

## **Beyond Intellectual Blackmail: Foucault and Habermas on Reason, Truth, and Enlightenment**

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### **Abstract**

In this essay I consider how Habermas and Foucault understand the nature of truth and reason in fundamentally different ways, and I argue that Habermas' misunderstanding of Foucault's position on these issues undermines his critique of Foucault. I argue that a strong response to Habermas' criticism is implicit in Foucault's work, and that this implicit response also offers us an occasion for reinterpreting all of Foucault's work as a single, unified project with roots in the Enlightenment.

# Beyond Intellectual Blackmail: Foucault and Habermas on Reason, Truth, and Enlightenment

In this essay I will consider how Habermas and Foucault understand the nature of truth and reason in fundamentally different ways, and I will argue that Habermas' misunderstanding of Foucault's position on these issues undermines his critique of Foucault. I will argue that a strong response to Habermas' criticism is implicit in Foucault's work, and that this implicit response also offers us an occasion for reinterpreting all of Foucault's work as a single, unified project with roots in the Enlightenment.

I will proceed by first outlining Habermas' critique of Foucault (from *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*<sup>i</sup>). Then I will formulate a response in Foucault's defense. Finally, I will consider the picture of Foucault's philosophical project that emerges from that defense.<sup>ii</sup>

## (1) Habermas on Foucault

Habermas tells us explicitly what his criticism of Foucault is all about. "I will take up," he says "the question of whether Foucault succeeds in bringing off a radical critique of reason in the form of a historiography of the human sciences, which starts as archeology and is expanded into genealogy, without getting caught in the aporias of this self-referential undertaking" (PDM 247). Can reason critique itself in the "radical" way that Foucault's genealogical method proposes without getting tangled up in performative contradictions? For Habermas this is the fundamental question to be answered; from this foundation, he launches his attack on Foucault's anti-foundationalism.<sup>iii</sup>

Not surprisingly, Habermas concludes that the answer to this fundamental question is “no.” After analyzing the development of Foucault’s genealogical project out of his earlier archaeology (which culminates in *The Order of Things*), he locates in the method of genealogy the fundamental flaw that undermines the whole undertaking. Genealogy begins, Habermas believes, by “reversing” the received relation between truth and power (PDM 274-275). Traditionally, power is regarded as an empirical reflection of how successful a subject is in manipulating and controlling objects. The power of the subject is the extent to which that subject can have an effect upon objects in its various relationships with them. But such *practical* relationships of power are normally understood to be subordinate to *cognitive* relationships of truth. The success of the subject in affecting objects by means of its actions is ultimately taken to be a function of the truth of the judgments that govern those actions. Thus, in the traditional dichotomy between truth and power, truth is assigned the dominant position in the hierarchy, and power remains dependent on it.

Habermas argues that Foucault inverts this hierarchy. “Foucault abruptly reverses power’s truth-dependency into the power-dependency of truth. Then foundational power no longer need be bound to the competencies of acting and judging subjects – power becomes subjectless” (PDM 274). In order to carry out an archaeology of the human sciences without having to refer power-effects back to the truth judgments of a conscious subject, Foucault proposes to over-power that subject and stand it on its head. Transforming “truth/power” into “power/truth,” he thinks that he is free of the philosophy of the subject forever.

This reversal has several consequences. First of all, in the concept of “power” that emerges from the transposition, Habermas finds an essential and “systematic” ambiguity:

On the one hand, it retains the innocence of a concept used descriptively and serves the *empirical analysis* of power technologies... On the other hand... [it has]

the meaning of a basic concept within a *theory of constitution* as well; this is what lends the empirical analysis of technologies of power their significance as a critique of reason and secures for genealogical historiography its unmasking effect (PDM 270).

This ambiguity creates in Foucault's texts a "paradoxical linking of a positivist attitude with a critical claim" (PDM 270).

The "double role" that power plays Habermas finds exceedingly "irritating" (PDM 273); but in itself it only points to a deeper problem. The fact that Foucault relies upon power to play this double role reveals that he has not made such a radical break with the "philosophy of the subject" after all. The new version of power is "empirico-transcendental," just like the old version of man.<sup>iv</sup> Habermas claims that in trying to displace truth from its ruling position in the "truth/power" dichotomy, Foucault has only succeeded in renaming it. Power crosses over from its subordinate position and pretends to take the place of the King, but really it is only masquerading in the King's clothing. Truth remains enthroned as the ruling concept, and with it the conscious, philosophical subject.

