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Cognitive Capitalism, Education, and Digital Labor

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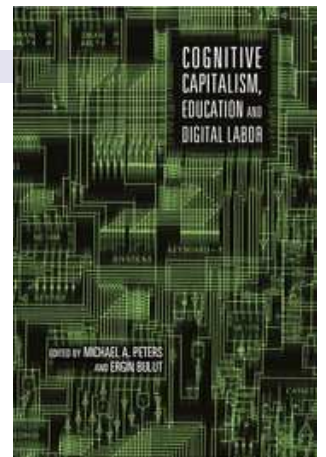
Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labor

New York, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, Oxford, Wien, 2011. XLII, 341 pp.

Print: ISBN 978-1-4331-0981-2 pb. (Softcover)
SFR 37.00 / €* 27.70 / €** 28.50 / € 25.90 / £ 23.00 / US\$ 38.95

Print: ISBN 978-1-4331-0982-9 hb. (Hardcover)
SFR 140.00 / €* 106.90 / €** 109.90 / € 99.90 / £ 90.00 / US\$ 149.95

Order online: www.peterlang.com



Book synopsis

Cognitive capitalism - sometimes referred to as 'third capitalism,' after mercantilism and industrial capitalism - is an increasingly significant theory, given its focus on the socio-economic changes caused by Internet and Web 2.0 technologies that have transformed the mode of production and the nature of labor. The theory of cognitive capitalism has its origins in French and Italian thinkers, particularly Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's, Michel Foucault's work on the birth of biopower and Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's, as well as the Italian Autonomist Marxist movement that had its origins in the Italian (workerism) of the 1960s. In this collection, leading international scholars explore the significance of cognitive capitalism for education, especially focusing on the question of digital labor.

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About the author(s)/editor(s)

Michael A. Peters is Professor of Education at the University of Waikato (New Zealand) and Emeritus Professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is the executive editor of *Educational Philosophy and Theory* and editor of two international e-journals, *Policy Futures in Education* and *E-Learning*. His interests are in education, philosophy and social policy and he has written over fifty books, including *Creativity and the Global Knowledge Economy* (Lang, 2009) (with Simon Marginson and Peter Murphy).

Ergin Bulut is a PhD candidate at the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He is interested in political economy of labor and its intersection with education, communication and culture.

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«'Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labor' provides us with a series of very thoughtful and provocative analyses of the relationship among political economy, education and new forms of knowledge and labor. It is definitely worth reading and then discussing its implications at length.» (Michael W. Apple, John Bascom Professor of Curriculum and Instruction and Educational Policy Studies, University of Wisconsin, Madison)

«This volume is a 'tour de force'. Through its chapters, a new space is opened for understanding education in the contemporary world. With an magisterial introduction by its indefatigable editor, Michael A. Peters, and his colleague Ergin Bulut, 'Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labor' implicitly shows the limitations of postmodernism and offers a large conceptual framework that will surely be mined and critically examined for some years to come.» (Ronald Barnett, Emeritus Professor of Higher Education, Institute of Education, London)

«'Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labor' is extraordinarily instructive in studying the living bestiary of capitalism, a provocative text that enervates capitalism through helping us cultivate our critical faculties creatively and exultantly in the service of its demise. An important advance in our understanding the production of subjectivity in capitalist societies.» (Peter McLaren, School of Critical Studies in Education, Faculty of Education, University of Auckland)

«This valuable, lithe volume explores the ever-evolving, mutating forms of capitalism. It is a work of craft, intelligence and provocation. It reflects on some of the most important subterranean trends in contemporary societies. These unite the material and the immaterial, biology and power, economics and education. The contributors parse the intersections of intellectual and physical labour, paid and unpaid work, labour and pedagogy, research and gaming, free information and multi-national corporations, autonomy and liberalism, accumulation and enclosure, class and creativity. They do so with verve, steel and tenacious insight.» (Peter Murphy, Professor of Creative Arts and Social Aesthetics, James Cook University)

