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**Foucault, Modernity, and Postmodernity**

by

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"Foucault, Modernity, and Postmodernity"

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**Abstract:**

This paper examines modernist and postmodernist notions of knowledge by reviewing four authors (Michel Foucault, Jurgen Habermas, Richard Rorty, and Immanuel Kant) who put forward different views of these notions. Focusing on Foucault and Habermas, it proves difficult to make an unequivocal choice between these two authors' theories. In any event, the examination reveals that the field of higher education appears to be an area in which Habermas's and Foucault's theoretical and historical perspectives allow us to understand both possibilities and problems in the development of institutions.

## Introduction

Humankind's actions are somewhat determined by our basic beliefs. What people believe to some extent determines how they see things, what things they will or will not support, and what actions they will take. Naturally this affects university institutions because what people believe will affect what form we think the university should take. Today, notions of what the university should be and what forms it should take are more contested than ever. For example, the idea that there are foundational truths has been challenged by many writers including those that take a postmodern view. This paper examines modernist and postmodernist notions of knowledge by reviewing four authors who occupy different positions in these arguments.

Some authors whose writings explain the different basic beliefs contained in these two notions are Immanuel Kant, Jurgen Habermas, Michel Foucault, and Richard Rorty. In their works, these authors align themselves with and support either the goals and beliefs of modernity or postmodernity. A critical examination of these authors' writings allows judgments to be made about whether we want to align ourselves and our actions with the basic belief structure of modernity or postmodernity.

To be more specific, a critical examination of these authors' views exposes the problems with each view and leads to conclusions about which view is the most convincing and

which view does not seem to work. The result is that Habermas in his argument for modernity appears to be the most convincing and Rorty in his argument for postmodernity seems the least convincing. Foucault's works represent a strong criticism of modernity but at the same time Foucault appears to support modernity. Foucault's works also relate to postmodernism in that while he claims to be modernist, in his critique of modernity, at times, he appears to support postmodernism in opposition to modernism.

Finally, these authors' theories, particularly in the case of Foucault, have implications for the university.

## **Kant**

We can begin with Kant because he is chronologically the first author of the four and provides a good introduction to the other three authors. Kant lived at the turn of the 1700's and is strongly associated with the Enlightenment. His essay "What is Enlightenment?" was written in 1784 and is seen as the entrance into the period called "modernity". Recently, some people such as Richard Rorty have argued for entrance into the new period of "postmodernity". Others such as Habermas uphold the project of "modernity" and argue that we should push on with the principles begun with Kant at the time of the Enlightenment. Finally, Foucault offers his own unique challenge to "modernity" and has been labelled both as

a "modernist" and as a "postmodernist".

To return to Kant, his essay "What is Enlightenment?" is important because it is recognized as an essay that marks the beginning of a new "enlightened" way of thinking for humanity and entrance into the period called "modernism". In his time Kant was rallying for people to think for themselves as opposed to being servants of tradition or religion or any other institution they might follow blindly, not think for themselves, and not take responsibility for their own actions and lives.

Kant described enlightenment as

Enlightenment is man's release from his self-incurred tutelage. Tutelage is man's inability to make use of his understanding without direction from another. Self-incurred is this tutelage when its cause lies not in lack of reason but in lack of resolution and courage to use it without direction from another. Sapere aude! ["Dare to know!"] "Have courage to use your own reason!" - that is the motto of enlightenment. (Kant, pg 1)

Kant saw mankind as being able to improve its' existence through people having the courage to exercise their own judgment. Kant argued that if obstacles to the free exercise of one's judgment were removed people would naturally begin to use their innate ability to think and make decisions for themselves instead of being lead and treated like cattle by authorities outside themselves.

Western society has changed significantly since the 1700's. Those who purport to follow Kant would claim that the changes that have taken place since the enlightenment have been improvements for mankind. They would claim that through people rallying for greater social and political freedom they have won the opportunity to become more autonomous and have taken advantage of that opportunity by seeking to be responsible and take control of their own lives collectively through reasoned and agreed upon choices leading to legitimate social actions.

