

## Postcolonial biopolitics in the empire of capital: Lines of Foucauldian inquiry in educational studies

### Biopolítica pós-colonial no império do capital: linhas Foucaultianas de investigação nos estudos educacionais

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**Abstract:** This paper provides a reading of the trope “after Foucault” to indicate three lines of inquiry in Foucauldian studies with particular application to education: the postcolonial, following Edward Said; the biopolitical, following Giorgio Agamben; and the empire of capital, following Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. This is a synoptic paper that engages with the question of how to read Foucault after thirty years of theorising, following the advice of Foucault himself, and in each case of the postcolonial, the biopolitical and the empire of capital there are hermeneutical gains and losses. And in each case the field of educational opens itself to new vistas, new problems, and new orientations and approaches.

**Keywords:** Biopolitics, foucauldian studies, post-colonial, empire of capital.

**Resumo:** Este artigo oferece uma leitura do tropo “pós Foucault” para indicar três linhas de pesquisa em estudos Foucaultianos, com particular aplicação à educação: o pós-colonial, seguindo Edward Said; a biopolítica, na sequência de Giorgio Agamben; e o império do capital, seguindo Michael Hardt e Antonio Negri. Este é um artigo sinóptico, que abrange a questão de como ler Foucault, depois de trinta anos de teorização, seguindo as recomendações do próprio filósofo. Discute-se que, em cada caso do pós-colonial, da biopolítica e do império do capital, há ganhos e perdas hermenêuticas. E, em cada caso, o campo educacional se abre para novas perspectivas, novos problemas e novas orientações e abordagens.

**Palavras-chave:** Biopolítica, Estudos foucaultianos, pós-colonial, império do capital.

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Foucault shows how the struggle for domination can be quiet, systematic, hidden, all because discourse (which is always a symbol of victory in language) appears to be inevitable and systematic... There is an unceasing and meaningful interaction between forces... seeking to dominate and displace each other; now what makes the struggle something more than a random tooth-and-claw battle is that values

(moral and intellectual) are involved (Said, 1976, p. 36).

I sought to apply the same genealogical and paradigmatic method practiced by Foucault. On the other hand, Foucault worked in many areas, but the two that he left out were precisely the law and theology. It seemed natural for me to address my two latest studies in this direction (Sacco, 2004).

In Foucault’s thought, Marxism is completely dismantled at the level of analysis of power relations and historical teleology, of the refusal of historicism or of a certain positivism; but at the same time, Marxism is also reinvented and remodelled on the perspective of the movements and struggles, i.e. actually on the reality of the subjects of these movements and struggles: because *to know is to produce subjectivity* (Negri, 2004).

## Introduction: Reading and Writing “after Foucault”?

It is a great privilege to be invited to the Universidad de San Buenaventura, Bogotá, Columbia, to the Second International Conference on Foucault and Education.<sup>1</sup> Let me immediately express my thanks to Professor Carlos Ernesto Noguera Ramírez, the *Universidad Pedagógica Nacional* (UPN), *Grupo de Historia de la Práctica Pedagógica* (GHPP) and *Grupo de estudos e pesquisas em Currículo e Pós-modernidade* (GEPCPós), as well as the Organising Committee, the Academic Committee, and Academic Support and Logistics. I would like to take this opportunity also to acknowledge colleagues from Brazil and from Columbia who are participating in this conference. I am aware that the first conference organised by a group of Columbian researchers was held in 2004 to commemorate the death of Michel Foucault and that this conference has been organised to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of his death and also, as the conference website puts it, to analyse what new research approaches have occurred in the field of education and pedagogy in an era that many have begun to call the learning or pedagogy society (or more generally the knowledge society or economy) as a way of acknowledging the growing and central significance of education in the process of global modernity and development.

I should preface my comments by saying that I am a Pākehā<sup>2</sup> from Aotearoa-New Zealand, a small ex-British colony and white set-

tlar society of three main islands and four million people, located in the south-western Pacific Ocean, originally settled by Maori as the indigenous people. My father was a first generation Italian of Italian parents; my mother was English with Irish influence. I was fortunate to grow up in New Zealand’s welfare state during the 1950s and 1960s. Academically, my interests have always been in critical areas of scholarship – first in literature, followed by geography, pedagogy, philosophy of science and philosophy of language, culminating in a PhD on Wittgenstein and the problem of rationality, focusing on the *Philosophical Investigations* (Peters, 1984). I first read Lyotard’s (1984) *The Postmodern Condition* before I began reading Foucault in the mid 1980s. And I taught a Master’s paper on Nietzsche’s *The Genealogy of Morals* for a few years, as a preparation for understanding Foucault. I left Auckland, first for the University of Glasgow, where I stayed five years, and then the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign), where I taught an advanced seminar on Foucault for several years and a course at the University of Oslo. I accepted a post back in New Zealand at the University of Waikato, where I have been for three years.

