



Simon Springer: *Fuck Neoliberalism: Translating Resistance*

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Academia can be stifling. For first-generation scholars and persons from historically excluded and marginalized backgrounds, in particular, the doctoral degree can feel like a practice in cognitive dissonance. In *Fuck Neoliberalism: Translating Resistance*, Simon Springer cuts loose and offers a succinct and personalized interpretation of neoliberalism and its corresponding harms to our increasingly globalized world.

When I say that the argument is succinct, I mean that it is captured in a total of eight pages. If you have read the title, then you have understood the core of the argument: fuck neoliberalism!

In addition to the core thesis, the title of the book also contains the translocal ethos and original contribution of *translating resistance*. In physical form (more about e-books later), this book was made to travel. The structure of the text is presented in twenty-one chapters, each of which serves as a translation of the original eight-page essay. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction (in English) by the translator, sharing context, motivation, and the personal relationship that the translator has with both the original essay and the experience of translating it to another language.

The writing style is accessible, candid, and with lots of heart. I do not know the author, but Springer introduces parts of himself in both intended and unintended ways. For instance, I learned about the author's motivations (and traumatic experiences) in navigating respectability politics in academia. One has to be somewhat of an insider to appreciate the cathartic “fuck you!” that the author delivers effectively to a former supervisor. This may not resonate with all readers because not everyone will be familiar with the uglier features (or structural issues) of working in academia, and experiences will vary across diverse kinds of people.

Springer notes how it “is potentially quite dangerous to simply stick our heads in the sand and collectively ignore a phenomenon that has had such devastating and debilitating effects on our shared world” (p.11). In my own work, I have characterized major portions of what we do (in criminology conferences, specifically) as analogous to rearranging chairs on the Titanic. As such, I concur wholeheartedly with Springer's frustrations that we are

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not *more* agitated, *more* concerned, *more* upset about the machinations of neoliberalism that increasingly govern our lives.

The collaborative translations are, in part, intended to showcase that neoliberalism sucks for variously situated people around the world. The translations provide a written testament to the international nature of *resistance* to neoliberalism. In channeling another frustration that this text helps to relieve, I will reciprocate the polemic energy and share that I detest e-books, their price schemes, and their metastasizing presence. You cannot lend an e-book for free. You can purchase an e-book about climate change, but you need your electricity-powered device to access it. You cannot throw an e-book across a room or put it in a stack of books on your shelf. E-books cannot be placed strategically in the background of your zoom calls. And if you had this book in digital form on your bullshit Amazon Kindle, it would be a subtle neoliberal parody of itself. Having physical copies of things matters. When the authoritarian regime shuts down your internet access, or when another extreme weather event knocks out your energy infrastructure, or when you find yourself waiting in line for hours to fulfill a basic human need, or when the state police seize your tablet at the airport because you were reading Noam Chomsky or the theory of evolution again, you will appreciate that this book is available in physical form. Whether at the hipster café or the private detention facility near you, this book was made to be shared.

My only critique of the text is that it devotes too much attention to their internal decision to use the term “fuck.” In short, the author seems to imply that it is a rather bold decision to use such a word in the title of one’s publication, when it is actually quite common (see the arbitrarily derived “Fuck Index” below). As I was reading this section, my millennial brain could only think: “Go off, king—say whatever if you want! It’s your book!”

The political ethos of the text is not only admirable, but a necessary contribution to the academic and popular record. When we (or others) look back and examine what we did through our day jobs, I believe this book will age well. It will show that even academics (who are rather risk-averse and part of a structurally conservative enterprise) could not ignore the fundamentally dystopian trajectory that many of us feel we are on, and the twenty-one languages and the perspectives of the translators underscore that we are connected in this experience. The language is not offensive, but *necessary*, and the energy captured in this book supports directly the continued coalition building to *unfuck* ourselves from the interests, incentives, and insidious state-corporate forces that seek to normalize this neoliberal existence while calling it “progress.” Fuck neoliberalism, indeed.

The Fuck Index*

This is a list of articles based on a search of the word “fuck” through my university library’s online search bar, filtered to include only “peer-reviewed journals.” This is a convenience sample and in no way representative of all the compelling titles that one might find in a separate search.

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