For example, in the area of crime and punishment, outrageous punishment for any small crime would no longer represent the vengeance of a violated sovereign and a message to all of his or her subjects. Rather punishment would be agreed upon by the public and administered by the public in the name of the public as people collectively sought to be responsible for and take control of their existence. They would no longer be controlled by the sovereign, they would take responsibility and be controlled by themselves.

As they sought to take responsibility for their actions and control of lives through legitimate bases, as opposed to the illegitimate basis of the tyranny of one person, the king or queen, they sought knowledge and information that would help them to direct and choose their actions. This has led to the modern human sciences such as criminology and psychology. Some would argue that this has also resulted in much more humane treatment of criminals through the invention

of such institutions as the prison. These kind of claims are exactly what a writer like Foucault would challenge.

### **Habermas**

The project of "modernity", which is the project of mankind taking responsibility for and control of their lives through "reason", is expanded upon and carried forward into modern day by Habermas. Habermas calls this taking control of one's life through the use of one's own reason "autonomy".

In his essay, "**Knowledge and Human Interests**", Habermas gives us further insights into autonomy. Habermas points out that there are new problems for mankind in relation to autonomy. As opposed to religion, tradition, or the rule of monarchies being the things that we could follow blindly, Habermas sees a new danger in that we are allowing modern day science to lead us blindly.

However, the most important part of Habermas's essay is that in giving us his criticism of scientism Habermas elaborates on what he believes is the essence of human beings and why the pursuit of autonomy is so important to us. In contrast, Kant only states that the pursuit of autonomy is important because by not pursuing it we are cowardly and lazy as human beings, and comparable to cattle.

Kant's assertion raises the question of why would humankind seek to use their reason to establish their own

autonomy? Why does Kant assert that it is important for humankind to use their reason in this manner?

Habermas asserts that the reason is because humankind has an impulse to utopian fulfillment.

Taken by itself this thesis could lead to the misunderstanding that reason is an organ of adaption for men just as claws and teeth are for animals. True, it does serve this function. But the human interests that have emerged in man's natural history, to which we have traced back the three knowledge-constitutive interests, derive both from nature and "from the cultural break" with nature. Along with the tendency to realize natural drives they have incorporated the tendency toward release from the constraint of nature. Even the interest in self-preservation, natural as it seems, is represented by a social system that compensates for the lacks in man's organic equipment and secures his historical existence against the force of nature threatening from without. But society is not only a system of self-preservation. An enticing natural force, present in the individual as libido, has detached itself from the behavioral system of self-preservation and urges toward utopian fulfillment. These individual demands, which do not initially accord with the requirement of collective self-preservation, are also absorbed by the social system. That is why the cognitive processes to which social life is indissolubly linked function not only as means to the reproduction of life; for in equal measure they themselves determine the definitions of this life. What may appear as naked survival is always in its roots a historical phenomenon. For it is subject to the criterion of what a society intends for itself as the good life. (Habermas, 1971, pg 312-313)

The above quote is rather lengthy and unclear on its own. However, an examination of Habermas's criticism of modern day scientific pursuits will help to make clear the connection between "utopian urges", "the good life" and our pursuit of autonomy. As well, making this connection will lead to a complete picture of the project of "modernity" and

it's corresponding beliefs.

In his criticism of scientism Habermas argues that mankind in its scientific pursuits operates under the "illusion of objectivity". By failing to realize this illusion we are conducting our lives on the basis of falsehoods to the extent that false claims to certainty of some forms of science affect our conduct. This leads us out of the realm of rational activity or reason. In turn, this pertains to our autonomy because for Habermas the realm of rational activity is the only place where we can use our reason and become autonomous.

While pointing out this barrier to mankind's autonomy Habermas also points out how we can overcome it.

Finally, Habermas equates autonomy with what he calls "the good life". This assumption runs to the root of his essay and forms the basis for his critique of scientific activity. Habermas's explanation of this assumption allows us to fill out our conception of the project of "modernity" and its corresponding beliefs.

In order to explain the problem of the "illusion of objectivity" Habermas begins by explaining the concept of "theory" and the connection between the scientific approach and the "theoretical approach".

The concept of "theory" originated with the philosophical thinking of the ancient Greeks who sought to

understand and describe the universe. In order to properly contemplate the universe one had to abandon one's self to the universe in contemplation, that is, disregard one's own idiosyncratic concerns and interests and just take in the universe as it is. Their assumptions were: that there is a structure of the universe independent of mankind, there is an ideal order of things in the universe, and that through understanding and contemplation of it mankind could come to mimic this ideal order in his or her own life. For mankind to live in this ideal state was called "life in theory".