What this whole charade demonstrates, Habermas says, is that by merely reversing the truth/power relationship that characterized the philosophy of the subject, Foucault has not succeeded in leaving it behind. It is not enough to simply transpose the terms:

No one can escape the strategic conceptual constraints of the philosophy of the subject merely by performing operations of reversal upon its basic concepts.

Foucault cannot do away with all the aporias he attributes to the philosophy of the subject by means of a concept of power borrowed from the philosophy of the subject itself (PDM 274).

Thinking to free genealogy once and for all from the pernicious influences of the subject, Foucault instead finds his method overtaken by an "ironic fate":

To the extent that it retreats into the reflectionless objectivity of a nonparticipatory, ascetic description of kaleidoscopically changing practices of power, genealogical historiography emerges from its cocoon as precisely the *presentistic, relativistic, cryptonormative* illusory science that it does not want to be.... it follows the movement of a radically historicist extinction of the subject and ends up in an unholy subjectivism (PDM 275-276).

“Presentism” denotes an inability to transcend the present moment. The subject remains rooted in the present, and cannot fail to treat all other epochs and periods as subordinate to its own temporal point of departure. Thus, it cannot offer a truly objective, transhistorical critique (PDM 276-278). “Cryptonormativism” refers to a hidden normative agenda that secretly carries on behind a mask of positivism. The result, Habermas believes, is merely an inferior form of normativism, a “partisanship” that can offer no grounds for the normative claims that it inevitably puts forth (PDM 282-286). Both of these charges are serious, but Habermas’ third indictment – the charge of relativism – goes most directly to the heart of the matter. The other two objections can be seen as derivative from this central disagreement. Habermas’ claim that Foucault is a relativist foregrounds the truly “fundamental” issue that divides him from Foucault: his position on the nature of truth and reason.

Habermas claims that Foucault’s philosophy cannot escape relativism because it undercuts its own truth claims:

The basic assumption of the theory of power [that the meaning of validity claims consists in the power effects that they have] is self referential; if it is correct, it must destroy the foundations of the research inspired by it as well. But if the truth claims that Foucault himself raises for his genealogy of knowledge were in fact illusory and amounted to no more than the effects that this theory is capable of releasing within the circle of its adherents, then the entire undertaking of a critical unmasking of the human sciences would lose its point (PDM 279).

In other words, once Foucault has made truth and reason the constituted effects of power he can no longer claim any special validity for his own argument. Either it is simply false or it is merely another effect of power that does not deserve any particular attention. Since “the only thing that lasts is power” in Foucault’s philosophy (PDM 253), genealogical critique will also fade away. It is incapable of offering any insights with enduring claims to validity.

## (2) A Reply to Habermas (on Foucault’s Behalf)

Foucault was not able to respond directly to Habermas’ criticisms in *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, but I don’t think that it will be either impossible or artificial to reconstruct a response to Habermas on Foucault’s behalf from his published writings. The text that best responds to Habermas’ arguments is the essay “What is Enlightenment.”<sup>v</sup> In this remarkable essay, written late in his career, Foucault formulates a very effective refutation of the Habermasian charge of relativism, first of all by explaining and clarifying what he means by “truth” and “reason,” and secondly by laying out the context within which he believes his entire philosophical project should be seen.

### (a) The Nature of Truth and Reason

It is clear from *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* that Habermas holds an unusually high degree of respect for Foucault’s work. He devotes two lectures in the book to Foucault, while Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida and Bataille each merit only one; and much of what he has to say about Foucault is approving. He seems to think that Foucault, among the many voices that make up the philosophical discourse of

modernity, has gotten closest to the truth. In addition, his rendering of the Foucauldian projects of archaeology and genealogy are admirably comprehensive and even-handed.

Nevertheless, Habermas never really confronts the “fundamental” issue that distinguishes Foucault’s thinking from his own. This issue is the nature of truth and the nature of reason. He assumes throughout his critique that Foucault must necessarily share his understanding of what truth and rationality are like; he refuses to acknowledge that there may be at work in Foucault’s critical project an understanding of truth and reason that is radically different.

