

BOOK REVIEW

Capitalism, Pedagogy, and the Politics of Being. By: Noah De Lissovoy (2022), 208 pages. ISBN 978-1350157453. London: Bloomsbury Publishing

De Lissovoy's new book explores the social phenomenon he observed, and is an attempt to find a better response to the domination imposed on people of colour. It is an enjoyable book albeit one not entirely meant as a light reading material. Understanding the gist of the book requires at least an idea of Marxist, Decolonial theory, critical theory, Freud's theory, Thomas Piketty's work, Robinson's, Dewey's, and Freire's to name a few. Building on the literature around racial capitalism, the book offers fresh insights on the possibility of viewing the pervasiveness of neoliberalism, and capitalism in a racial light; one which attempts to challenge the very foundation of these deep-seated ideologies that are weighing down on an expanding society and a rapidly degrading ecosystem. Works critiquing capitalism is not new, and the mentioning of Marxist theory in discussing capitalism is practically a must. Likewise, critique of the remnants of colonial shadows in the modern world is not new, and decolonial theory has been around for decades. But to link these two together, while roping in a basis of Freud's psychoanalysis theory that has been reimagined to view outward phenomenon rather than be directed inwards, is refreshing.

The flow of De Lissovoy's argument with the three parts structure of the book is easy to follow. The first part of the book dealt primarily with the framework proposed for understanding the current manifestation of capitalism. The second part, encompassing three chapters, ties the framework detailed in the first part to the current form of neoliberalism, emphasising the argument on how "race and racism are central to education" (p. 6). The third part, containing the remaining three chapters, provided a hopeful tone of how emancipatory praxis could challenge and redefine the current status quo confined to the capitalistic mode of being.

The author's clear and straightforward analysis of the hidden messages behind the current mode of operation at large, and in education, makes it an enjoyable read. A clear explanation of the "doublespeak"—what the action claimed to achieve, and what the action actually meant to achieve—present in today's social operations gave readers a deeper understanding of the underlying messages behind the actions of those in the upper echelons. Likewise, the author's attempt to go beyond the racial capitalism narrative by exploring a different way of perceiving "the fundamental categories of accumulation and value" (p.32) enriched the literature on links between coloniality, colonialism, and capitalism. Also, the contents do provide much-needed food for thoughts on how the neoliberal frame of mind has seeped into many facades of the modern world. With the "empowerment", "public-private partnership" and "change" notions seen across many sectors, one would start to believe that these are common, accepted, or even beneficial aspects of development towards a better tomorrow. That is, until the reality of what it entails and the message behind it pulled one back to reality; that they are but camouflage for a world where the supposed charity projects are racially based feel-good events meant to advertise the superiority of the whites.

In response to the deep-seated influence of capitalism on modernity, the author proposed a culturally and historically sensitive meso-curriculum (which supposedly sketches out the broad historical and social problems of today) covering key themes on continental and global levels. To confront capitalism in and through education, the key themes proposed include concepts such as extractivism, precritization, gender-based violence, ecological destruction, surveillance and control. The concept of reimagining a tomorrow with greater plurality is not new, with many curriculums globally attempting to be more holistic in their coverage. The framework proposed has a promising potential in realising a generation of culturally attuned individuals who would be more critical to

society's mode of operation. The concern lies in whether and how it could be realistically practised in an actual classroom.

At this point, several thoughts surfaced regarding the (1) link between racism and capitalism and the (2) curious absence of any mention regarding new native elites of ex-colony in perpetuating the violence that enabled exploitation. The deleterious effects of racism on equality around the globe, and the authors' argument on how racism seeps into all facades of modernity, enabling and perpetuating the influence of capitalism are undeniable. Contradicting the author's argument, it is also true that even in predominantly monoracial societies, inequalities and oppression encouraged by the elites exist. This suggests that there are limits to the author's arguments on the link between capitalism, neoliberalism and racism.

This brings us to the next thought, the author suggests that the link between racism and capitalism is a global phenomenon. There are examples of how the American white elites try to expand their influence and amass greater domination over non-whites (locally and abroad) through charity. But there are no discussions on how native elites in ex-colonial territory fit into this bigger picture. It is hard to argue that the native elites of the same race as those oppressed are racist capitalists. In this situation, how does this same race violence, exploitation, and oppression fit into the neoliberal hegemony?

Capitalism, Pedagogy and the Politics of Being came the same year United Nations General Assembly made a momentous declaration that it is a universal human right to live in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Although the declaration is not legally binding, it is a step in the right direction for the fight towards climate and environmental justice in a world that is operating in a capitalistic mode. With that, a book aimed at encouraging an alternative imagination of the capitalistic influence on pedagogy, and on many facets of life, is definitely a good addition to the literature.

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