leaders that continue to shape organizational strategy (MacAulay et al., 2010), or unacknowledged but nonetheless influential theoretical perspectives (Cummings and Thanem, 2002). Mystery, understood as the chthonic and the uncanny, a real phenomenon and not a mere figure of speech, has been argued now by some authors (Beyes and Steyaert, 2013; Gabriel, 2012) to constitute a regular part of managing and organizing. Orr (2014) uses the idea of ghosts and haunting directly and non-metaphorically as a way of making certain organizational phenomena, such as leadership and learning in local government, understandable. Drawing directly on stories recounted by his interviewees, he describes local government managers as simultaneously willing and uneasy subjects of haunting. They are troubled by the ghosts of fired colleagues, mysterious 'runes' of performance indicators, past decisions and hidden agendas, but also use them to make sense of the moral quandaries of their work.

Grønbæk Pors (2016) employs the notion of ghostliness to analyse strategy implementation. Her ethnographic study of Danish local authorities, focused mainly on school managers, shows the development of conflicts between the strategic and managerial logics: top management versus the everyday work at the schools. During her observations, there repeatedly emerged feelings and events which, in the words of the researcher, 'sen[t] a cold shiver down [her] spine' (Grønbæk Pors, 2016: 1648). Engaging with these moments of ghostly unease as opposed to dismissing them helped her make sense of her data, and, in particular, of the moments when the strategic narrative was collapsing. Strategies intended to make schools more effectively managed forced live histories into linear narratives with straightforward representations of past, present and future. Seeing ghosts here was an act of reclaiming and re-embedding the narrative of practice in the broader social and political context. Grønbæk Pors relied on comments that ordinarily would have been excluded from the analysis because they were 'too vague'. By reflecting on them, addressing and naming

them as parts of a larger socio-political context, Grønbæk Pors dragged the previously ghostly voices of resistance into the material world.

A recent special issue of the critical organization studies journal *Ephemera* has been dedicated to ghosts (Grønbæk Pors et al., 2019). Most articles in this issue use the character of the ghost in a similar metaphoric-but-bordering-on-the-literal way. They impart that ghosts are all around us as active, if half-visible, participants in our lives. They are the statutes standing in city squares – while time obscures whom or what they commemorate, their messages, vague that they are, continue to percolate to the modern-day audience, often in disturbing ways (Edensor, 2019). They are glimpsed in the potent absence of non-existent workplace gender quota legislation that spooks the Danish corporate managers into equality and diversity work (Christensen and Muhr, 2019). They are the incomprehensible, invisible and yet coveted financial products (Just, 2019). Some authors hunt for ghosts in management texts in order to awaken their redemptive power (Kociatkiewicz and Kostera, 2019). The editors, Grønbæk Pors et al. (2019), call for a closer consideration of the ghostly in order to enhance our articulation of certain organizational aspects, such as multiple temporalities, and to throw light on them that otherwise would have escaped scrutiny and evaded understanding. The ghostly is, to them, a way of working with what is normally side-lined due to not conforming to modern rationality. In this text we also propose to confront the ghost of capitalism in the business school as an absent presence endowed with agency. By acknowledging capitalism as a ghost and shining a light on it, we hope to both suggest the means of exorcising it as part of a radical dream of social change and consider the consequences of such exorcism.

Haunted business schools

Gordon (2011) suggested that 'haunting is one way in which abusive systems of power make themselves known and their impacts felt in everyday life, especially when . . . their oppressive nature is continuously denied' (p. 2). We suggest as much for capitalism in higher education in general, and business schools in particular.

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the ideological underpinnings of contemporary higher education, both in terms of its framing as a pathway for the student's individual success in the marketplace (Giroux, 2014), and in the naturalization of capitalism as a neutral context for the topics presented within the curriculum. Fisher (2009) aptly named this latter process of universalization of a very specific and historically-bound setting the capitalist realism, and saw it as a major barrier to any social change. Both issues are exacerbated in business schools, where the understanding of the social role of a manager and socioeconomic organization underpin student self-identification and curriculum construction.

We are also not the first to point out that capitalism is foundational to the modern business school curriculum. The Critical Management Education movement (CME), an offshoot of Critical Management Studies (CMS), took off in the early 1990s. Since its inception, it treated the education process as ideological and business education as underpinned by capitalist ideology – the supremacy of the market, the sanctity of private property, the right of capital to appropriate added value, the virtue of competition, etc. (e.g. Collin, 1996). Business schools, while usually part of universities, are seen as different from a university as they teach only one form of societal organization. This thread runs through the history of CME writing. Ehrensal (2001) in a contribution to an edited collection on the 'hidden curriculum' in higher education, named the American business school the 'pinnacle of schooling' in capitalism (p. 99) that conditions the white collar workers to accept the rules of the capitalist game. Contu (2009) described the business school curriculum as perpetuating capitalist relations. Parker (2018), in his polemical book *Shut Down the Business*

School, argued that capitalism is what business schools teach and provided a meticulous description of how this is accomplished in the varied business school disciplines.

Despite these repeated acknowledgements of capitalism's pervasiveness within business schools, the business school curriculum change little if at all in all but a handful of institutions (Rowlinson and Hassard, 2011). Presently influential initiatives that purport to orient the business school curriculum towards ethical reflection and practice such as PRME do not engage with the notion of political ideology (PRME, 2020). Critical commentators increasingly argue that rather than providing students with tools for challenging the ideological status quo, business schools are becoming more and more aligned with the capitalist and managerialist value and practice systems (Jones and Andrews, 2019; McLaren, 2020; Thrift, 2005 in Contu, 2009).