Habermas argues that even though Foucault’s various works reflect a subtle and progressive development, all of them still remain implicated in the same performative contradiction. This performative contradiction is assumed to arise when genealogy attempts to critique reason on the basis of a mere reversal of the traditional truth/reason dichotomy. But Foucault’s understanding of truth and reason is, in fact, far more intricate and nuanced than Habermas has allowed. Foucault does not propose a simple reversal of truth and power; rather, he calls into question the very possibility of all such “simple” realities, relationships, and reversals. Habermas thinks of truth in terms of a clean, absolute dichotomy: one is either in the truth or in error; one either has truth as a univocal foundation or one is caught in a performative contradiction, (denying – comically – the very foundation on which one must stand in order to say anything meaningful). To be rational, for Habermas, is to recognize the purity of truth, the fact that truth can speak with only one voice, and that between truth and untruth there is an clear separation, an absolute abyss. But Foucault says that he considers all such simple and absolute dichotomies to be a form of “intellectual blackmail” (WIE 45, 42). For him, true rationality is not a matter of being absolutely “for” or “against” something. Rather it requires that one “refuse everything that might present itself in the form of a simplistic and authoritarian alternative” (WIE 43).

Foucault is asking us to be more reasonable in our assessment of rationality. He is not suggesting that we turn our backs on truth – that we judge it to be a fiction, nothing more than one of the manifold effects of power. Rather, he is calling for us to own up to the fact that truth is not so pure and simple as Habermas (and others) would make it out to be; but that it is (always and already) inhabited by – among other things – relations of power. Habermas can think of truth and power solely in terms of a simple either/or dichotomy, and so he is only able to make sense of Foucault’s discourse by reading it as a *reversal* of the terms: from “truth/power” to “power/truth.” But Foucault would denounce the second dichotomy – just as he would the first – as “simplistic and authoritarian.”

Instead of merely rearranging the terms of the dichotomy, Foucault wants to situate his critical thinking on the slash. “We are not talking about a gesture of rejection,” he says. “We have to move beyond the outside-inside alternative; we have to be at the frontiers” (WIE 45). The area of the “frontier,” I take it, is that space of possibilities that is both outside and inside the truth, the space that is “between” truth and untruth (as they have been handed down to us). Foucault denies that this space is a void or an abysmal breach. Rather, he considers it an area of fruitful interchange, where an honest critical attitude can find room to expand its borders. Instead of repudiating this space as a no-mans-land, Foucault embraces it as the welcome clearing in which possibilities abound. The critical attitude he calls for would no longer naively maintain that truth has dropped from the sky, with an immaculate purity that it manages to protect from all mundane relations of power; but neither would it consider truth to be so thoroughly contaminated by power that validity claims can no longer be made, and only an unchecked relativism prevails. Foucault calls for a rationality that has owned up to the fact that truth is always inhabited by untruth, that reason itself cannot escape the influence of unreason.<sup>vi</sup>



So it seems to me that Habermas was right when he said of Foucault: “perhaps I did not understand him well.”<sup>vii</sup> Habermas, in fact, appears determined not to understand Foucault on Foucault’s own terms. Recasting Foucault’s non-foundational arguments in the idiom and the logic of his own foundationalist discourse he (not surprisingly) finds that they fall short. The fact that Habermas is willing to stake his entire critique on the claim that Foucault implicates himself in a performative contradiction is indicative of the fact that he has not appreciated the subtlety of Foucault’s “position” on truth and rationality. This “position” is a non-static position. Foucault does not stay in one place. Habermas looks for him in the only two locations where he thinks one can stand: with the truth or against it. But in fact, Foucault is not standing anywhere. He is in flight, operating a messenger service between truth and untruth, reason and unreason. To Habermas’ eternal “irritation,” he presents a moving target; and the site of his movement is not one that Habermas can even get in his sights. That Habermas thinks he can catch Foucault in the clumsy net of performative contradiction indicates that he believes Foucault has settled down for good in a restful pose. He obviously does not recognize the slipperiness and subtlety of Foucault’s fugitive “position” concerning truth and reason.

## **(b) Foucault’s Philosophical Project**

Somewhat analogous versions on truth and rationality can be found in various other contemporary philosophers. (For example, Heidegger on truth as *aletheia*, as Dasein’s disclosedness;<sup>viii</sup> Derrida on “undecidability” and *différance*;<sup>ix</sup> Vattimo on “weak thought.”<sup>x</sup>). Though Foucault is in flight, it is still entirely appropriate to “situate” him in this field. But what I find in Foucault’s account of a rationality that has owned up to its limitations and its imperfections without succumbing to nihilism that I

do not find in these other philosophers is a very clear statement concerning what such a rationality can still do, and indeed *ought* to do.