«If you read just a single book in the field of educational theory this year, make sure it's this one. Drawing on the rich tradition of Marxist autonomism, the contributors pinpoint what the transmutation of labor and opening of new domains of class struggle under cognitive capitalism mean for education. The editors have assembled an impressive team, all accomplished scholars adept at envisioning changes in the sites and forms of knowledge-making, acquisition and contestation. For anyone interested in the educational implications of technologically-driven shifts in capitalism's socio-economic structures, this is the volume to buy. Brimming with insight, balanced and lively - it will attract attention from scholars and students well beyond the confines of education faculties.» (James Reveley, Associate Professor, Faculty of Commerce, University of Wollongong)

«We have now for some time been undergoing intense technological and social revolutions that transformed the nature of labor, education and the capitalist economy. Peters and Bulut and their collaborators in 'Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labor' chart out the changes in the new economy and social life and explore its consequences for education. All educators and those concerned with transformations of contemporary culture and society should be concerned with these issues and learn from this book.» (Douglas Kellner, UCLA; Author of 'Guys and Guns Amok' and 'Media Spectacle and the Crisis of Democracy')

«The mainstream discourse of the knowledge economy is empty. The digital-Taylorist routinisation of much of the work that was once the preserve of knowledge workers and the offshoring of knowledge jobs to countries where skilled labour is much cheaper have given the game away. But it would be wrong to assume that the electronic/IT revolution has not changed our lives and our labour when it clearly has. This outstanding collection raises fundamental questions about knowledge, the role of education and labour in the digital world. It brings current debates to a new level and should be read by students, academics and policy makers across the globe.» (Hugh Lauder, Professor of Education and Political Economy, University of Bath)

«'Cognitive Capitalism, Education and Digital Labor' presents a new theory of capitalism and digital labor. It is a very valuable resource and will spark an industry of debate and elaboration. This book presents such a wealth of diverse material that any reader will find something new and challenging, and each chapter in this collection makes a welcome contribution to the growing literature in the field.» (George Lazarou, Principal Research Fellow, Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences, New York)

«Cognitive capitalism is a crucial category for conceptualizing the workings of contemporary globalization. Using the theories of the Italian Autonomist Marxist tradition, or 'operaismo', Peters and Bulut along with the other authors in this collection present important, fascinating insights into capitalism, education and labor today. It should be read immediately by anyone concerned about how the daily practices of education prepare the multitude for the travails of their immaterial and material labor.» (Timothy W. Luke, Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University)

«Peters and Bulut have provided us with a brilliant set of papers that take us to the heart of the political economy. Under 'cognitive capitalism' subjectivity is both the realm of freedom and the source of value, raising the stakes in control (governmentality). Hence the continuing fecundity of interpretations at the intersection of Marx/Foucault/Deleuze. We experience both larger productive community and heightened public surveillance, together with unsolvable tensions in education and research. But this book also reminds us that the circuits of cognitive capitalism continue to rest on a mountain of physical commodities, generated largely in the emerging economies and subject to more traditional (and more traditionally Marxist) forms of manufacture, energy consumption and hyper-exploitation of labour.» (Simon Marginson, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne, Australia)

«Education cannot be understood outside of the diverse national and global forces in which it is situated, including the increasing separation of power from local politics. This book brings together a number of first-rate theorists in making clear the relationship among knowledge, power and digital labor. The book is a tour de force for anyone interested in the new registers of power that are now shaping education on a global level. This is an important book and should be put on the class list of every educator who views education central to politics.» (Henry A. Giroux, Global Television Network Chair Professor, English and Cultural Studies Department, McMaster University)

«The exceptional contributions assembled for this timely volume carefully anatomize - and critically question - the category of cognitive capitalism and its composition. This book is a major resource for a generation of academic workers with a very real stake in developments, conflicts and debates surrounding the edu-factory.» (Greig de Peuter, Co-author of 'Games of Empire')

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