According to Habermas the scientific disciplines have

"... continuity with the beginnings of philosophical thought. For both are committed to a theoretical attitude that frees those who take it from dogmatic association with the natural interests of life and their irritating influence; and both share the cosmological intention of describing the universe theoretically in its lawlike order, just as it is." (Habermas, 1971, pg 303)

A difference between the early philosophical approach and the scientific approach that Habermas identifies is that the latter has left behind the goal of mankind achieving an ideal state of existence through mimesis and Habermas associates this abandonment with the scientific concept of "value-freedom".

Therefore, in the "theoretical approach" of modern day science we have the goal of describing the universe in it's

lawlike nature while disregarding humankind's idiosyncratic concerns or interests. The freedom from interests which might divert scientists from their goal is called "objectivity". Habermas claims that this "objectivity" associated with the theoretical approach is an illusion.

Habermas asserts that "objectivity" is an illusion by arguing that in any of mankind's pursuits, including our scientific pursuits, there is always a prior frame of reference which informs and therefore influences or directs the pursuit. This prior frame of reference is our basic human experience or our experience in the "lifeworld". The everyday experiences in the history of mankind are recorded, accumulated, passed on and built upon to form the "lifeworld" of any given point in history. For example, one of the ways the "lifeworld" automatically influences whatever we do is through the dynamic of language. Mankind's interests and experiences are recorded in the invention and development of language and these interests are automatically passed on in the acquisition and use of language in our communications.

Habermas describes this overall process of the evolution and development of our interests as follows:

" .. an ego ... adapts itself to its external conditions through learning processes, is initiated into the communication system of a social life-world by means of self-formative processes, and constructs an identity in the conflict between instinctual aims and social constraints. In turn these achievements become part of the productive forces accumulated by a society, the cultural tradition through which a society interprets itself, and the legitimations that a society accepts or

criticizes." (Habermas, 1971, pg 313)

Therefore because we are always bringing an a priori organization of our experience to any of our pursuits we cannot help but bring definite interests or influences to our scientific pursuits. In the case of the empirical-analytical sciences Habermas states it as follows:

"In reality basic statements are not simple representation of facts in themselves, but express the success or failure of our operations. We can say that facts and the relations between them are apprehended descriptively. But this way of talking must not conceal that as such the facts relevant to the empirical sciences are first constituted through an a priori organization of our experience in the behavioural system of instrumental action." (Habermas, 1971, pg 309)

In the case of the historical-hermeneutic sciences Habermas, in the same way, points out the definite influences inevitably continually driving the scientific pursuit.

".. here, too, the facts are first constituted in relation to the standards that establish them. ... Hermeneutic knowledge is always mediated through this pre-understanding, which is derived from the interpreter's initial situation. The world of traditional meaning discloses itself to the interpreter only to the extent that his own world becomes clarified at the same time. The subject of understanding establishes communication between both worlds. He comprehends the substantive content of tradition by applying tradition to himself and his situation." (Habermas, 1971, pg 309-310)

This argument (that the objectivity of the sciences generates complete certainties) is an illusion that has significant implications for the issue of autonomy. To sum it up, Habermas argues that the sciences would have mankind believe: that the information and descriptions of the universe provided by the sciences simply bubble to the surface by themselves and are simply observed and recorded by scientific observation, that the most useful thing we can do to grasp as much about the universe as possible is to renounce and avoid all human interests and influences because they only impede the real work and progress of scientific observation.

Next, he reveals that everything that mankind does, every action of mankind, is driven by his or her experience in the "lifeworld". Our experience in the "lifeworld" essentially represents our exposure to the development, negotiation, and results of mankind's interests up to any given point in history. Therefore, the conclusion is that our actions in scientific pursuits are inescapably influenced by mankind's generic concerns and interests.

