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Abstract: This article discusses mainly the issue of education and how feminism and capitalism intersect within this discipline. Nowadays, the topics of feminism, education and capitalism have become debatable subjects. Debatable in a manner that even though many scholars and theorists explore them as academic subjects, many issues relevant to the topic still remain: the most prominent one is widespread inequality. In fact, the postmodern era revealed many problems and tensions in the education system around the world, such as, male-dominance, white supremacy, racism and capitalism. We must acknowledge the fact that the problem is not in the whole society but in individuals themselves: we need to reconstruct our beliefs of values and ‘to recognize the maldistribution and misrecognition inherent to neoliberal capitalism’ and we must learn again how to establish ourselves as subjects apart from the processes of capital circulation. Even as ordinary citizens, we must learn how to critically judge and not accept things for granted.

Key words: postfeminism, education, neoliberal capitalism, pedagogy, society, consumerism, femininity, capital, education system, consumerism

INTRODUCTION

When we discuss the notion of postfeminism in the market oriented education system and argue that the definition and values of feminism, that were refined and perfected during the last century, have become altered and corrupted to due consumerism and capitalism based world society. Today neoliberal approach has become a panacea for any crises that emerges due to capitalism. The authors try to ask how come neoliberalism, even though recognized as an elitist notion, has become welcomingly acceptable by the societies, and education has become so influentially powerful institution that creates ‘homo economicus’ (p. 713), the subject that would only serve for the values of waged labor market. Human capital has become the main concern of education that human beings have become to represent potential production value.

We should admit that that against the background of capitalist and education-for-economy ideals, the movement of postfeminism came to play. The term of postfeminism is very broad and it can mean opposition to both feminist and antifeminist ideals and threats. It became particularly popular within the media and cultural studies, after previous three waves of feminism fulfilled their senses and became unfashionable to the demands of the new capitalist era. However, new ideals, such as, consumerism and beauty industry, has corrupted the postfeministic ideals, and shifted its focus from the traditional femininity concepts to new ones, such as femininity as a ‘bodily property’ (p.715). In this regard, the authors ‘blame’ neoliberalism, because market values gave rise to the ‘aesthetic imaginary’ of women (p. 715), that is outlook sexual attractiveness and over-emphasize of ‘sex-positive’ feminism. It must be criticized that the paradox of how come pornography, which depicts submissiveness of women to men, started representing liberation, and the idea of body-for-sale has become trend for majority of people.

Contemporary neoliberal approach based academic subjects forced people to pursue education in order to become productive in the capitalistic world and become less interested in critical education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

There are ongoing discussions on the definition of philosophy of education study. Many prominent theorists and scholars have been dwelling upon the representation of the subject in order to define what we mean by a philosophical approach to education. The philosophical approach to education takes place within the boundaries of educational field and the philosophy. In fact, the rhetoric and discussion around the philosophy of education has been ongoing since the ancient Greek times. Hayden (2012) states that not only ‘traditional educational thinkers such as Plato, Socrates, Dewey and Freire’ (p. 24) greatly contributed to the field of education, but also theorists who are not directly related to the field, like Foucault, Derrida, and Wittgenstein are widely referenced in the literature. However, the philosophy of education tried to divert itself from traditional school of philosophy from 1960 onwards (Biesta, 2009). It wanted to become a separate field and engage itself with different educational issues based on the approach of applied and practical philosophy (Biesta, 2009). This statement, at some level, proves the description suggested by Keith Thompson to the philosophy of education as ‘practical consequences for education’ which has been argued in Richard Pring’s essay in 1970 (Pring, 1970).

As for the aim of the philosophy of education, according to Heyting (2004), the main pursuit of philosophers is critique and coming up with better and alternative solutions to improve the quality of our social existence by using language. The literature discourses on the subject suggest that the philosophy of education is a domain where philosophers and educator discuss and work together

in order to solve the educational issues (Stengel, 2002). When the wide range of research work on philosophy of education were investigated by Hayden, he summarized that the researches in the field basically investigate ‘theoretical explorations of education, inquiries about teaching, pedagogies, and practice, and investigations of what is being taught or learned in schools’ (2012, p. 24). Hayden (2012) concludes that philosophy and education intersect in terms of educational activities and philosophers play very important role in improving them.

On the other hand, there is a different point of view on the philosophy of education, particularly in German speaking world, that denies its status as a special branch of knowledge. Proponents of this position argue that the content of the philosophy of education basically coincides with the theoretical and methodological problems of pedagogical science. They believe through mere educational theorizing and by using philosophical resources they can address educational issues (Biesta, 2009). Based on these points, we can assume that the adherents to this position are the scientists and teachers who are involved in the development of methodological foundations in education and they don’t burden themselves with philosophical thinking in their work.

Nonetheless, what is the common across the field is the critical thinking approach (Mayo, 2011). Mayo states that the main intent of the philosophical critique in education is ‘political and educational development’ in the field of education (Mayo, 2011, p.472). However, he feels that critique-based approach to education has become marginalized, viz. ‘bent’ due to increasing importance of evidence-based-science approach and innovation in education, and thus, branded as an elitist and irrelevant (Mayo, 2011, p. 474). However, the philosophy of education discourse suggests that critical thinking is the most possible tool to reach quality. Perhaps, therefore, Mayo (2011) agrees that critical engagement not only

brings uncertainty but also encourages and maintains ‘curiosity’ (p.473) and hence keeps ongoing discussions around the problem which would lead to its resolution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following paragraphs will discuss the article by Öchsner and Murray with respect to philosophical approach to education and the way the authors criticize the topic of postfeminism in the era of marketised and comprised educational system.