I mention these brief biographical remarks because I believe in the concept of “situated reading”. The ways we receive texts are determined by questions of geography, history and culture, as well as personal agency, and the text and the intertext. Reading and *receiving* Foucault, or the texts of any thinker, is a complex educational problem that Foucault himself addressed through a num-

ber of related essays such as “The Orders of Discourse” (Foucault, 1971, 1981).<sup>3</sup>

In “What is an Author” Foucault (1977a), guided by Beckett’s statement “what matter who’s speaking” (p. 115), responds to Barthes’ rejection of author as the creator and proprietor of his work to emphasise “the author-function” as a “legal codification”, part of “social order of property which governs our culture” (p. 125) that is neither universal nor constant and varies with the kind of discourse, including the historical anonymity of some texts (e.g., the epics and tragedies). Modern literary and philosophical criticism falls under the spell of German and English Romanticism that demands an original and creative author as the master of the text, whose intentions can be read as the meaning of the text. The author thus signifies “the principle of unity” in the process and evolution of writing that “neutralize the contradictions” found in the text (p. 128). The advent of the author is part of the moment leading to the “individualization in the history of ideas, knowledge, and literature, or in the history of philosophy and science” (p. 115) based on an intentionalist argument about the sovereignty of the author-subject, writing at a particular time, as the creator of meaning.

We might in similar terms that emphasise the author-function and the historicity of the author in relations to the text, also understand and analyse “the reader” as a historical construct: the development of “reading publics”, the relations between materiality and meaning, the production of the cheap quarto, the changing practice of the consump-

<sup>1</sup> This paper was an invited keynote to the *Seminario internacional pensar de otro modo resonancias de Foucault educacion*, Bogota, October 1-3, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Pākehā’ is a Māori word for a New Zealander of European descent. The etymology of the word is unclear and some suggest it has unpleasant connotations. On its origin and a distinctive culture see Michael King’s *Being Pākehā* (1985) and *Being Pākehā Now* (1999).

<sup>3</sup> This is not a work of exegesis but rather a productive and dialogical reading of Foucault. For my main works on Foucault, see Peters and Besley (2006), Besley and Peters (2008), Peters et al. (2009a, 2014). See also O’Farrell (2014) for “Bibliography on Foucault and Education”.

tion of books and texts, the changing practices of print, politics and patronage, the rise of constructivist and subjectivist theories of reading where meaning is said to reside in the dynamic interplay of reader and text, or is seen to be a result entirely of the reader's active interpretation. Reading aloud, passive reading, and the pedagogization of the reading experience all signal the changing practice of reading. Today reading is often viewed as a sociocultural, cognitive and linguistic process in which readers use various systems of knowledge (of spoken and written language, of the subject matter of the text, and of culture) to *construct* meaning with text, rather than reading it off the page. The development and application of Foucauldian critical methodologies to the analysis of reading or of the production of a *philosophical reading* also requires some thought as a prevalent and dominant academic practice (Foucault's reading of Nietzsche; reading Foucault *through, against*, another author or text, or indeed, the more common Foucauldian reading of...).

In terms of this analysis we may read Foucault as or against a certain field of conceptual or theoretical coherence. Given the historicity of Foucault as author, influenced by the *problematique de la sujet* going back to Kant, we may read him against the background of a European formalism in linguistics and poetics developed by Saussure, Jakobson and Bakhtin, and the rejection of a structuralist epistemology epitomised by Claude Levi-Strauss and many other structuralist thinkers. In this history of Foucault as

author we would need to mention the journal culture of the *Tel Quel* group, the significance of reading Nietzsche and Heidegger, and, of course, a collection of French philosophers (Althusser, Canguilhem, Bataille, Sartre) and contemporary colleagues (Lyotard, Derrida, Deleuze), not to mention his students who later made available transcripts of his courses. More broadly we might also acknowledge the intellectually dense environment of Paris in the post-war period and the economy of power relations that helped to constitute the institutions and practices that buttressed academic practices.

Foucault himself spoke of a different kind of criticism or reading that John Muckelbauer (2000, p. 73-74) calls the "productive reading" rather than a "programmatic reading":

In several interviews, Foucault spoke longingly of a "different" type of criticism (see *Politics*, 324) a criticism that, rather than judging his concepts or texts, forces them to "land in unexpected places and form shapes that [he] had never thought of" (324) This style of engagement, instead of reading in an attempt to discover what is lacking in a text or theory, instead of reading programmatically, reads in order to produce different ideas, to develop possible solutions of contemporary problems, or as importantly, to move through contemporary problems in an attempt to develop new questions...

### Latinamericanism

This book first arose out of a passage in [Jorge Luis] Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read

the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought—*our* thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography—breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other. This passage quotes a 'certain Chinese encyclopaedia' in which it is written that 'animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) suckling pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies'. In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking *that*<sup>4</sup> (Foucault, 1970, p. xv).

We may also analyse the reception of him as a philosopher and author in different cultural and historical periods and in different disciplines. I am intrigued by the notion of Latin American readings of Foucault. Benigno Trigo (2002) the editor of *Foucault and Latin America*, writing for the *APA Newsletter on Hispanic/Latino Issues in Philosophy* under the heading "Latinamerican Genealogies: Appropriating Foucault".

<sup>4</sup> See the discussion on Foucault's reference to Borges, e.g., Topinka's (2010) "Foucault, Borges, Heterotopia: Producing Knowledge in Other Spaces". Borges' essay to which Foucault refers is "The Analytical Language of John Wilkins" (n.d.), first published in 1942 in which he refers to Wilkins who was a 17<sup>th</sup> century English philosopher and first secretary of the Royal Society who proposed a universal language based on a classification system that would encode a description of the thing a word describes into the word itself. In response to this proposal and in order to illustrate the arbitrariness and cultural specificity of any attempt to categorize the world, Borges describes this example of an alternate taxonomy, taken from an ancient Chinese encyclopaedia entitled *Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge*. Borges writes: "it is clear that there is no classification of the Universe not being arbitrary and full of conjectures. The reason for this is very simple: we do not know what thing the universe is" whereupon he quotes David Hume, see Borges (n.d.).