We argue that these findings point to the ghostly status of capitalism within the business school. Capitalism in the business school is an absent presence. It is manifested through the curriculum, but because its discussion is mostly confined to the 'critical' circles (CMS and also feminist and anti-racist writing – e.g. Liu, 2020), it remains largely invisible to the majority of the business school inhabitants. The continuous use of the adjective 'critical' is partly an indication that the critique has never gone mainstream. Capitalism is taught, but never as a subject. Business schools as a rule do not explicitly indicate that their courses are based on capitalist assumptions, nor do they commonly have modules dedicated to the examination of capitalism as a socio-economic system. Business school staff may be aware that they are teaching a capitalist order, but this is treated as a natural state of things with no viable alternatives and thus not warranting a discussion or, often, even an acknowledgement.

Capitalism is rarely named. In our experience, one of the few places where the word 'capitalism' is used regularly is in the discussion of the 'varieties of capitalism' in lectures on the diversity of national systems around the world that are usually part of the International Business curriculum. Even here, however, 'capitalism' is treated as the normal and natural order of worldwide presence rather than of a socio-economic system that is just one of many and to which alternatives are available.

As befits a proper spectre, however, capitalism has an animated, a haunting presence. It is not entirely invisible. It occasionally manifests in 'the mainstream', in situations where we notice that things do not quite add up. Such situations may be described as hauntings. They are disturbing experiences where we question our thinking and assumptions. They could happen on a micro-level. For example, those of us who teach Corporate Social Responsibility may wonder why Carroll's (1991) CSR pyramid – a widely-used framework that outlines a hierarchical relationship between different areas of corporate responsibility – presents the economic performance of the organization as more important than the ethical (da Silva Junior et al., 2018). Those of us who teach Human Resources may feel unease when referring to people as 'resources' (Inkson, 2008). We also may be disturbed on a broader level in our frustration that despite our long history of teaching ethics to future managers, a world where businesses behave ethically is failing to materialize around us (Giacalone and Thompson, 2006; Toubiana, 2014). The endless debates about the purpose of the business school are produced by and themselves produce these feelings of unease and dislocation (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005; Jones and O'Doherty, 2005). Most of all, we may fear that the market-based system we teach is about to crush us as it takes on particularly monstrous forms in the current coronavirus pandemic (The Economist, 2020).

In this way, capitalism in business schools is characterized by the kind of ghostliness described by Grønbæk Pors (2016): something that makes us pause, largely invisible but not entirely. It creates disturbances and dislocations in our experiences that we have no means of addressing. We cannot see capitalism clearly or resist it productively while it haunts us.

Derrida (1994) suggests that ambiguity is one of ghost's chief characteristics. While we may occasionally glimpse capitalism in situations where things like 'business' and 'ethics' do not add up, we are not able to view it with clarity. Partially, this is because many if not most of us (particularly the younger generation of business school faculty) have been educated in business schools and not studied it as a subject (Rowlinson and Hassard, 2011) or do not use theory pertaining to it in our own research and teaching even when aligning ourselves with the critical position (Klikauer, 2015). As a result, we do not have clear means to deal with the hauntings or to try to exorcise the ghost altogether.

This ghostly – ambiguous and animated – nature of capitalism in the business school is our focus. We will explore the methods and consequences of seeing and speaking about capitalism in the business school, and how they are shaped by capitalism's being a ghost. We begin in the next section by considering in more detail why we should acknowledge the ghost, engage with the torment of the haunting, and not deny its existence.

Seeing ghosts

To see ghosts is to open oneself up for the eerie and the weird. Fisher (2016) proposes that neither weird nor eerie has to be horrific. They are strange, they lie beyond our standard perception, but they do not have to be repulse or terrify us. He contends that the weird and the eerie are, in particular 'modes: modes of film and fiction, modes of perception, ultimately, you might even say, modes of being' (p. 9). They are a disentanglement from the current context and from the familiar. It takes a step into the unfamiliar to perceive them, but, Fisher points out, this is a step very much worth taking, because it 'can give us access to spaces beyond the mundane, this escape from the confines of what is ordinarily taken for reality, which goes some way to account for the peculiar appeal that the eerie possesses' (p. 13).

While we contend that capitalism's ghostly status within the business school undermines our ability to resist its social and economic consequences and our role in creating them or to simply confront the contradictions that we daily encounter, we also contend that recognizing capitalism as a ghost and engaging with it as such will help us resist it. Below we outline the various ways the outcomes of looking at (not just being haunted by) ghosts are understood in the recent wider sociological literature.

The ability of the spectre to highlight the notion and importance of visibility aligns it with the poststructuralist concerns for the concealing function of discourse and the revealing function of deconstructive discourse analysis. In the 19th century West, the ghost was often used as a metaphor for the encounters with otherness, including within the self and within the emerging industrial mass production systems (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, 2013: 3). For instance, Dickens's *Christmas Carol* can be seen as an expositional critique of capitalist industrialization. The four ghosts in the story function to expose and explain how the capitalist production system consumes human beings and deprives even the holders of capital of meaningful existence. Ghosts haunt with reminders of things forgotten, just as the Ghost of Christmas Past haunts Scrooge with reminders of generosity and friendship. They also haunt with things ignored, just as Marley's ghost forces Scrooge to observe his present contribution to social injustice (Kenway, 2007). In essence, the hauntings can show us things we presently fail to see. Haunting needs not be mere torment. It can lead to 'transformative recognition' (Gordon, 1997: 8) if only we are prepared to actively see and listen – to engage.

If we refuse to engage, the ghost will only obscure what is already difficult to perceive. Davis (2013), for example, discusses the work of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok on transgenerational communication and how the secreted and unspoken of traumas of the earlier generations come to disrupt the lives of their descendants. The ghost, in this case, is a presence (a haunting) that

continues to shroud the past in mystery and mislead the present generations. In order to dissolve the fog, the ghost needs to be exposed, the secret brought to light, its ghostly nature destroyed through the fleshing out and concretizing of its body.