Foucault is bold enough to connect his account of rationality with—of all things—the Enlightenment. The connection that he wishes to make here is not with a particular historical period, nor with the specific ideas and projects that characterized that time. What Foucault wants to claim from that epoch is something both more abstract and more radical than either of those. It is an aspect of the Enlightenment that has perhaps never been noticed before. “The thread that may connect us with the Enlightenment is... the permanent reactivation of an attitude—that is, of a philosophical ethos that could be described as a permanent critique of our historical era” (WIE 42). This “philosophical ethos” can be defined as “the critical ontology of ourselves as a historico-practical test of the limits that we may go beyond, and thus as a work carried out by ourselves upon ourselves as free beings” (WIE 47).

Foucault believes that this attitude was a genuine innovation of the Enlightenment that deserves to be retrieved and retained. He wants his own work to be seen in the light of such an attitude, and as a continuation of the critical project that follows in its wake. This critical project reconnects with Kant, and the Kantian tradition of seeking out the conditions and the limits of the possible. Foucault explicitly acknowledges his connection with that tradition, and actively encourages that his work be seen in that context.<sup>xi</sup> His philosophy, he argues, is in fact a continuation of the Kantian project, but with this important caveat:

Criticism indeed consists of analyzing and reflecting upon limits. But if the Kantian question was that of knowing what limits knowledge has to renounce transgressing, it seems to me that the critical question today has to be turned back into a positive one: in what is given to us as universal, necessary, obligatory, what place is occupied by whatever is singular, contingent, and the product of arbitrary constraints?<sup>xii</sup> The point, in brief, is to transform the critique

conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression (WIE 45).

Whereas Kant sought the theoretical limits that could not be transgressed, Foucault seeks the practical limits where transgression is possible.

“Transgression” for Foucault is the overcoming of limits, the extension of the possible, the opening up of new fields of activity. Heard with a certain ear, Foucault’s call for transgression resonates with the Enlightenment ideal of progress. Both entail a search for new possibilities, as well as a certain faith that new possibilities are always already there to be found. Both likewise imply a view of the present as a contingent moment, whose limits were imposed from behind, and need not persist into the future. In these respects, it is not at all misleading to connect Foucauldian transgression with Enlightenment progress, as Foucault himself does (WIE 45-46).

But Foucault’s retrieval of this aspect of the Enlightenment, just like his retrieval of the Kantian tradition, needs to be understood as a “creative retrieval.” Foucault does not share the Enlightenment’s confidence in “progress” in the purely ameliorative sense; transgression for him does not necessarily guarantee any improvement. One may transgress certain limits only to find oneself constrained in even more confining limits. And the possibility of escaping from all limits would make no sense to Foucault, for whom human existence is always an historically constituted reality. While Foucault’s only interest in limits is “the possibility of going beyond them” (WIE 50), he does not believe that all limits can be overcome, nor that what we will find beyond the limits that are transgressed will necessarily be a “better” situation.<sup>xiii</sup>

Foucault goes on to explain that this work of transgression is to be made possible through a criticism that is “genealogical in its design and archaeological in its method” (WIE 46). His explanation of this design and method is important because it serves to further connect his project with Kant’s, and also to differentiate the two at crucial junctures. It also has the effect of situating all of his archaeological and genealogical

works within the context of the larger critical project that he is describing. Foucault explains that by 'archaeological' he means to differentiate his procedure from a transcendental method. Instead of seeking out "universal structures" which would apply equally in all times and situations, an archaeological design concerns itself with particular discursive practices, which it regards as historical events that are historically constituted (WIE 46). The genealogical method which then goes to work within this historical context seeks to identify "the contingency that has made us what we are" in order to further identify "the possibility of no longer being, doing, or thinking what we are, do, or think" (WIE 46). Foucault goes on to clarify that both of these movements are to proceed in a manner that is strictly practical and local. The point is not simply to generate more and more abstract theories, but rather to locate particular and present possibilities :

[T]his historico-critical attitude must be an experimental one. I mean that this work done at the limits of ourselves must, on the one hand, open up a realm of historical inquiry and, on the other, put itself to the test of reality, of contemporary reality, both to grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and to determine the precise form this change should take (WIE 46).