Since the mid-eighties, Michel Foucault's work has informed much of the critical thought about Latin America's cultural, literary, historical, and political events. Influential works written in the United States such as *The Lettered City* (1996) by Angel Rama, *Myth and Archive* (1990), by Roberto González Echevarría, *Foundational Fictions* (1991), by Doris Sommer, and *At Face Value* (1991), by Sylvia Molloy, draw from Foucault's *The Order of Things* (1970), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), *Discipline and Punish* (1977b), *The History of Sexuality* (1978) and *Technologies of the Self* (Foucault et al., 1988) to develop concepts like the consciousness of an intellectual elite (or *letrados*), the archive novel, the foundational fiction, and self-writing all of which are now the common currency of critical analysis in and about Latin America. Thus, it is not surprising that a new generation of critics in universities in the United States continues this trend and turns to Foucault in an effort to develop its own insights into Latin American culture, politics, history, and literature.

Eduardo Mendieta (2002, p. 79) comments in his editorial that the Latin American creative appropriation by younger philosophers "illustrate how young philosophers may begin their own path of creative readings of classical figures in the Western philosophical canon by translocating them, by testing them, by immersing them in other contexts

than those of either Europe or the United States". Trigo (2002) in his piece (based on his Introduction to the edited volume) calls on Román de la Campa's *Latin American* to argue that after the poststructuralist turn the postmodern and postcolonial represent two possible directions. The former—"the postmodern episthetic"—is now exhausted, and he recommends a revisitation of the latter that provides the platform for a critical engagement with the rhetoric of globalization.<sup>5</sup> The original Latin American *vanguardismo* provides a postcolonial poetics for rejecting the past while finding some inspiration in contemporary European avant-garde movements, such as Cubism, Dadasim, Surrealism, Futurism and Expressionism for indigenous works concerned with *the new* like Vicente Huidobro's (the Chilean poet) Creationism.<sup>6</sup> As John Beverley, Michael Aronna, José Oviedo (1995, p. 2), editors of the collection *Postmodernism in Latin America* note "*postmodernismo* designates, in Spanish American literary history, a short-lived and transitional movement in poetry around 1910 in reaction to the hegemony of *modernista* aestheticism". The terms more recently have come to approximate the meaning in the English-speaking world. Campa's judgement here seems premature especially if the question is broadened from philosophical issues concerning discourse, forms of textuality and genres of writing to encompass what falls under the category of postmodernism in art

and architecture. This is also surely an important aspect of curriculum theory, of constructing the canon in these areas and of tracing the relations between different intellectual movements? I make the conjecture that the question of Latin American philosophy cannot be separated from Latin American literature, and postmodern philosophy and literature in Latin America cannot be separated from the postcolonial (Mendieta, 2003; Dussel, 2003). Might I also suggest that both literature and philosophy in Latin America needs to take into account the question of pedagogy—the archaeology of pedagogical practices, its institutional forms and the genealogy of canons, courses, and reading lists.

Campa's identification of progressive and degenerating directions seems to be somewhat ideological in that he does not refer to the problem of destabilization of genres (philosophy and literature) nor to the fact that the term was first used by Federico de Onís in 1934 in his anthology *Antología de la poesía española e hispanoamericana* where he used the term postmodernism to refer to a new tendency in Latin American Hispanic literature at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Alfonso De Toro (2003) suggests "a difference should be established between the current categories and Ibero-American postmodernism as defined by Federico de Onís in the thirties" (p. 90). It is ironic then to think that the global-English terms of 'postmodernism' and 'postmo-

<sup>5</sup> In this respect, see García Canclini's *La Modernidad después de la postmodernidad* (1990) and Zizek's 'Postmodernity as Modernity's Myth' (2001). See also my '(Posts-) Modernism and Structuralism: Affinities and Theoretical Innovations' (Peters, 1999) and "Postmodernism/Post-structuralism" (Peters and Wain, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Ortega (1995) 'Avant Garde Poetry in Latin America and Spain: Aspects and Historical Background'. Unruh (1994, p. 3) provides a useful description: 'Between the late teens and the mid-1930s, vanguardist activity emerged throughout Latin America. This activity included several possible forms: the emergence of small groups of writers committed to innovation; the affirmation by groups or individuals of aesthetic or cultural positions often designated by a particular "ism" or more broadly as *arte nuevo* (new art) or *vanguardismo*; the dissemination of these positions through written manifestos or public manifestations; engagement by some groups in debates and polemics with others; experimentation in multiple literary and artistic genres and across generic boundaries; the publication of often ephemeral little magazines as outlets for both artistic experiments and cultural debates; the organization of study groups or seminars; and serious investigations by these study groups or by individual writers into language, folklore, and cultural history.'

dernity' that began by ignoring its original use in Latin American poetics only became established as a global discourse, growing out of predominantly Western sources, much later in the 1980s and 1990s.

In this respect I find De Toro's (2003, p. 117) analysis of "Borges and Postmodernity" salutary. He shows "Borges is not only a predecessor of postmodernity, but also... a postmodern author in the most genuine sense of the term". In *Postmodernidad y Latinoamérica* as early as 1990 he identified the characteristics of Borgesian discourse in terms of the relationship between object-language and metalanguage, and a new form of aesthetics that develops its own "defictionalization" based on the plurification, "a multiplication of codes organized according to the principles of the rhizome" (De Toro, 2003, p. 93). As he puts it: "Borges's postmodernity is based on his narrative techniques understood as a discursive plurality" (De Toro, 2003, p. 93) and he asserts that postmodernity is characterized by: "deconstruction," "rhizome," the "metadiscursive game," "interculturality," "historicity," "cognitive reception," "ludic experience," "heterogeneity," "subjectivity," "recreativity," "radical particularity," "diversity," and, in sum, "universality." One could add other features, such as minimalism, irony, humor, integrational fragmentation, collage, and dissolution of the separation between fiction and criticism, between art and non-art, between reality and fiction and, virtually, between the author and the reader (De Toro, 2003, p. 93).