Derrida (1994) suggests that the ghost is a metaphor for the ever-present possibility of alterity that demands recognition and a response. A ghost is a difference that continues to haunt even when we may refuse to see it. Ghosts, due to their unstable and obscure nature, have a tendency to make us doubt what we know (Kenway, 2007). 'The spectre is first and foremost something visible. It is of the visible, but of the invisible visible, it is the visibility of a body which is not present in flesh and blood.. . . The spectral logic is de facto a deconstructive logic' (Derrida and Stiegler, 2002: 116–117).

In this way, trying to get a clearer and closer look at a spectre may not only reveal previously forgotten and ignored knowledge, but challenge the present forms of knowledge altogether. As Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren (2013) summarize it (p. 9):

> While [the ghost] has insight to offer, especially into those matters that are commonly considered not to matter and into the ambiguous itself, its own status as discourse or epistemology is never stable, as the ghost also questions the formation of knowledge itself and specifically invokes what is placed outside it, excluded from perception and, consequently, from both the archive as the depository of the sanctioned, acknowledged past and politics as the (re)imagined present and future.

These understandings of the ghost allow us to see it as something that has the ability to obscure things and, if properly acknowledged, to reveal things that are and that may be. Acknowledging capitalism as a ghost in the business school offers similarly productive possibilities. Through the disturbances created by its hauntings, the ghost of capitalism invites us to take a closer look at itself. This affords us the opportunity to develop a clearer awareness of its nature, history, functions and consequences that have been so far hidden from an average inhabitant of a business school. This, of course, starts the process of divesting capitalism of its spectrality. However, this is necessary for lifting the obscurities that exist about the business school itself, revealing the 'something' that is wrong with the business schools in the opinions of modern critical commentators (e.g. Giacalone and Wargo, 2009).

It is important to remember, however, that by forcing capitalism into the open, we do the same for its alternatives that also haunt business schools in those elective modules on ethics and in the last lectures of the semester where lecturers may turn, as an afterthought, to the ethical implications of what they have just taught. Business schools are haunted by many ghosts. Dragging one into the light inevitably pulls up many more. Reflecting upon this spectral assemblage that does not have a clear form or boundary opens us to difference. It allows us to gaze at the non-presences within our walls with more clarity and also imagine and debate alternative futures with more energy and openness. And this reflection is a matter of an ethical stance – openness to difference and different forms of knowledge – rather than of a quest to simply clarify what is.

Finally, it will of course never be possible to materialize the ghost of capitalism into a fully concrete, describable and coherent 'body'. Its nature and effects will always be a subject to debate. As Derrida reminds us, ghosts are inherently ambiguous. Engaging with ambiguity, however, is another way of engaging with difference and creating opportunities to develop knowledges radically different from what we currently know.

Methodology: Ghosts in the narrative

Having established the spectral nature of capitalism in business schools, and examined how ghosts have been described and theorized in social science, we now wish to turn to literary fiction to

provide us with concrete examples of engaging with ghosts, and to analyse their pertinence for similarly engaging with the haunting of business schools by capitalism. The pertinence of analysing fiction for gaining insight into the social and organizational worlds has been asserted by numerous scholars (e.g. Banks and Banks, 1998; Guillet de Monthoux and Czarniawska-Joerges, 1994; Śliwa et al., 2015), and our goals aligns well with such a mode of study.

Gordon (1997) believes that investigating ghostly aspects of society by textual means is an outstanding way of exercising Millsian sociological imagination. The reading of the text is an opportunity to discern the links between a specific experience/context and the wider social milieu, enriching our understanding of both. We are all readers, and we are used to reading texts, but mainly what they present. A reading of the haunting in a text can be extended to what is importantly absent and made present through the reading, a re-telling that reaches deeper into the context of the text and finds connections there that bear the shape of a *structure of feeling* (p. 19), or what it feels like to be entangled in the context's social totality including its phantoms of violence. We read texts and let the 'ghost [make] itself known to us through haunting and [pull] us affectively into the structure of feeing of a reality we come to experience as recognition' (p. 63).

In the next section, we present three well-known literary tales (an illustrated children's story, a novel and a novel cycle). They have all been described as ghost stories, though the ghosts present in them are not the most traditional nor the most exemplary spectres. All three narratives were written in English, though this was not a criterion we used to select them. Instead, we decided simply for each of the co-authors of this text to choose a ghost story they felt the most relevant. Subsequently, we discussed our choices, but did not make any changes in the selection. The result is clearly a deeply biased and partial, but also offers material rich and varied enough to examine different facets of haunting, and to discuss different ways of confronting the ghost.

Although the ghost we ultimately wish to confront is a specific one, the tales we have chosen are not usually read as narratives of capitalism, nor do we claim that they were written as such. They are stories of fantasy and gothic fiction, written for audiences of varied ages and literary discernment. Regardless of their genre classification and apparent subject matter, we read them, just as Fisher (2016) suggests: with a particular attention to the weird, to what 'does not belong' in our world, but which is addressed explicitly in the analysed story. This enables us to examine the role of agency, 'the forces that govern our lives and the world' (p. 64). We focus our attention on these forces and compare them with the structures of feeling we recognize from late capitalist society and especially our experience with business schools. One can perhaps claim that these structures can be regarded, in our narratives, as our main protagonists, recognizable in the ghost stories and in the everyday experience as business school teachers. We lift them out of their context, but keeping their complexity as intact as possible by abstaining from reductionist or analytical description, rather, preserving the thick narrative of the ghost story language.