Habermas claims that by coming to this realization we will reject the untrue claims and statements of the sciences, or conversely take up truth in our statements. Outside the realm of true statements mankind is operating in a state of

delusion and only inside the realm of true statements can we properly exercise our reason. In turn, exercising our own reason leads to a state of autonomy, a state of being where we are not controlled or led by forces outside of us. Habermas asserts that being in a state of autonomy is "the good life" because it allows us to be in control of our lives and surroundings and move towards utopian fulfillment. Finally the urge to move towards some sort of utopian fulfillment rises out of our very nature.

This gives us a more complete picture of the project of "modernity" and its corresponding beliefs.

The implications of "modernity" for the university are fairly straight forward. The university must continue to pursue truth in its statements if mankind is to continue to move towards autonomy and "the good life". Although the order seems simple and straight forward, the task of pursuing truth in our statements is difficult and requires complex thought of the type that Habermas exhibits in his critical analysis of scientific pursuits. The university must continue to pursue these types of critical analyses in all of its activities if mankind is to progress in the pursuit of autonomy.

Moving beyond scientific pursuits the project of "modernity" applies to mankind's activity in general. For

Habermas, the task of this project is continued critical examination of the truth of our statements in all of mankind's activities. In order to have truth in our statements Habermas claims that we have to have unconstrained communication amongst ourselves leading to a true consensus. Therefore wherever dialogue has been suppressed in the history of the development of our statements we have to examine and reconstruct what has been suppressed in order to amend our statements so that they are once again "true" statements. By amending our communication in such a way we move closer to autonomy;

Only when philosophy discovers in the dialectical course of history the traces of violence that deform repeated attempts at dialogue and recurrently close off the path to unconstrained communication does it further the process whose suspension it otherwise legitimates: mankind's evolution toward autonomy and responsibility. My fifth thesis is thus that the unity of knowledge and interest proves itself in a dialectic that takes the historical traces of suppressed dialogue and reconstructs what has been suppressed. (Habermas, 1971, pg 314-315)

and this leads to "the good life" that follows autonomy;

However, only in an emancipated society, whose members' autonomy and responsibility had been realized, would communication have developed into the non-authoritarian and universally practiced dialogue from which both our model of reciprocally constituted ego identity and our idea of true consensus are always implicitly derived. To this extent the truth of statements is based on anticipating the realization of the good life. (Habermas, 1971, pg 314)

Given these insights into the project of modernity and

Habermas's notion of communicative action we can move on to an examination of Foucault's theory of power which provides a very interesting challenge to the project of "modernity" and to Rorty's version of "postmodernism" which argues that we should abandon some of the ideas of "modernity".

## **Foucault**

Foucault offers us a much different story of the progress of mankind since the time of the Enlightenment in his historical analyses such as **"Discipline and Punish"**. As well, in his own essay **"What is Enlightenment?"**, Foucault uses Kant's essay of the same title to draw some ideas from his own historical analyses on how he thinks that we can make progress today as a society.

Habermas has offered some strong response to Foucault's works that allows us to decide to what extent we are persuaded by Foucault's ideas. Finally, Foucault's work has obvious implications for the university.

Foucault offers us a much more negative picture of the progress of mankind since the Enlightenment. Through his analysis of the evolution of punishment in **"Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison"** Foucault supplies an overall theory as to how society operates and how power operates

within society. The implications for autonomy are staggering as Foucault's theory leads us to believe that people are heavily affected by the operation of power within society to the point of even being created by power.

To begin with, Foucault believes our society can be described as an ongoing battle involving a "strategic distribution of elements". The strategic distribution of elements at any given time in the battle represents a layout for the effective functioning of power. In the course of time new circumstances are introduced into the battle which in turn requires the introduction of new elements and a strategic redistribution of elements in the battle. The new strategic distribution of elements represents a new way for power to function effectively.

In this picture of society it soon becomes apparent that individuals have very little control and are merely caught in this ongoing battle, strategic distribution of elements and resulting power dynamics. Members of society end up being mere agents or tools for the exercise of power or the subject or material upon which power is exercised, or both. In either case the result is that we are at the mercy of changing power regimes controlling us. Instead of people having the power and authority to exercise their own judgment and be autonomous, power regimes have people exercising the structures and rules it has put in place, and people have no

autonomy.

This idea is demonstrated in "**Discipline and Punish**" where Foucault gives us a detailed historical analysis of the rise and use of prisons as a form of punishment for criminals.