Archaeology and genealogy are the particular tools that Foucault employs to further the project of the Enlightenment ethos, and bring about unique possibilities of transgression.<sup>xiv</sup>

But what, after all, is the purpose of all this work? Foucault does not in any way avoid this question. Concerning the overall goal of his critical project, he is absolutely unequivocal: "it is seeking to give new impetus, as far and wide as possible," he says, "to the undefined work of freedom" (WIE 46). This work of freedom remains undefined on a theoretical level because ultimately it is matter of concern for individuals. It is enough for the Enlightenment ethos to recognize that humans are "free beings" capable of carrying out such a "critical ontology" of themselves (WIE 47), and that they have an

“impatience for liberty” (WIE 50). Obviously there is a normative claim entailed in this goal: humans ought to desire more freedom, and they ought to seize every possibility to realize it. Foucault recognizes that there can be no universal foundation for such a claim, but that does not seem to bother him. He is content to let this particular normative claim “stand” as an unfounded invitation, offered to individuals who do not need proof of its logical credentials in order to recognize its validity.

### (3) In Conclusion: A Way of Reading Foucault

What Foucault says in “What is Enlightenment?” is truly extraordinary. No doubt his remarks have been viewed as a scandal by many – by those, like Habermas, who are sworn to defend the honor of the *Aufklärung*, as well as by those who insist that Foucault’s genealogical studies of power relations have revealed freedom, ethics, and progress to be empty fictions that we can no longer take seriously. But it seems to me that if we are willing to hear all that Foucault is saying in “What is Enlightenment?” about the nature of truth and rationality, and about the overall project to which all of his texts belong, there is no cause to dismiss his work as either a hopeless collection of performative contradictions or as a surrender to nihilism. The response that “What is Enlightenment?” provides to Habermas’ critique goes beyond that particular critique and gives us a conceptual framework within which we can see all of Foucault’s work as a continuation of the Enlightenment project.<sup>xv</sup>

## Endnotes

- <sup>i</sup> Trans. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987). Hereafter cited as **PDM**.
- <sup>ii</sup> I wish to thank Tom Flynn for his comments on this essay.
- <sup>iii</sup> For a rereading of the Foucault-Habermas debate that adopts the Habermasian position on performative contradictions and defends it against an imagined attack by Foucault (and others), see, Martin Jay, "The Debate over Performative Contradiction: Habermas versus the Poststructuralists," *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of the Enlightenment*, ed. Axel Honneth, Thomas McCarthy, Claus Offe, and Albrecht Wellmer (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992) 261-279.
- <sup>iv</sup> Habermas is very impressed with Foucault's critique of man as the "empirical-transcendental doublet" (cf. Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1973) 303-343). He therefore finds it all the more ironic that Foucault himself should repeat the same "overloading" in his own thought. (Cf. **PDM** 257-265.) For a critique of Foucault on this point see Herbert Schnädelbach, "The Face in the Sand: Foucault and the Anthropological Slumber," trans. William Rehg, *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of the Enlightenment*, ed. Axel Honneth, Thomas McCarthy, Claus Offe, and Albrecht Wellmer (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992) 311-340.
- <sup>v</sup> Trans. Catherine Porter, *The Foucault Reader*, Ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984) 32-50. Hereafter cited as **WIE**.
- <sup>vi</sup> For a further elaboration of Foucault's understanding of truth and reason, see the essays "Theatrum Philosophicum," and "Language to Infinity," trans. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977) 165-196, 53-67; and also the essay "Maurice Blanchot: The Thought from the Outside," trans. Brian Massumi, *Foucault/Blanchot* (New York: Zone Books, 1987) 9-58.

vii “Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present,” *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historian’s Debate*, ed. and trans, Shierry Weber Nicholse (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989) 173-179, 173.

viii Cf. *Being and Time*, trans. Macquarrie and Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962) §44; “The Origin of the Work of Art,” trans. Albert Hofstadter, *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Krell (New York: Harper, 1977) 143-188.

ix Cf. *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973) 88-104; *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1982) 1-28; *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1981) 1-14, 37-96. An interesting account of the nature of truth that draws from both Heidegger and Derrida can be found in John D. Caputo, “On Being Inside/Outside Truth,” *Modernity and its Discontents*, ed. James L. Marsh, John D. Caputo, and Merold Westphal (New York: Fordham UP, 1992) 45-64.