The mode of reading we adopt in this paper is based on Land, Sliwa, and Czarniawska's (2009) technique of distant readings: the analysis of specific plot or theme elements in a number of different texts, and on Ingarden's (1960) analytical approach which stresses the multiple layers of meaning present in every significant text. In line with the hermeneutical tradition, interpretation, for Ingarden, involves not a single act of understanding, but multiple re-readings focused on different aspects of the examined narrative, unearthing different meanings and different connotations. Consequently, when we examine the three ghost stories guiding this text, we do so on four layers: the literal level of overt narration, the allegorical level relating each story to the ghost of capitalism, the phenomenological level of plot mechanisms, and the metaphorical level of underlying symbols. With Gordon (1997), we endeavour to search out the structures of feeling outlined by these significant absences. By concentrating on the ghostly aspect of the tales rather than on their surface or linear storylines, we endeavour to bring back symbols that throw light on some of the significant

interactions mirroring our encounters with the spectre of capitalism in the business school. This process echoes Burrell's (1997) project of the retro-organization theory: to transcend the linearity of rational theorizing, and by doing so to subvert the symbolic logic of inevitability which makes the propagation of capitalism a natural and unreflexive business school activity.

We will now briefly present an overview of each of the three ghost stories. This retelling is, of course, in itself an act of interpretation, one focused on the level of overt narration: we choose the plot elements we deem the most significant, and offer them up as a representation of the original stories. We then proceed to analyse these narratives on allegorical, phenomenological and metaphorical levels, and then consider the implications our insights gained from such analysis might have for challenging the ghost of capitalism.

Tale 1: Heeding the warning – wolves in the walls

In Gaiman's (2003) *Wolves in the Walls*, the protagonist, a little girl, is well aware of the ghostly wolves inhabiting the walls of the house she lives in with her parents. But this does not help little Lucy who cried wolf: her parents, seeing no harm being done, discount her repeated warnings. Yet one day the wolves come out of the walls.

Lucy has been speaking the truth. She really could hear the ghostly creatures and they were wolves, not mice or rats, as her mother and father proposed or bats, as her brother claimed. Yet her mother, father and brother all knew that 'if the wolves come out of the walls, it's all over'. Truth was there, all the time. Lucy was the only person who spoke it.

The wolves really were inhabiting the walls and making terrifying noises. They were rumbling and rustling. They were watching from holes in the walls. They spent their time nibbling and squabbling. They were an explosive, aggressive, incongruous presence. They did not mean anything good by it. Everybody knew it, even if nobody, except Lucy, spoke about it. And then, one night, they grew silent. Lucy understood that this was a moment most grave.

And the wolves attack. They explode out of the walls, they go berserk in the house. 'It's all over', cry the family members. They assemble in the darkness of the night time garden. They talk about emigrating to the Arctic or the Sahara: their house has been occupied and destroyed by the pack of wolves. But Lucy does not want to leave, this is her home after all. She goes back and steps into the walls. From the holes she observes the wreckage the wolves are making, appropriating the family's possessions, making themselves wildly comfortable in plundered space. The family is still camping in the garden and planning how to get away. But Lucy manages to convince them to move back in and into the walls. They watch the wolves together from the holes. In the end, they decide to come out – all of them together – and now it is the wolves who flee. 'Argh' they cry, 'the people have come out of the walls!'. It is all over for them, they know it well.

It takes a long time to clean up the house after the wolves leave, and some of the things are destroyed beyond rescue. But the family make the house inhabitable again and now they know how to deal with further ghosts in their walls.

Tale 2: Recognizing the power of the invisible – Rebecca

Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* tells a tale that is not immediately identifiable as a ghost story. The characters of the novel see the world as a generally explicable place, and there are no obvious supernatural elements to the narrative. The story concerns the unnamed female narrator who marries Maxim de Winter after the death of his first wife, the eponymous Rebecca. Moving to his opulent estate of Manderley, she finds herself distressed by the persistent traces of the previous occupant, and by the constant comparisons hinting at her inadequacy compared to the first Mrs. de

Winter. There is no question of an actual haunting: Rebecca lingers on only through her constant invocation by acolytes such as the sinister housekeeper Miss Danvers. But her nonexistence is no guarantee of powerlessness: the past colours all of the narrator's experiences of the house:

> I keep remembering how—how it must have been at Manderley before, when there was someone there who was born and bred to it, did it all naturally and without effort (du Maurier, 1941: 114).

The narrator never saw the house while Rebecca still lived: her remembering it is an example of how ghostliness seeps into a rational and naturalistic narrative. But this very rationality prevents the narrator from acknowledging the reality of Rebecca's continued influence over her life, an acknowledgement made all the more difficult by other characters' unwillingness to speak out Rebecca's name even as they continued to invoke her person; the narrator notices it, and struggles to make sense of the apparent taboo:

> I thought it funny the way he called her 'she.' He did not say "Rebecca" or "Mrs. de Winter", as I expected him to do (du Maurier, 1941: 111).

And yet it was a taboo, one that affected the narrator herself, who found it very difficult to make herself name the haunting presence. When she did, the act did not solve her problems or banish the figurative ghost; it felt, nevertheless, like a momentous occasion:

> I could not believe that I had said the name at last. I waited, wondering what would happen. I had said the name. I had said the word "Rebecca" aloud. It was a tremendous relief. It was as though I had taken a purge and rid myself of an intolerable pain. Rebecca. I had said it aloud (du Maurier, 1941: 107).

Saying Rebecca's name marks the beginning of the process of exorcising the ghost, but it is not the whole journey. It opens up the possibility for the narrator to start learning about Rebecca and her relations to the still living characters. It is a long and painful journey, and there are many twists on the narrator's path to liberation from the ghost, as well as an almost literal sacrifice: the destruction of Manderley in a fiery blaze. But, ultimately, the reader is led to believe that with the knowledge of Rebecca, and of her knotty relationships with other characters, particularly Maxim de Winter, the narrator can set herself free.