The Boom in Spanish American literature it has been suggested peaked in 1967 with Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and since evolved into different postmodern directions. Magical realism and postmodern

literature shared many features essential to understanding their complex relations including the destabilization of the reader, intertextuality, parody, metafiction, self-reflexiveness, multiplicity, the erasure of boundaries, and postcolonial discourse. This trend of postmodern experimentation in the 1990s can be seen in the works of Piglia, Eltit, Moreno-Durán, Balza, Sánchez, and Pacheco. Some critics argue that the fiction of Piglia is one of the most aesthetically innovative and politically significant since the writings of Cortázar and his fictional works are often explained as an outgrowth of Borges' work involving a rewriting of Argentine history and literature in a fictional world of provisional truths (Shaw, 2007).

The destabilization of the blurred genres of literature and philosophy has interesting effects. One consequence is to refer us simultaneously to the materiality of discourse and poetics of style especially of academic writing that can lift and refit the traditional genre of the academic article, to invest it with some vitality after the punishing effects of an industrial and increasingly big data publishing systems that always want to standardise formats, writing styles, and results.

Against the view that wants to cordon-off intellectual movements and to make sweeping condemnations of a host of experimental work I am inclined to remain very sceptical, even if those views that theoretically want to decontaminate the local, the indigenous, the postcolonial from alleged global western forms. While we can discern differences, this "disinfecting" reading tactic seems to underplay interculturalism, intertextuality, internationalism, intersubjectivity, interaction and all the hybrid forms of reception, resistance, and reworking that characterize the

dominant tendencies of thought in the twenty-first century.

In this context, I want to mention also Arturo Escobar on post-developmentalism because as a Columbian thinker he has successfully drawn on Foucault and Said to question the very concept of development that offered a sustained critique of Western developmental economics as an ideological construct and act of deliberate cultural imperialism that buttressed the Bretton Woods settlement after WWII. His *Encountering Development* (Escobar, 1995) was a deft and sophisticated crafting of Foucault and Said to challenge not only the tradition of western developmentalism in economics but also the neoliberal appropriation of the development agenda in terms of structural adjustment loans and coercive privatization agenda forced on governments throughout Latin America from the brutal unseating of Allende's social democracy in Chile, assisted by the CIA, too. One might argue that western developmentalism was a common-sense amalgam of western modernity, modernism and modernization that applied the standard industrial model and then the so-called Washington consensus as one universal global market solution to the problems of education, health, and democracy. One of the reasons I mention Escobar in this context is that his work helps to remind us of the Foucaultian critique of developmentalism per se, its genealogy in Hegel's lectures on "world history", and its dominance in educational theories of cognitive and moral development. We currently face an inadequacy of our ability to invent a new discourse in education that goes beyond the limits of the localism of post-developmentalism and the abstract stage of post-formalism.

I am also surprised by the lack of disciplinary acknowledgement in

philosophical accounts of Foucault. The paradigm of transdisciplinary exists only as a regulative ideal. Here I speak of my own ignorance of the work that has been completed by participants at this conference and, in particular, by members of *Grupo de Historia de la Práctica Pedagógica (GHPP)* and *Grupo de estudos e pesquisas em Currículo e Pós-modernidade (GEPCPós)*. At the risk of exclusion based on my lack of knowledge of the reception of Foucault by these groups let me simply acknowledge the work of Alfredo Jose de Velga-Neto and Silvio Donzietti Gallo de Oliveira on Alfredo Jose in philosophy of education on spiritual exercises and art of existence; Carlos Ernesto Noguera-Ramírez's (2011) work on pedagogy and governmentality, or modernity as an educational society with the emergence of the utopian figure of Homo Educabilis; the intellectual labors of Maura Lopez Corcini, Laura Corcini Lopes, Kamila Lockmann and Morgana Domenica Hattge on inclusion as a strategy of biopolitical management of social risks; and Julio Roberto Aquino Groppa's systematic charting of the appropriation of Foucault's thinking in the Brazilian educational research from 1990 to the present day to mention only a few contributions that spill over from the Latin American context to reach the global mix on the discourse of Foucault and Education.

Taking a steer from this discussion my essay, then, is both a synoptic and 'productive' reading after Foucault. One might even argue here for a 'dialogical reading'. Binkley and Capetillo (2009) in their collection *Governmentality, Biopolitics and Discipline in the New Millennium* argue that while the conditions of global modernity seem far removed from Foucault's study of 'disciplinary societies' Foucault's thought is not exhausted. New

studies of neoliberal economic rationality framed by a different form of governmentality, novel forms of analysis of life and biopolitics, the emergence of global forms of surveillance and the development of postcolonial discourses preserves and expands Foucault's theoretical legacy. A 'dialogical reading' of Foucault might be said to use Foucault's concepts to overcome the limitations and lacunae in his work. If one holds that Foucault is a European thinker bound by the constraints of his age and the parameters of intellectual history up to the time of his death—before the advent of the Internet, the rapid growth of finance capitalism, and the increasing globalization of academic exchange—it can be argued that despite his European orientation and Eurocentrism, his work has continued significance. On this interpretation Foucault is an example of what he called "founders of discursivity" as he says of Nietzsche, Marx and Freud. It is both a novel and useful *problematique* of the author and authorship. As Foucault argues founders of discursivity are "unique in that they are not just the authors of their own works. They have produced something else: the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other texts". They create "signs, figures, relationships, and structures that could be reused by others".