x *The End of Modernity*, trans. Jon R. Snyder (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1988) 19-50, 164-181.

xi See Foucault’s (pseudonymous) article on himself in the *Dictionnaire des Philosophes*, ed. Denis Thuisman (Paris: PUF, 1984) 941-944. (Foucault wrote the article under the pseudonym of “Maurice Florence.”)

xii Foucault’s concern for “the singular” here suggests that the Enlightenment ethos is also interested in opening up a space for ethics. Foucault’s work at the time of his death seemed to be moving in this direction. For an opposing point of view concerning the relation of the Enlightenment ethos to the possibility of an ethics, see Charles E. Scott, *The Question of Ethics* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990) 53-93.

xiii On the other hand, he doesn’t rule out such a possibility either. A further elaboration of the important concept of “transgression” can be found in Foucault’s “A Preface to Transgression,” trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, *Language Counter-*

*Memory, Practice*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1977) 53-67. A good presentation of some aspects of transgression can also be found in Tony O'Connor, "Foucault and the Transgression of Limits," *Continental Philosophy I: Philosophy and Non-Philosophy Since Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (London: Routledge, 1988) 136-151.

<sup>xiv</sup> For a good explanation of Foucault's genealogical method and its connection with transgression, see Charles E. Scott, *The Language of Difference* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1987) 106-111.

<sup>xv</sup> A number of recent studies have been similarly impressed by "What is Enlightenment?", and have likewise suggested that this essay gives us a way to read all of Foucault's work in a new light. Cf. Richard Bernstein, "Foucault: Critique as a Philosophical *Ethos*," *The New Constellation: The Ethical-Political Horizons of Modernity/Postmodernity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992) 142-171; Gary Gutting, *Michel Foucault's Archaeology of Scientific Reason* (Cambridge: University Press, 1989) 1-7, 272-288; James W. Bernauer, *Michel Foucault's Force of Flight: Toward an Ethics for Thought* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1990) 6.



Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow, trans. The question of what Enlightenment is is a question that modern philosophy "from Kant to Hegel to Nietzsche to Weber to Horkheimer to Habermas" has always been confronted with and troubled by, so much so that we might answer the question, what is modern philosophy?, by saying that it is the philosophy that is trying to answer the question, what is Enlightenment? 2008. *Beyond Intellectual Blackmail: Foucault and Habermas on Reason, Truth, and Enlightenment*. E-Logos: Electronic Journal for Philosophy. <http://nb.vse.cz/kfil/elogos/history/dalton08.pdf>. Accessed 24 Aug 2011. In *Philosophical Interventions in the Unfinished Project of the Enlightenment*, ed. Axel Honneth, Thomas McCarthy, Claus Offe, and Albrecht Wellmer, 261-279. Cambridge: MIT Press. Google Scholar. There's a reason analytic philosophy redefined contemporary philosophy while the continentals receded into the murky depths of the liberal arts: actual nonsense doesn't hold up to scrutiny, and merely pretending otherwise gets you about as far as any number of non-rigorous soft sciences will take you. Deleuze and Foucault see this as an effort to allow the prisoners to express their own understanding about the inequalities of their condition that they have developed, instead of Foucault applying a general theory to argue on their behalf, or to develop a reform platform based on their complaints. It's the same principle, applied to intellectual honesty; it's virtually obvious that Foucault died of AIDS the year this was released. It was a busy year for him, as he wrapped up his philosophical inquiries and tried to make the most of the rest of his life. Read More. Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?" in Rabinow (P.), ed., *The Foucault Reader*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1984, pp. 32-50. Today when a periodical asks its readers a question, it does so in order to collect opinions on some subject about which everyone has an opinion already; there is not much likelihood of learning anything new. My analysis shows that Habermas, as many of his predecessors, still fails to solve the problem of exclusion. The failure to solve this problem is the main reason why Habermas and the Enlightenment more generally fail to eliminate domination and achieve emancipation. The article argues that in order to solve the problem of exclusion, our civilization must transcend the paradigm of the Enlightenment. The focus of this article is the project of emancipation "alternately known as the Enlightenment project, or the project of modernity. The principal goal of this project is the elimination of domination and the emancipation of humanity. Having originated during the period of the Enlightenment, this project has powerfully shaped the course of European and world history.