Tale 3: Naming the enemy – Harry Potter

The third tale is from the extremely well-known *Harry Potter* book series by Rowling (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2005, 2007). Over the course of seven volumes, Rowling tells a story of a boy who, at the age of eleven, enters a world of magic that exists in parallel to the everyday reality in which we reside. The boy, Harry Potter and his friends, find themselves at the centre of a struggle against the evil wizard Voldemort who is bent on subjugating the world to his own power.

At the start of Rowling's tale, Voldemort exists in a spectral form. His physical body had been destroyed some years before the events of the first book, in an inexplicable occurrence when he attempted to murder the infant Harry Potter. Voldemort disappeared, but the memories of his past terrifying crimes are very much alive. As ordinary witches and wizards believe that he somehow survived, they continue to fear him. They fear him so much, that they avoid uttering his name and refer to him instead as 'You-Know-Who' (Rowling, 1997: 12) or 'He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named' (Rowling, 1997: 96). They believe that naming Voldemort will expose them to evil powers. Harry, however, did not grow up in magical world and has trouble relating to this fear. From the start, he

uses Voldemort's name freely. Harry is also the one who, together with his friends, defeats Voldemort in the end.

Naming the ghost of capitalism: The allegorical reading

The above descriptions are the overt narration: a superficial reading of the tales which nevertheless identifies some elements as significant and ignores others. Our aim, however, is to analyse them, and analytical reading requires a more structured interpretation. As Ingarden (1960) demonstrated, all texts can be read and interpreted on a number of different layers, each bringing new insights. This is how we propose to analyse the ghost stories over the next three section of this paper. In this section, we start with an allegorical reading, taking the ghost of each tale to represent capitalism. A phenomenological reading follows, focusing on how plot resolution is achieved. We finish our analysis with the metaphorical reading, identifying symbols underpinning all three tales.

Just as Lucy in *Wolves in the Walls*, many a little girl (Karl Marx being one of the earliest) has warned us of the dangers of capitalism. Klein's (2014) is a warning of the most serious urgency: capitalism is destroying life on our planet. Bauman's (2017) last book, *Retrotopia*, is an earnest call for reflection – and for reaching out to each other throughout a world plagued by the numerous pathologies caused by capitalism, with a culture wasted by the dying system's morbid plundering of everything it touches. And still the business schools continue their seemingly untroubled existence, while the wolves of climate change, inequality and alienation get ever closer to pouncing.

The ability to hear or to utter a warning hinges on being able to denaturalize the threatening presence and to question the normality of one's lived experience. Du Maurier's story demonstrates the difficulty of establishing the ghost's status, the ambiguity of its status, simultaneously absent and thoroughly normalized, and shows the haunting as the framing of reality by the ghost for the haunted. Tzvetan Todorov, in his exploration of hesitation in the face of the inexplicable, describes the stark choice presented to the witness of a haunting:

> who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is the victim of an illusion of the senses. . . and the laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place. . . but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us (Todorov, 1975: 25)

This choice is at the heart of the struggle experienced by the narrator in *Rebecca*: she must either reconcile herself to her apparently self-inflicted unhappiness, or acknowledge, in spite of her rational outlook, Rebecca's ability to cause misery from beyond the grave. The first option preserves one's consistent view of the world, but presents no way to alleviate the pain or anticipate and prepare for further misfortunes. While the second one also does not offer easy pathways to joy, it allows the possibility of one day confronting and banishing the ghost. It also opens the way for learning about the ghost and, more importantly, about how other people experience it.

The parallels to capitalism are compelling: its death has been repeatedly and widely acknowledged (most recently after the crash of 2007: cf. Harman, 2009; Mason, 2015), and yet the implied will of the markets continues to grasp the global society in its invisible (spectral) hand. This is the frame of reference which prioritizes individualized or market-based solutions to any acknowledged problems, and requires careful critical consideration if humanity is to step back from the brink of extinction. This requires not only the recognition of the signs of danger (as discussed in regards to *Wolves in the Walls*), but also the acknowledgement of the efficacy of the ghost. Whether ectoplasmic, immaterial or even non-existent, ghost has the power to harm. Acknowledging the agency of the ghost of capitalism, however, involves recognizing the materiality of something that others may be unwilling to see. Seeing ghosts, after all, does not recommend one as a rational and

credible individual, leaving one with a difficult choice between powerless silence and possible social conflict.

Nonetheless, counteracting the ghost is not possible without close examination of spectral activity, which requires the ghost to be named, just as Rebecca had to be. Naming something or someone is understood as an act of power in the folklore and cultural beliefs of many societies (e.g. Fleming, 2011; Smal-Stocki, 1950). Thus, the biblical Adam names the animals in the Garden of Eden and the name of the bear – a sacred animal – is tabooed in Slavic languages. This understanding also exists in the modern usage, Le Guin's (2012) *A Wizard of Earthsea* being one of better-known examples. Naming is associated with power, but, as we shall discuss below, this is not a simple or a linear relationship, making naming deeply problematic.

Naming can give the speaker power over the named object or person. This can be linked with the modern post-structural understanding of discourse as constitutive of reality. For example, Milstein (2011) writes that the simple practice of naming something in the context of a wildlife sightseeing tourist experience caries the function of marking out various aspects of nature from the general environment, 'setting apart from the whole', sorting them out, categorizing and separating (p. 4). Naming and developing special terms has been important in uncovering specific forms of oppression and opening them up to critical examination. For instance, naming 'whiteness' (Liu and Baker, 2016), 'whiteliness' (Tate and Page, 2018; Yancy, 2015) and 'heteronormativity' (Warner, 1991) aim to uncover and critique oppressive epistemologies that have previously functioned as invisible norms. Naming acts to single out the named and make it an object that can be examined and discussed.