### Postcolonial Biopolitics in the Empire of Capital

In this section I provide a post-critical reading of the trope "after Foucault" to indicate three lines of inquiry in Foucauldian studies with particular application to education: the biopolitical, following Giorgio Agamben; the postcolonial, following Edward Said; and the empire of capital, following Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. I engage with the

question of how to read Foucault after thirty years of theorising, following the advice of Foucault himself. In each case of the postcolonial, the biopolitical and the empire of capital there are hermeneutical gains and losses; in each case the field of educational opens itself to new vistas, new problems, and new orientations and approaches.

I explore these as generative themes in a productive and dialogical reading of Foucault that verges on creative appropriation. In each case I based my contribution on works that I have written on these themes: the biopolitical in "Giorgio Agamben's Homo Sacer Project" (Peters, 2014a) and *Citizenship, Human Rights and Identity: Prospects of a Liberal Cosmopolitan Order* (Peters, 2013); the postcolonial in a range of essays and conversations, including "Eurocentrism and the Critique of 'Universal World History': The Eastern Origins of Western Civilization" (Peters, 2014d), "Contexts, Contextualism and Contextualizing Educational Research (An antidote to a Eurocentric universalist social science)" (Peters, 2014c), "Education and Scenarios for a Post-Occidental World" (Peters, 2012), and "Understanding the Sources of Anti-Westernism: a dialogue between Jan Nederveen Pieterse and Michael A. Peters" (Pieterse and Peters, 2012); the empire of capital, in *Governmentality Studies in Education* (Peters et al., 2009a) and *Cognitive Capitalism, Education, and Digital Labor* (Peters and Bulut, 2011) as well as a series of papers designed to develop the concept of "creative labour" (e.g., Peters, 2014c).

My approach is to develop a *dialogical reading* among the three strands of inquiry I dub the biopolitical, the postcolonial and the Empire of capital. A dialogical reading is not to gloss over differences but to elicit

major themes that flow from the work of Foucault in its application to understanding the relationship between Europe and the rest of the world and particularly as an outcome of four hundred years of colonialism and several phases of decolonisation struggles that documents the world process of European political domination based on territorial acquisitions of colonies. While Foucault is often criticized for his Eurocentrism and his lack of reference to colonialism as the dominant world historical process leading to the formation of the modern world, the Foucauldian line of inquiry adopted, developed and modified by Edward Said and by postcolonial theorists such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, demonstrates the significance of Foucault's concepts and approaches. Postcolonialism as an academic discourse and framework for analysing literature finds its origins well before Foucault in thinkers like Fanon and Césaire who worked through a poetics of resistance that drew on Hegel and through the matrix of phenomenology, existentialism and humanist Marxism. Foucault's imprint on postcolonial studies in the 1970s and 1980s, after Said's *Orientalism* (1978), becomes both a productive and indelible watermark that serves as basis for Subaltern studies and subjectivity studies of colonial power and the decolonization movements and struggles. A dialogical reading of Foucault and postcolonial theory recognizes Foucault's Eurocentrism and the lacunae and limitations in his work yet also sees the extraordinary productive analyses of imperial power in works inspired by Foucault's *oeuvre*. One has to understand the paradox of Foucault's own Eurocentrism transcending or overcoming itself in much the same way that Marx and Hegel serve as a single analytical framework for the first generation

of postcolonial thinkers to saturate the humanities and postcolonial studies. As Robert Young (2001, p. 395) remarks while 'Foucault's work displays a virtual absence of explicit discussions of colonialism or race' it has come to dominate the field. Thijs Willaert (2012) in his *Postcolonial Studies After Foucault: Discourse, Discipline, Biopower, and Governmentality as Travelling Concepts* asserts there is no such thing as an unproblematic Foucault effect in postcolonial studies. Because of the discontinuities in Foucault's work, the diversity in the porous entity called postcolonial studies, and the inevitable processes of transformation involved in the recontextualization of concepts, there is no theoretical, methodological, or conceptual unity within the segment of postcolonial studies that has drawn on the work of Foucault. Rather, what we find is a tightly-knit intertextual web in which a Foucauldian critique competes with other approaches and concepts, and struggles to establish itself as the dominant theoretical framework. A conceptual architecture Edward Said developed in *Orientalism* often continues to absorb and reroute Foucauldian concepts, even in the work of those postcolonial scholars who ostensibly write against Said's framework. The result is a crucial tension between Foucault's conceptualization of power as an ensemble of technologies and strategies, and a Saidian focus on power understood as authority (Willaert, 2012, p. 12).

This intertextuality of Foucauldian-inspired postcolonial studies I see as a kind of Wittgensteinian "family resemblance" reading that speaks to itself and to multiple threads that recuperates early influences but does not capture by itself all forms of territoriality or European colonial power. To a large extent this is because most postcolonial

studies focus on Foucault's concept of discourse and is content to map the contours of a discursive reality to deconstruct Western systems of representation.