In his book, Foucault begins with a grisly historical account of a 1757 public torture and execution of a man for attempted regicide. The punishment represents the violent and direct vengeance of the sovereign for an attempt on his life.

Foucault goes on to point out that all crimes, even minor crimes, were seen as an attempt to disrupt the sovereign's kingdom and therefore were considered a direct threat to the sovereign. As such, even relatively minor crimes were met with severe and violent public punishment which proclaimed the king's power.

At executions of criminals who had committed particularly horrible crimes people would jeer and hurl insults at the criminal. However at executions of criminals convicted for less serious crimes people began to sympathize with the criminals and form a solidarity against the power of the king. The power to punish begins to lose its effect in the hands of the sovereign.

In order to deal with this problem the authorities of

the king began to post bulletins which outlined the crimes of the criminal and attempted to paint the criminal in a bad light. However, where people tended to sympathize with the struggles of criminals the strategy backfired and the bulletins tended to heroize the criminals amongst the people.

... the effect of the literature [the bulletins] was equivocal. The condemned man found himself transformed into a hero by the sheer extent of his widely advertised crimes, and sometimes the affirmation of his belated repentance. Against the law, against the rich, the powerful, the magistrates, the constabulary or the watch, against taxes and their collectors, he appeared to have waged a struggle with which one all too easily identified. The proclamation of these crimes blew up to epic proportions the tiny struggle that passed unperceived in everyday life. (Foucault, 1977, pg 67)

At this same point in history the excessive public violence of public executions was beginning to be criticized as revolting and there is a call by some to reform penal practice to more humane punishments. However, more importantly, Foucault points out that at the same time as this call for humane reform occurred there were also three other developments taking place: the type of crime taking place in society has changed from physically violent crimes against the person to property crimes; in response to the repression of the sovereign people have developed their own set of accepted illegal activities; and finally there has been an increase in wealth and economic activity of society. The growth of the importance of economic activity in society brings with it an increased focus on somehow addressing

operation of crime in the areas of property and trade.

This combination of developments taking place in society calls for a new strategy in punishment or a new "strategic distribution of elements". Power no longer operates effectively where punishment is in the hands of the king.

In order to combat this situation reformers bring the idea of the social contract to punishment. The power to punish is taken from the sovereign and put into the hands of the people. The idea is that collectively people form a society and what holds them together is their support of a common set of beliefs and laws. When someone breaks the law they consent to bringing the wrath of a society on to themselves of which they are a part and which they must uphold and keep strong. Therefore part of public punishment is for the criminal to personally and publicly once again endorse the social contract. The power to punish, no longer effective in the sovereign's hands, has now shifted into the hands of the people where power becomes effective once again.

At the level of principles, this new strategy falls easily into the general theory of the contract. The citizen is presumed to have accepted once and for all, with the laws of society, the very law by which he may be punished. Thus the criminal appears as a juridically paradoxical being. He has broken the pact, he is therefore the enemy of society as a whole, but he participates in the punishment that is practised upon him. The least crime attacks the whole of society; and the whole of society - including the criminal - is present in the least punishment. Penal punishment is therefore a generalized function, coextensive with the

function of the social body and with each of its elements. (Foucault, 1977, pg 89-90)

In addition to putting the power of punishment in the hands of the people the reformers plan to make punishment more humane and just by bringing moderation to punishment and tailoring punishments to suit individual crimes. At the same time punishment is to remain a public spectacle so that the consequences of various crimes are inscribed into the minds of people. The idea behind this plan was that people would be prevented from committing crimes because whenever they thought of committing any crime they would also immediately picture the corresponding specific punishment for that crime.

To this point in Foucault's analysis we can see a clear illustration of how the battle in society takes place and how it requires strategic moves and tactics for power to operate effectively. Foucault's analysis of power allows us to postulate that the movement towards humane punishment had little to do with our desire to be more humane to criminals and much to do with a strategic shifting of elements in order that power could operate in society effectively.

However, at the same time, to this point in Foucault's analysis these events also seem to be consistent with the Enlightenment notion of people becoming free from powers

outside of themselves that are controlling them (the sovereign) and then having the courage to take responsibility for and control of their own lives through exercising their own judgment (the social contract and public support of reasoned and justifiable punishments). Society is beginning to look like a place where people are on their way to becoming more autonomous.

