

BOOK REVIEW

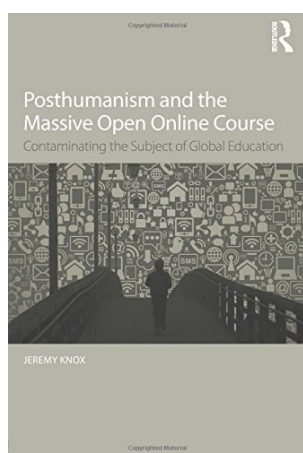
POSTHUMANISM AND THE MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE COURSE

Contaminating the Subject of Global Education

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Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) is one of the revolutionary online learning applications in this period, in which communication technologies connect the Earth, that brings academicians in the most elite universities to individuals who are autonomous in a remote corner of the world and learns to study on his own. Although MOOC concept, in academic circles, are perceived as free and open online courses being given by respected academics from elite universities around the world, the theoretically criticized studies are rare. This book titled "Post-humanism and the Massive Open Online Course: Contaminating the Subject of Global Education" has made critical analysis through theoretical frameworks by approaching the MOOCs which have become very popular in recent years and attracted attention, with a critical perspective. While the book is making these analyzes, it uses "critical post humanism", a well-

structured form of humanism derived from philosophical and critical theory, an umbrella concept covering many theories. Jeremy Knox, the author of the book, has turned his thesis into a book due to the fact that there are not many critical analyses for online education and MOOC concepts. The book, consisting of 5 chapters and 238 pages, has first been published by Routledge in 2016.

The first chapter, titled "(Post)Humanism and Education", includes the topics of the definition of humanism, relation of humanism and education, definition and features of critical posthumanism, new materialism, educational dualism and posthuman knowledge. Within the scope of this section, MOOCs are examined from a theoretical point of view. In this chapter, where humanism is associated with education and the learning process is approached with the view of humanism, the fact that education researches are dominated by dualist approaches and the reflection of posthumanism on education are discussed. In chapter 1, the relation of education-humanism is used as a base and complemented with the critical posthumanism. The MOOC concept is first looked at from a humanist point of

view and universal human being is analyzed with criticisms of autonomous learners and university education at the campus. Chapter 1 draws attention as an introduction in which the concepts to be explained in the following chapters are introduced.

In Chapter 2, the place and role of MOOCs in education are discussed in the universal sense. In this chapter, the MOOC world is criticized by being associated with humanism and colonialism. The author, indicating that colonialism is rooted in humanism, benefits from these theories while introducing MOOC platforms such as Coursera, Udacity and EdX and examining them from a critical point of view. Throughout the chapter, he analyzes colonialism in the context of situations occurred by the imposition of this understanding and thought on human rather than in the context of capturing geographical regions. Specific recommendations are also provided for MOOC researches and platform designs. At this point, the intersection of postcolonial and posthumanism is used as an alternative theoretical framework. In this chapter, where the data collection tools and strategies of MOOC platforms are examined in detail, the author presents a new concept called data colonialism.

Chapter 3 includes the identification of the characteristics of MOOC participants and their communities by concepts from different disciplines such as anthropology together with approaches like connectivism and individualism. In this chapter, the differences are rejected and the features of a universal MOOC platform are listed from a humanist point of view. Participants' behaviors on the MOOC platforms are analyzed and divided into categories. Personal Learning Network (PLN) concept, the basis for the formation of MOOCs, is studied in detail. In addition, the ways of implementation of individualism in connectivist MOOC (cMOOC) are being discussed and the "social" dimension of MOOCs are being focused on.

Chapter 4 starts with MOOC reviews. In this context, the course 'Modern and Contemporary American Poetry', opened on Coursera, is studied. After introducing the course called ModPo, the basic structure, content, evaluation tools and other educational practices related to the course are summarized. In the chapter, it is emphasized that the colonial aspect of MOOCs should be restrained while accessibility and openness of university campuses are encouraged. In the chapter, it is indicated what the dominant frames are and the ideas about how to understand the concepts of "space" and "place" in MOOCs are indicated from a humanist point of view.

In chapter 5, a course on Coursera is discussed again. The author has been involved in the process as a teacher on the course 'E-learning and Digital Cultures' (EDCMOOC) from University of Edinburgh. The author approached from the perspectives of both the teacher and the researcher when conducting analyses about the course. In the chapter, the concepts of hybridity and contamination have been studied in order to understand EDCMOOC.

As a result, the book starts out of the necessity for an innovative, alternative and radical MOOC design by approaching MOOCs far beyond the context of human societies. It also focuses on the design of future courses for a "non-human" audience, not just "human". There are important suggestions for structuring the MOOCs differently than they are today. From this aspect, it also provides tips for designing future distance learning environments, not only for MOOC platforms. The book mentions the importance of criticizing the current MOOCs with different theoretical and philosophical approaches. The author states that while preparing this book he was influenced by the first wave of MOOCs, that is, he had a different approach for MOOCs produced with connectivist approaches. Although the book has been written with a negative view on MOOCs, it does not neglect the idea of how it can be improved. While criticizing MOOCs, he claims that MOOCs are against the nature of traditional education by using critical posthumanism. Throughout the course of the book, the author claims that a new post-human understanding is represented rather than the structure of the posthumanism and humanism which centralize human and its fundamental characteristics. In simple terms, in the future the requirements of human

characteristics will change; learning styles will evolve. At this point, it is argued that MOOCs should be criticized and restructured for the future from a posthumanist point of view. As traditional education is going to come to an end, the most popular example of online education, MOOCs, also needs to be redesigned and regulated according to human needs in the future. Challenging of borders with posthumanism is encouraged instead of a safe and risk-free environment in humanism, it is underlined that an innovative dimension has to be given to learning. This book is a reference guide for researchers, educators and academicians who integrate or want to integrate Open and Distance Learning, Computer Science, Educational Technology, and Digital Media with Philosophy. Since it is a doctoral thesis that has been turned into a book, it is a resource that must be used by graduate students and especially by PhD students.

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