Ann Stoler's (1995) work *Race and the Education of Desire* is exemplary here and indicative of what is possible. She challenges Foucault's marginalization of colonialism and empire to explore questions of the relations between biopower, sexuality and the colonial treatment of sexuality in "racisms of the state". The regime of biopolitics that consists in the management of bodies includes technologies that (re)produce life under the administrative control of the colony. Her *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power* (Stoler, 2002) illustrates the complexity of colonial culture and interracial politics that explores relations of sexuality, gender, and race, including miscegenation, European womanhood, child rearing and abandonment, rape, and eugenics. Stoler (2011) in developing the political lexicon of the concept of the "colony" argues:

Security may have become, as Agamben insists, "a veritable paradigm of government" today, but it has been paradigmatic and elemental for the practices of imperial governance far longer than his assertion suggests. It raises an issue that eluded both Foucault's treatment of "the carceral archipelago" (from which he excluded the penal colony as too early and the camp as too extreme), as well as Agamben's own treatment of the (refugee) camp as the first in a series of exceptions that has become at once "the nomos of the modern" and the norm: the colony and camp are both containments, enclosures, and unsettled encampments that are more closely allied than we may have imagined. One might describe them as distinct but dependent and not apart. Or perhaps more aptly, they share a "family resemblance" (in Wittgenstein's sense), not any one

essential core feature so much as an “overlapping, crisscrossing” set in “a complicated network of similarities.” Colony and camp make up a conjoined conceptual matrix, twin formations and formulations of how imperial rather than national logics of security operate. They borrow and blend features of their protective architecture and anticipatory fear. They are in a deadly embrace from the start (Stoler, 2011).

Stoler’s (2011) focus on the particular and on the archival web that describes different kinds of colony, as she says:

agricultural colonies for delinquent youth established throughout France and the Netherlands in the 1840s and 1850s, the pioneer colonies on the Russian steppe, the penal colonies of the French Antilles and British Guiana plotted across the Caribbean, always proximate to the white settler sugar colonies that could be seen from their shores; the leper colonies of Trinidad, Tobago and Hawaii, the Algerian prison colonies where French dissidents were deposited after the 1848 revolution, the agricultural colonies in the same Algerian countryside designed to remove from Europe and resettle its increasing numbers caught in the intemperate economic zones assigned to the urban poor... The prison penal colonies within settler colonies (as Mauritius served for the British in Bengal in the 1820s) as well as enclave colonies of containment like those planned for poor Indo-European mixed-bloods in the highlands of the Netherlands Indies... (Stoler, 2011).

She suggests a focus on the “documentary trace” that makes these connections by emphasizing “an essay of five hundred pages, in four volumes, written by a certain Count de Tourdonnet in Paris, published in 1863 under the title: “An essay

on the education of poor children: The agricultural colonies” of which the French agricultural colony of Mettray was hailed as a template for the sixty that were created in the following decade.” And she makes the link to children in the colonies and to their colonial education, to forms of colonial citizenship, to punishment and to a set of power relations that disciplined the colonial body.

If these children’s agricultural colonies designed as “seedbeds” to raise honest citizens with limited aspirations had iconic status in the nineteenth century, Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish* was to endow the exemplary one of Mettray with more. For Foucault, Mettray’s opening in 1840 marked at once “the completion of the carceral archipelago,” the dawn of “a new era” in the “art of power relations.” It was here that he located “the art of punishing that is still more or less our own.”

If the Foucault effect in postcolonial studies is uneven and Foucault’s concepts have been used to overcome his own limitations, the emphasis on *biopolitics* as a new kind of “technology of power”, different from disciplinary power, marks a theoretical departure that has reinvigorated postcolonial studies and given it a new direction. Derived from his earlier notion of biopower first explored in the 1975-1976 course of lectures entitled *Society Must Be Defended*, biopolitics is used to analyze the state’s power and control apparatus over the physical and political body of the population as a whole, with the possibility of special reference to the imperial state’s control over colonial bodies and populations.

Thomas Lemke (2009) notes that for Foucault:

biopolitics marks the threshold of modernity since it places life at the center of political order. In this theoretical perspective, there is an intimate link between the constitution of a capitalist society and the birth of biopolitics: “Society’s control over individuals was accomplished not only through consciousness or ideology but also in the body and with the body. For capitalist society, it was biopolitics, the biological, the corporal, that mattered more than anything else” (Foucault, 2000 in Lemke, 2009, p. 1).

Foucault’s concept of biopolitics functions as a critique of the “juridico-discursive” model of power (Foucault, 1977) of political liberalism where power is exercised within framework of law that rest of the problematic of sovereignty that has the ultimate say over the “right to death”. He detects two different contemporary uses of Foucault’s notion of biopolitics that issue in a critique of Foucault:

In contrast to Foucault, Agamben holds that modern biopolitics rests on the solid basis of pre-modern sovereign power, while Hardt and Negri on the contrary claim that Foucault did not sufficiently pay attention to the transformation of a modern to a postmodern biopolitics (Lemke, 2009, p. 3).

Agamben’s *Homo Sacer* project<sup>7</sup> that began with his analysis of sovereign power as power over ‘life’ drew heavily on Foucault’s concept of biopolitics citing Foucault’s observation “For millennia man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics calls his existence as a living being into question” (Agamben, 1998, p.

<sup>7</sup> These comments draws on my introductory essay on Agamben “Giorgio Agamben’s *Homo Sacer* Project” (Peters, 2014a).