Nowadays, the topics of feminism, education and capitalism have become debatable subjects. Debatable in a manner that even though many scholars and theorists explore them as academic subjects, many issues relevant to the topic still remain: the most prominent one is widespread inequality. In fact, the postmodern era revealed many problems and tensions in the education system around the world, such as, male-dominance, white supremacy, racism and capitalism (Öchsner & Murray, 2018, Cabrera, 2014, Mayo, 2011). Therefore, philosophical thinking, namely critical thinking, has become necessary to solve these issues and educational practitioners and theorists feel obliged to critically engage themselves to tackle them. In the same manner, the article is critically engaged in discussing the functions and the role of schools in the society where market values are prioritised, and the misrecognized perception of postfeminism and its relationship with the field of education within this society.

The main objects of the article are postfeminism, capitalism and education and the point they intersect with each other. Öchsner and Murray critically discuss the notion of ‘new woman’ and how education and capitalism misrepresent woman, feminist values, in modern day. Critical theory and neomarxism viewpoints make up the theoretical foundation of the article. The authors criticize, question, doubt and look for answers for the misperception of postfeminism within

neoliberal society. The main reason why the article can be branded as philosophical approach to education is the authors not only criticise education system for its contribution to ‘propagate and engender a conformist ideology’ (p.709), but also articulate the ways out of the current miserable situation.

The primary method authors use to articulate their thoughts is critique of neoliberal education and capitalism. Through observation of neoliberal capitalist society they argue that the functions and nature of education has changed: it has become an instrument to boost the human capital in the society rather than a liberating force. Based on the works of several theorists, the Öchsner and Murray state that the main purpose behind the establishment of education as an institution in the West in the mid-nineteenth century was putting mass industrialized working class under ‘control’, ‘engendering’, ‘order’, ‘obedience’ and ‘class’ (p. 709). Looking through the lenses of state and power relations in education, the authors claim that education has become a ‘public good’ and a ‘private privilege’ (p. 710). In this regard the authors look through the Foucauldian power analysis and perspective, and state that firms and industries have become power that dictates its terms to educational institutions and urges them to produce human capital. They support their statement with the theories and views of prominent figures in the critique of school and power relations, such as Michael Apple, Noah Golden and Michael Peters.

Furthermore, the article has the features of critical pedagogy, which was developed by Paulo Freire, because it questions the status quo of education and problematizes feminist values accepted in mainstream society (Freire, 2000). Another prominent critic of neoliberal education that can be reflected through the article is Biesta who believed that the essence of education has been changed within school learning environments and teaching has become act of control (Biesta, 2017) and emphasized the relations between the learner, as a consumer, and

the teacher as a provider (Biesta, 2015). Besides, the theoretical position of human capital theory has also been criticized in the article, where the authors hold neoclassical economists, Jacob Mincer, Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker, partly responsible for encouraging individuals to be reduced to another means of production.

The most important point discussed in the article is the commercial appeal of postfeminism and its consequences for functioning within the framework of consumer culture. The authors claim that feminist principles have been ‘sold’ for modern industry and women are ‘reduced to their respective capital value’ (p.713). In this respect, the authors follow the argument stated by Nancy Fraser that the power of capital gave rise to neoliberalism and resulted in unjust society. They claim that education system within capitalism failed to ‘deliver to women’ and resulted in greater ‘maldistribution, misrecognition and misregulation’ in society (p.711). The authors make reference to Nina Power, the theorist who states that consumerism and having choice what to buy have been falsely taken for liberalism (Power, 2009).

The article also briefly discusses the history of feminism and gives background information to make the concept and characteristics of postfeminism comprehensible. According to the authors, the boundaries of postfeminist references include conceptual and semantic links not only with feminism, but also with other social, political, cultural and theoretical fields, such as consumer culture, mass media and neoliberal discourse. They state that postfeminism is ‘not a specific stance, but rather, an object of analysis in culture’ (p.714). Hence, postfeminism can take on diverse and sometimes even conflicting meanings; for example, it can both mean feminist and antifeminist, or both anti-authoritarian and neoconservative at the same time. The authors try to explain the phenomena of

postfeminism through the prism of Karl Marx and Michel Foucault's approach to neoliberalism.

In this regard, the main object for the discussion of postfeminism is beauty and adult industry. The authors claim that these industries have a great contribution not only in corrupting the women values and but also in making them obedient and subjective consumers. Therefore, the article poses many questions for the readers to contemplate upon, such as, whether self-enjoyment is the liberation of women or whether the struggle for the feminist values is over since the women don't feel they need for protection. Most importantly, they look for the justification for the women to choose a consumerist path, and the interview with one of the sex-workers reveal that high price of adult industry actually allow her to earn decent money and for her tuition fee.

CONCLUSION

Neoliberalism poses a significant threat to education and it is believed that critical education can help us to prevent it. We must not just learn to study in educational institutions but also learn how to think and 'demand a critical transformation of education. We should mention the fact that the problem is not in the whole society but in individuals themselves: we need reconstruct our beliefs of values and to recognize the maldistribution and misrecognition inherent to neoliberal capitalism' and 'we must learn again how to establish ourselves as subjects apart from the processes of capital circulation. Even as ordinary citizens, we must learn how to critically judge and not accept things for granted. When everybody takes action to develop the quality of education, much more changes can be noticed all around the world. Women should not be overlooked and they can not also be prioritized, as everything should be merit based. Too much commercialization of education dissuades people and they can be disillusioned by it forever. The main mitigating measures involve thorough planning and

distributing knowledge equally between different segments of the society: rich, poor, handicapped.

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