The understanding of naming in *Harry Potter* does not deviate from these (probably universal) notions. Ghostly Voldemort is defeated by the person who names and thus exposes him. The key lesson for the treatment of the ghost of capitalism in the business school is the importance of actually using the word 'capitalism' in our teaching and other forms of professional discourse. It is key to identifying capitalism as an object of critique. It is not possible to start unpicking the disturbances and inconsistencies created by its spectral presence without a recognition of its role in creating them and its very existence. Capitalism has to be de-ghosted, called into a more material presence by the incantation of its name.

'The limits of my language mean the limits of my world', Wittgenstein (2002) famously proclaimed (p. 68). We, as well as stories we analyse, agree: naming the ghost of capitalism can mark it out as a phenomenon-within-reality as opposed to the flux of reality itself, thus emphasizing its separateness and singularity, effectively objectifying it and therefore making it analysable.

Such naming can be accomplished in a variety of ways. The business and management curriculum can contain learning elements that specifically focus on the examination of capitalism as a socio-economic system. It can be explicitly recognized and explored as the ideology that underpins most of the contemporary theorizing in the business and management field and how this underpinning occurs. This, befitting the ability of the ghost to call up other ghosts, should generate a discussion of alternative forms of organizing, giving the business school the chance to become more than a mouthpiece of capitalism.

Engaging with the ghost through naming it, however, has more complex outcomes. While granting the power over the named, naming can also put the speaker in danger. It puts the speaker face-to-face with the named. It reveals the named to the speaker but also reveals the speaker to the named. It opens a channel of communication between the speaker and the named and thus exposes the speaker to various unintended and potentially detrimental consequences. The inhabitants of the Rowling's magical works are afraid of naming Voldemort because they believe it will expose them to his power. This fear is not without grounds. As Harry Potter and his friends discover in the final book, naming Voldemort does indeed draw Voldemort's attention to the speaker and reveals the

speaker's location to him. In addition, while Rowling's characters use the name 'Voldemort' with increasing confidence over the course of the books, Voldemort does not progressively lose power. On the contrary, he grows in strength as he becomes less shadowy and more material.

Those who name capitalism in a business school should be aware that they may be exposing themselves to danger. The named will respond. Seeing ghosts may undermine the speakers' credibility and they may face a backlash. As critical scholars of diversity note, calling out a problem marks out the speaker as the problem (e.g. Ahmed, 2017). Whistle-blowers, those who complain about discrimination, those who call out unethical aspects of organizational policies disturb organizational routines, put a strain on personal loyalties and relationships, force uncomfortable reflections. Such 'rocking the boat' is often less than appreciated by those sitting in it, and the rocker becomes the object of critical attention (DiAngelo, 2011). Attempts to materialize the ghost of capitalism may face similar forms of resistance and create conflict between the members of the business school community.

Engagement with the ghost though naming it has transformative potential but is not unproblematic. Those who do it should take care they control the forces they are unleashing by speaking up. Harry Potter's defeat of Voldemort is not merely due to the pronouncement of Voldemort's name. It required bravery, determination and, most importantly, the support of his friends. Materializing capitalism is a political rather than a purely scientific endeavour. The speakers of its name will require allies if they are to forward their cause. Building supportive networks, creating open conversations about capitalism, getting others to name it within a particular business school and in the academic forums outside it will be a necessity.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, towards the end of Rowling's story, Harry Potter makes a shocking discovery of a close link between himself and Voldemort. Part of Voldemort's soul was sealed in his body during their initial encounter. We, as would-be exorcists of capitalism, should be reflexive and examine the presence and effects of capitalist ideologies within ourselves. We are, after all, speaking from within the business school and derive benefit from our insider position while trying to destabilize the cornerstone in the business school foundation (Ford et al., 2010).

Seeing the ghost of capitalism: The phenomenological reading

We have retold the three ghost stories and identified their basic plot structure: the plots all lead from a state of danger and the absence of truth to an ending where harmony is regained, truth spoken and presence reaffirmed. We have also interpreted them as allegories helping us see ghostly aspects (structures of feeling) of capitalism in business schools. We now aim to analyse the stories on the third, phenomenological level focusing on how the stories' plots achieve their narrative goals: how they lead from opening to denouement.

In *Harry Potter*, the villain is defeated by the person who names him. In *Wolves in the Walls*, the protagonists save their home because they decide to reclaim their space. In *Rebecca*, the path towards a solution (and absolution) lies in remembrance and empathy. In all stories seeing, naming and listening play an important role. Generally, the other story characters do not know and do not want to know about the ghost, because they are either afraid or cannot believe in its existence or power. The protagonist's willingness to puncture the silence in the face of external resistance is what moves the plot.

Other than this, the protagonists are rather ordinary. They are small or apparently weak, not to be taken seriously. Lucy is a little girl who cries wolf. The narrator of *Rebecca* is an indecisive woman who does not exhibit any extraordinary character traits. Harry Potter is a relatively unremarkable adolescent boy, albeit one gifted with magical powers. However, they are all sensitive, do not automatically accept what others around them say as truth and do not ignore what they

cannot fully understand. Instead, they explore, try to find ways to speak about and process what everybody knows is there but refuses to acknowledge.

This theme of acknowledging the invisible visible has disturbing equivalents in other contexts. Nicholas Stargardt (2015) in his examination of civilian life in the German Reich points to the fact that most Germans were aware of the mass murder of the Jews and other peoples. The news of the atrocities percolated through the soldiers' letters to their families and accounts of people who worked within the Reich bureaucracy. However, the mere existence of information did not cause the majority to reflect or resist. 'For that it would have needed the oxygen of public discussion' (p. 257). While anti-Semitic publications abound in the early years of the Reich, they failed to generate the level of hate desired by the Nazi party. In 1942, Goebbels adopted a drastically different approach: he started blacking out reports of genocide from the press, cinema newsreels and public speeches. In the absence of official reports, the ordinary German was left with rumours and fragmented accounts and with few tangible points of reference that would allow a conversation with others. Stargardt borrows the term 'spiral of silence' from the German post-war commentator Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann to describe the news blackout and its severing of the intersection between the private and the public and thwarting collective sensemaking (p. 246).