10). Tracking the discussion first to Aristotle's decisive definition and Foucault's observation, Agamben settles on Hannah Arendt's (1973) analysis of the process by which biological life occupies 'the very center of the political scene of modernity'. Foucault was prevented by his early death from exploring the way in which 'the entry of *zoe*' into the sphere of the *polis*' signaled a transformation of classical thought and became the threshold concept of political modernity. Biopolitics as a philosophical category had arrived and Foucault's enduring contribution was his decisive abandonment of the traditional approach to the problem of power, which is based on juridico-institutional models (the definition of sovereignty, the theory of the State), in favor of an unprejudiced analysis of the concrete ways in which power penetrates subjects' very bodies and forms of life (Agamben, 1998, p. 10).

Agamben identifies how the two elements in Foucault's work—political techniques of the State and technologies of the self—we might say 'subjection' and 'subjectification', enters into a double structure of modern power whose locus allegedly remains unclear or unsettled in Foucault's work.<sup>8</sup> Agamben locates himself and his project at this significant nexus: 'The present inquiry concerns precisely this hidden point of intersection between the juridico-institutional and the biopolitical models of power' (Agamben, 1998, p. 11). If Agamben's work has any relevance at all to the broad topic of modern education it is as a theory of biopolitical power and as providing the broad historical background against which educational theorists can understand the difference and

transition between these two models (*Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 2014).

*Homo Sacer* (Agamben, 1998) is hugely significant because it is in this work that he first examines the logic of sovereignty, introduces *Homo Sacer* and famously posits the camp as biopolitical paradigm of the modern. Agamben infers that while Foucault began with the prison and forms of spatial internment (*grande enfermement*) his biopolitical studies never led him to the analysis of the concentration camp. For this missing analysis he turns to Hannah Arendt and her studies of totalitarian regimes as forms of total domination but he maintains both miss the link between their ideas and the camp in its 'intimate symbiosis with bare life' in a fundamental shift from 'the juridico-political foundation of classical politics' (Agamben, 1998, p. 71). He traces bare life as the new political subject as implicit in the 1679 writ of habeas corpus and highlights the new centrality of the 'body' in the politico-juridical model: in Descartes and Newton, and in Hobbs' *Leviathan* but also in the 'thanatopolitics' and eugenics of the Nazi death camp that places it outside 'the normal juridical order' (Agamben, 1998, p. 97) and linked to the concept of state of exception. He concludes with three theses:

(i) The original political relation is the ban (the state of exception as zone of indistinction between outside and inside, exclusion and inclusion).

(ii) The fundamental activity of sovereign power is the production of bare life as originary political element and as threshold of articulation between nature and culture, *zoe* and bios.

(iii) Today it is not the city but rather the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West (Agamben, 1998, p. 102).

The problem with both Agamben and Foucault (to a lesser extent) is that the analysis is unrelentingly the dark side that connects the logic of the biopolitical to a state where the elimination of an ethnic minority in the name of national unity bypasses constitutional questions and sovereignty to lead us to a one-way historical street. For Agamben is there a way out of the hidden matrix and *nomos* of the political architecture in which we still live? What does it mean to say as Agamben's does in the conclusion of *Homo Sacer* that

only a politics that will have learned to take the fundamental biopolitical fracture of the West into account will be able to stop this oscillation and to put an end to the civil war that divides the peoples and the cities of the earth? (Agamben, 1998, p. 180)

Agamben since 1995 has tied himself to Foucault and yet his use of Foucault is open to question. When he states in *Homo Sacer* that the Foucault's thesis will have to be completed it is not clear how and in what forms he remains faithful to Foucault's approach.

By contrast, Hardt and Negri appropriation of Foucault's work locates biopolitics in postmodern capitalism giving it a positive meaning to claim that biopolitics, as Lemke notes, signals a new era of capitalist production where life is no longer limited to the domain of reproduction or subordinated to the working process: "The subjectivity of living labour reveals, simply

<sup>8</sup> This crucial starting point is well recorded in two of Agamben's 2009 videos—'Forms of Power' and 'the Problem of Subjectivity'—available from his faculty profile at the European Graduate School. See <http://www.egs.edu/faculty/giorgio-agamben/biography/>. This site also carries full text articles and interviews (some in English) as well as lectures and links.

and directly in the struggle over the senses of language and technology, that when one speaks of a collective means of the constitution of a new world, one is speaking of the connection between the power of life and its political organisation. The political, the social, the economic, and the vital here all dwell together” (Hardt and Negri 2000, p. 405-406, p. 22-41). In Hardt and Negri’s account the constitution of political relations now encompasses the entire life of the individual, which prepares the ground for a new revolutionary subject: the multitude (Lemke, 2009, p. 4).

Negri (2004) argues “Foucault has; I believe, the extraordinary intuition of defining the shift from modern politics to post-modern biopolitics” but he “did not manage to comprehend ‘the real dynamics of production in biopolitical society’”. For Negri and Hardt, in *Empire* and other works the biopolitical metamorphosis which Foucault identified, leads to Communism. Negri (2004) remarks:

the Foucauldian analyses of the reversal of biopowers into biopolitics have influenced our analyses of the genesis of empire: this is to say, how new forms of labour and struggle, produced by the transformation of material labour into immaterial labour, present themselves as producing subjectivity (Negri, 2004).

And he goes on to argue:

the new imperial condition under which we live (and socio-political conditions in which we build our work, our languages and thus ourselves) places at the center of the biopolitical context what we call *the common*: neither the private nor public, nor the individual or the social, but what, all together, we construct to grant man the possibility of producing and reproducing himself (Negri, 2004).