It appears that the harmful effects of power in the hands of one person, the sovereign, have been neutralized as power has become decentralized and apparently put into the hands of the people collectively. However, Foucault's analysis goes on to demonstrate how the battle taking place in society continues to rage on and as more new circumstances arise there is more strategic shifting of elements so that power can operate effectively. As history progresses and the battle in society rages on Foucault demonstrates how strategic manoeuvres take place and new elements are introduced for power to operate effectively. Foucault shows us how power becomes increasingly subtle and pervasive in its operation resulting in progressively higher levels of control of people.

To begin with, Foucault shows us that punishment did not end up taking the reasoned and collectively supported form of individualized public punishments. Rather unexplainedly,

punishment ends up taking the general form of prison where punishment is not highly visible to the public and is not tailored to individual crimes.

For Foucault this rise of the prison as the dominant form of punishment in society is the result of more new historical circumstances rising in the battle in society making it necessary for new elements and mechanisms to be introduced into the battle in order to allow power to operate effectively.

Foucault's analysis reveals that at this point in history new circumstances rise necessitate finding new methods and tactics for power to operate. Industry and commerce has taken off and a focus on production and efficiency begins to become a major concern. There is a need for surveillance of large numbers of workers and a need for training them to be efficient in their performance of their jobs. This need for efficiency of workers finds a useful source in the existing knowledge of training bodies that had been developed through the disciplines up to this point in history. "... disciplines - notably the army and schools - were quietly developing techniques and tactics to treat human beings as objects to be molded". (Dreyfus, pg 154)

Given these circumstances the battle called for new strategy and tactics for power to operate effectively. Therefore instead of the representative model of punishment proposed by the reformers catching hold, the panoptic prison

was adopted as it served as an ideal model for the effective operation of power in this new environment. The panoptic prison served as a model for optimal continual surveillance of people in their activities. As well, the focus of prisons was to discipline and train the criminal in order to modify their behaviour.

The appearance and the rapid acceptance of preventative detention as the main form of criminal punishment is striking, not because it incorporated some of the principles proposed by the Enlightenment reformers, but because it violated, reversed, or contradicted so many others. These contrasts can be summed up as follows: Punishment no longer sought significant public representation and didactic moral insight but rather attempted behavioural modification - both of the body and of the soul - through the precise application of administrative techniques of knowledge and power. Punishment would have succeeded when it produced "docile bodies". The application of punishment was once again inscribed on the body, but its aim was no longer to crush, dismember, and overpower it. Rather, the body was to be trained, exercised, and supervised. The production of a new apparatus of control was necessary, one which would carry out this program of discipline. It was an apparatus of total, continuous, and efficient surveillance. (Dreyfus, pg 152)

In addition, Foucault further supports his suggestion for the reason behind the adoption of prisons by asserting that although prisons have failed to reduce crime they continue to be the main form of punishment. "If the law is supposed to define offences, if the function of the penal apparatus is to reduce them and if the prison is the instrument of this repression, then failure has to be admitted", and yet "this failure of the prison has always

been accompanied by its maintenance". (Foucault, 1977, pg 271-72)

Foucault goes on to further describe the solidity of the position prison holds in society despite its failures by saying:

This no doubt explains the extreme solidity of the prison, that slight invention that was nevertheless decried from the outset. ... But, rooted as it was in mechanisms and strategies of power, it could meet any attempt to transform it with a great force of inertia. One fact is characteristic: when it is a question of altering the system of imprisonment, opposition does not come from the judicial institutions alone; resistance is not to be found in the prison as a penal sanction, but in the prison with all its determinations, links and extra-judicial results; in the prison as the relay in a general network of disciplines and surveillances; in the prison as it functions in a panoptic regime. (Foucault, 1977, pg 305)

Foucault's analysis goes beyond merely giving us a description of the rise of the use of prisons as a form of punishment. There are many other strategic moves occurring in this complex picture of society. As new developments take place in the battle, new strategies become necessary which will enable power to operate effectively. Foucault describes our society as having become "disciplinary" and "panoptic" in this process.