Collective sensemaking is another factor that progresses the plot in our three stories. Truth exists, Gabel (2018) maintains, but it is neither objective nor subjective, neither absolute, nor relative. Instead, it is a bond, that which connects the inside and the outside, the person and the fellow humans. For Gabel, truth depends on mutual recognition. Communal recognition is crucial, as is individual voice: although the protagonist often finds herself or himself alone, exorcism is primarily a social activity. Friends and allies are found, conversations take place. Lucy's parents join her in the walls of the house, the narrator in *Rebecca* opens up to others, and Harry Potter certainly would have got nowhere without his friends. The private needs to become public, the exorcism requires a public acknowledgement of the ghost. Confining the naming of capitalism to a few 'critical' publications is tantamount to silence. Naming it in public, not merely on the curriculum margins, creates a conversation point for collective sensemaking. Importantly, the naming does not always need to be critical. Simple wide-spread usage of the word 'capitalism' is sufficient.

Of course, recognizing the ghost, and speaking out its name is only the beginning. To achieve success, there must be more: action, bravery, movement. To stay and fight is important, we learn from Harry Potter. To come back and reclaim and repair the space is necessary, Lucy's story shows. But *Rebecca* also shows how understanding and empathy (for all the people affected, even if not of the ghost) play a central role in the way towards a good ending. Even then, we can expect no resolution to ever be final. As Lucy's story tells us, it is important to continue listening, and not to let our vigilance down. Only then, when another apparition inevitably appears, will it be possible to face it prepared.

Redeeming the business school: The metaphorical reading

The basic metaphors appearing in the stories are simple, almost too simple and bordering on the self-evident. In themselves they would be just that – nice (and possibly spooky) stories to retell and perhaps analyse for relevant morals. However, Ingarden teaches us that there may, even in simple text, be a deeper level, obscured underneath (or beside) the plot. What we find in our deepest and metaphorical reading of our narratives is the metaphor of redemption. The examined novels are no mere stories of heroic achievement and of conquering a malevolent presence. They all make a point about the possibility of a much more profound healing.

In *On the concept of history*, Benjamin (1974) proposes that the potentially revolutionary and redemptive moment is present in all things, including the material. Instead of focusing on 'how it

really was', the revolutionary historian should look for such moments, which he calls messianic, containing a promise of seeing what was not seen before, hearing what has been unheard, understanding and grasping. Things and ideas can be redeemed by disconnecting them from what appears as normal and inescapable on the surface. The dénouements in the analysed ghost stories perform that function: their plots guide away from the overpowering plot leading towards destruction, towards an 'it's all over', by finding messianic moments through bravery, naming and empathy. What has been initially plotted as eerily inevitable, becomes, in these moments, a turn of the tale, followed by another one, which gives the former a different meaning: revolution, reclaiming memory instead of vengeful resentment, hope instead of doom, reconstruction instead of ruin.

Benjamin derives the idea of redemption directly from Judeo-Christian theology. Many religions stress the possibility and central status of redemption from suffering, injustice, separation from God – towards a good life in unity and fulfilment. This can be achieved through a relationship with greater powers (Christ, God, dharma) with a more or less active role on the side of the human being and a more or less decisive role of the higher powers (Armstrong, 2001; Bonhoeffer, 1995; Francis (Pope), 2018; King, 1991; Sarwa, 2003; YIVO, 2010). In other words, there is an inherently liberating potential in certain engagements, most notably faith and compassion.

For Benjamin (2005), the initial state of misery equals the meaninglessness of history. By consciously disconnecting stories from the taken for granted versions dictated by power and conformism, the radical historian is able to offer redemption to sparks of life – messianic moments – that slumber underneath. In those moments the revolution has already happened. It only has to be turned loose from dead time and rightful memory. This is the deepest level of our reading, and one we believe has a real revolutionary power, even in a place as corrupted as the business school. Making capitalism in the business school a subject of discussion creates a switch point in the course of our educational endeavour. It is a method for stepping off the path that currently appears inevitable, an escape from the situation where we are forced to consider issues of social justice and environmental sustainability only from within the system obsessed with private accumulation. The possibility is open for consideration of radically different form or organizing as opposed to improvements in the currently available ones. We believe that it is precisely the resonance between the simplicity of the plots and this deeper metaphorical layer that makes the ghost stories such striking tools for insight – and teaching.

Coda

As the metaphors above, learning in business schools is, for the time being, rather simple, albeit with a different result. In a popular article from 2019, Martin Parker unveils the contemporary business school as an institution spinning simple fairy tales about unmitigated growth, greed and irresponsibility as sensible and, indeed, the only correct mindset, on a mass global scale (Parker, 2019). At the same time, the threat not just of growing social inequality, but common extinction driven by the prevailing forms of economic organization becomes ever more urgent (Bezanson and Luxton, 2006; Foster, 2002; Roy, 2014). Business school education ignores all this and keeps telling their simple fairy tales. We must replace this monster institution with something useful and sober, such as schools of organizing focusing on different and important aspects of business and organizations, respect for the ecosystem, social inclusion, justice, pleads Parker (2018, 2019).