By marrying Foucault’s biopolitics to the Italian autonomist tradition that takes its inspiration from Marx, Negri and Hardt “link the creative revision of Marxism... to revolutionary notions of biopolitics and of the production of subjectivity elaborated by Foucault.”

I have strong sympathies with this reading because it tries to embrace global capitalism in the analysis although it creates problems in forcing a Marxist reading of Foucault. This reading takes elements of Foucault to provide an analysis of what I call the “epoch of digital reason” with the ascendancy of “forms of cybernetic capitalism” (Peters *et al.*, 2009b; Peters, 2014b). To read Foucault against a postmodern Marx is certainly a useful and provocative way of using Foucault to go beyond Foucault in order to understand new configurations of biopolitics in an era dominated by neoliberalism, human capital and informational capitalism, with some resistance and redemptive possibilities inherent in the creation of new public spaces that enhance the virtues of openness (Peters and Roberts, 2012).

While I differ in certain respects from Hardt and Negri especially in respect of formulations of openness and the commons, in terms of historical necessity of resistance and in relation to the constellations of “cybernetic capitalism”—my genealogies and projections are quite different—I recognise that this rich vein of subjectivity studies based on conceptions of human capital and digital (or ‘immaterial’) labour seems to me to speak directly to problems of educational postmodernity and globalisation that define the new world interconnectedness of cognitive capitalism (Peters and Bulut, 2011; Peters, 2012a, 2012b, 2012c). I develop the series of concepts of biopower, biopolitics, biotechnologies, to incorporate

the notion of *bio-informational capitalism* in order to articulate an emergent form of capitalism that is self-renewing in the sense that it can change and renew the material basis for life and capital as well as program itself. Bio-informational capitalism applies and develops aspects of the new biology to informatics to create new organic forms of computing and self-reproducing memory that in turn has become the basis of bioinformatics (Peters, 2012d). The biopolitics of bioinformational capitalism is the ultimate control over life for at the level of code (genetic and informational) it *creates new life*, albeit elementary self-replicating DNA within a host bacterium.

Bio-informational capitalism is an outgrowth, emergent form and consequence of cybernetic capitalism that includes new forms of cognitive and finance capitalism (each dependent on the Internet) to reconfigure education at all levels as emergent forms of an integrated world capitalism that also create novel forms of educational capitalism (Peters, 2009, see Table 5). This is in part the culmination of forty years of neoliberal capitalism and the neoliberal privatisation of education reflected in the global educational reform movement (Peters, 2010). Whether this characterization of bio-informational capitalism fits easily within the biopolitical model of postmodernity remains to be fully tested yet it is clearly a form of power-knowledge, built around the administration of bodies and the management of life as a kind of code that distinguishes it from an older form of sovereign power. In this present-future the ancient right to take life or let live has been replaced not by a power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death, as Foucault argues, but rather by a power that *creates* and

owns new life as the material basis for the development of the system as a whole. In this context the relationship between bioinformational biopolitics and postcoloniality is not entirely clear except to say that the era that produced colonial miscegenation, racialised populations, exotic forms of sexuality, and the nation as a biopolitical category now seems more oriented toward cybernetic posthuman hybrids, new 'social machines', 'extended minds', collective intelligences, even the so-called 'global brain' where questions of scalability, surveillance, 'big data' and metadata increasingly dominate the educational 'control society' (Deleuze, 1992).

The strongest and most promising forms of resistance to this form of educational globalisation which is increasingly built on the universal applications of learning analytics and big data systems are what I call 'open knowledge production' and 'open learning' systems which are based on incremental, local, postcolonial and decentralized collaborative development processes. Whether these open systems will transcend the traditional proprietary market model, is yet to be determined.

As I have argued elsewhere:

While it may be true that commons-based peer production is based on free cooperation and not on the selling of one's labour in exchange for a wage; and that it is not motivated primarily by profit or for the exchange value of the resulting product; still, it is not yet clear whether this constitutes an entirely new *mode of social production*, or the extent to which it exists independently or parasitically on existing capitalist modes of production. While it is the

case that commons-based production is managed through new modes of peer governance rather than traditional organizational hierarchies, and that it is an innovative application of copyright that creates an information commons, it is still not clear to me that it transcends the limitations attached to both the private (for-profit) and public (state-based) property forms (Peters, 2009, p. 55).

In terms of the encounter of postcolonialism with bioinformational capitalism, it is important to recognize that the world has passed from a system of colonial law where "the colony represents the site where sovereignty consists fundamentally in the exercise of power outside the law" (Mbembe, 2003) constructed through legal justifications which legitimized the acquisition of territories based on occupation through a succession of decolonising struggles defining the modern system of states to witness the emergence of a new juridical regime as colonial rule dissolved and national sovereignty rights were transferred to new independent states. Today under bioinformational capitalism we might argue that at precisely the point where territorial sovereignty has been gain by former colonies, the concept of territoriality and sovereignty based upon it are threatened through *extraterritorial systems of power*<sup>9</sup> that resides in no particular place but in speed and mobility where politics are territorial but capitalism is extraterritorial (Bauman and Agamben, 2005).

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<sup>9</sup> Weizman (2005) writes: "In international law, the term "extraterritoriality" refers to those instances where a state extends its jurisdiction or effective control over zones, individuals or activities beyond its borders. The concept may apply to military movements on foreign soil as well as to embassies or diplomats in the form of diplomatic immunity. Extraterritoriality is therefore rooted in the concept of sovereignty, although it is usually considered as the violation thereof".

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