Our paper is an attempt to answer this call, albeit we propose that even within the current institution there could be a huge radical potential to set free, also by telling simple tales, but different ones. The silence surrounding capitalism in business schools is self-sustaining. Its spectrality produces silence as those who see and talk about ghosts are not believed. Ghosts are also feared. They do not have a place in the ordered reality and in the rational language of the sensible business

school academics. However, naming and talking about capitalism, whatever disharmony is produces, is the only way forward. This argument echoes the radical educationalist Paulo Freire's insistence that structuring the learning process around vocalization of certain words can initiate consciousness-raising and thus contains the seeds of liberation for the learners and teachers. Education should help individuals who are 'submerged' in their reality and thus unable to subject it to critical examination to 'emerge' from it and 'unveil the world of oppression and through the praxis commit themselves to its transformation' (Freire, 1996, pp. 36, 98). This also pertains to management learning. In this paper we propose a reflexive dialogical approach (Cunliffe, 2002) which aims at connecting tacit learning with explicit knowledge in order to 'create the imagined from the imaginary' (p. 57) by highlighting 'tacit assumptions and ideologies' (p. 57). Allen et al. (2019) adopt such an approach to question the present prevailing management education assumptions of humans being detached from nature and promote an eco-centric view. We focus on the systemic dimension: the issue of capitalism itself.

Capitalism's ghostly nature does not only prevent us from talking about it, but also, like a repressed traumatic memory, tethers us to our current understandings and prevents us from liberation and forward movement. Unveiling capitalism may bring back the voice of the founders, their vivid dreams and far from selfish ideas, as Kociatkiewicz and Kostera (2019) show in their paper dedicated to the ghosts of management. Founding fathers and mothers such as Henry Ford and Mary Parker Follett, allowed to speak in their original voices, not as presented in ever more streamlined textbooks, make visible what has been well intended and even good with those earlier capitalist ideas. But, at the same time, they point to some vital themes in our won times which need to be addressed by something beyond capitalism: the need for sociality, the care for the commune.

We need new tales and new ways of telling old ones. We propose business school teaching based on simple stories, just like the traditional Harvard case study method is, indeed, rooted in storytelling (Hatch et al., 2005). A class could start with a simple ghost story. Then the teacher would explain the role of capitalism in business education. Then, the students would look for simple stories of ordinary people in scientific literature and media: stories of employees and lower level managers, unheroic, mundane, often full of misery, like the workplace stories presented by Graeber (2018) and Fleming (2017). Finally, the students could be asked to perform a multi-level reading, as we did with the ghost stories. The analysis would begin with unveiling the spectre of capitalism in the context. Then, keeping it well in mind, the students would look for liberating and redeeming ways these stories could be told. Using notions of redemption from various sources, the students could focus on following narrative possibilities hidden in the stories or in their context: is there something good to be found? A common good? What can the protagonist do, how active can he or she be? Is there a possibility for developing faith and compassion? Instead of letting the protagonist break down or feel devoid of agency, let them speak out, tell their own story. In happy stories – they could look for human fragility and tenderness, and check, whether the protagonists could be even more compassionate towards someone else. Capitalism would have to be addressed in some way – abolished, crushed or re-formed, re-invented.

The point is not to invent a happy ending, but to find, within the setting of the tale, ways of a redeeming retelling, provided that capitalism is made visible. Through the retelling of such stories the students could, ultimately, look for more universal salvation: ways in which the organizations could be reshaped and benefit from the characters' humanity. For example, in Peter Fleming's (in Caless, 2016) well known story of frustrated employee who puts excrement in the toilet soap dispenser at work, the retelling could begin with making capitalism visible. The company has been taken over by a hedge fund. People are being laid off. Work has become fragmented. All employees are frustrated. Our protagonist puts excrement in the soap dispenser in the WC used by top management and not in the employees' toilet. He then gets fired anyway, but his colleagues take him to a pub and celebrate. Everyone is less frustrated, except, perhaps, the CEO.

To look at stories from the possibility of healing, starting from brokenness, is a way of looking at the world reminiscent of Leonard Cohen's poetry. Theologian Glazer (2020) believes that the poet 'argues that despite our better judgment of the brokenness that surrounds us, one must remain hopelessly hopeful that within the very brokenness there emerges a new openness within the world and inside ourselves to find the path to its redemption'. His tales of brokenness are unheroic, but they bring hope among stark darkness, something that the Campbellian hero usually does. And that is what we propose our simple stories to do in the classroom: retrieve and offer the possibility of healing.

The simple stories can be told as realist tales, open to different kinds of readings, concerned about the messianic moments they may contain. They can also be told as new fairy tales, challenging plots of growth, productivity and profit. The ghost metaphor is powerful as it reveals the power of the irrational and the unseen. Students may learn how to adopt plots of unmasking haunting presences, especially capitalism, which must be named. They can also seek forgiveness, understanding and empathy for who we are, what we have done and why. They can, finally, contain a call to confronting capitalism, to reclaiming our common home, planet Earth. All this is being done elsewhere, especially in the margins of society, but, we suggest, these different stories must be introduced into the heart of the business schools.

Otherwise, in the worst case scenario, extinction will become a fact, last and untold. In the best case scenario, the forces of salvation will arrive from the margins. Business schools will be turned into schools of organizing that Parker (2018) dreamt of. However, as East Europeans, we know this is no happy ending. We all remember the end of the system of state communism and how it failed, even though it seemed to be immortal, as expressed in Yurchak's (2005) brilliant title of the book dedicated the that moment: *everything was forever, until it was no more*. Structures and institutions changed ownership, became dramatically redefined and reconfigured. One of them was the old type ideological higher education institution, known in Poland as political academy and in the USSR as Academy of National Economy. We have all observed how these institutions suddenly and almost completely stealthily shape-shifted and became – you may have guessed it – business schools. The faculties were re-named. The old ideology, however, did not disappear. It became a ghost and commenced its haunting.

To some extent, this is inevitable. Hauntings are part of a human experience, but so is laying them to rest. To do so, we need not just a revolution and redirection, but redemption. Something that ghost stories are exquisitely good at.

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