Power now operates effectively through the development of the disciplines and panopticism and people end up being effectively more closely controlled by these sophisticated developments. The disciplines in the area of the "human

sciences", such as criminology and psychology, enabled to gather knowledge and information by panopticism, systematically pursue and gather extremely detailed information about the behaviour of people. This knowledge is used to take ever closer control of people.

At this point it begins to become clear how the Enlightenment notion of people taking control of their own lives through exercising their own reason is connected with the operation of power. As power loses its effect in the hands of the sovereign and is transferred into the hands of the people seeking autonomy by exercising their own reason, people tend to seek knowledge and information on which to base their judgments. In a personal interview Foucault describes the relationship between power and knowledge as follows:

Now I have been trying to make the visible the constant articulation I think there is of power on knowledge and of knowledge on power. We should not be content to say that power has a need for such-and-such a discovery, such-and-such a form of knowledge, but we should add that the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information. ... The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power. ... It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power. (Foucault, 1980, pg 51-52)

The human sciences take root with the Enlightenment notion of autonomy. As people seek to make use of their own

reason and become autonomous, while having only their own knowledge and experience of society to refer to, they are faced with the difficult task of trying to objectively establish an order of things. The knowledge gathered and compiled through their own use of reason forms the objective and legitimate basis for their actions. Further, these knowledges, now the legitimate bases of actions, are further pursued and developed by very reason of their legitimate existence.

The problem with this situation is three-fold. First, people are faced the contradictory task of establishing objective factual knowledge for the legitimate operation of society while having only their own subjective knowledge and judgment to refer to. Secondly, in attempting to overcome the problem of subjectivity they generate more and more knowledge in order to try to gain legitimacy and objectivity for their assertions. Thirdly, their apparatuses for the gathering of knowledge and the knowledge they have available to them rises out of a strategic distribution of elements that allows power to operate effectively in society. Therefore, people are faced with the ongoing and impossible task of trying to establish objective factual knowledge to base their actions on, through their subjective experiences of an environment that, unknown to them, is a battlefield where the effective operation of power is the ultimate goal.

Habermas describes the first two aspects of this

situation that Foucault has seized upon in the project of "modernity" as follows:

The human person, become present to himself in self-consciousness, has to assume the superhuman task of establishing an order of things as soon as he becomes aware of himself as an existence at once autonomous and finite. ... The pressure to break out of this unstable to and fro between aspects of self-thematization that are just as irreconcilable as they are inevitable makes itself felt as the intractable will to knowledge and ever more knowledge. This will pretentiously shoots beyond anything the structurally overburdened and overstrained subject is capable of performing. In this way, the modern form of knowledge is determined by the unique dynamism of a 'will to truth' which any frustration is only a spur to the renewed production of knowledge. This will to truth, then, is for Foucault the key to the internal nexus between knowledge and power. The human sciences occupy the terrain opened up by the aporetic self-thematization of the cognitive subject. With their pretentious and never redeemed claims, they erect a facade of universally valid knowledge behind which lurks the facticity of a sheer will to cognitive self-mastery, a will to a boundlessly productive increase of knowledge in the wake of which both subjectivity and self-consciousness are first formed. (Habermas, 1987, pg 260-261)

Power now operates more subtly and effectively through knowledge in the form of the human sciences. The generation of knowledge through the human sciences is pursued as new developments take place in the battle in society and legitimation is needed for the exercise of power and the taking of actions by society. Knowledge and power become intertwined in a relationship where knowledge allows power to operate and power operates through the creation of knowledge.

For example in a personal interview Foucault claims that the human science of criminology is merely a tool for the

effective operation of power that has strategically arisen in the battle taking place in society. Criminology as a knowledge base and discipline rose out of a shift in strategy to the panoptic prison which facilitated the collection of large amounts of information on criminals. In turn the discipline of criminology supports and allows the continued use of prisons despite their failure to reform criminals. Therefore criminology is both an effect of power, in that it arose out of the move in punishment towards the panoptic prison, and a tool of power in that it produces a so-called "scientific" body of knowledge which attempts to justify the operation of prisons despite their repeated failure to reform criminals.

Q. You are very hard on criminology, it's 'garrulous discourse', it's 'endless repetitions'.

A. (Foucault) Have you ever read any criminological texts? They are staggering. And I say this out of astonishment, not aggressiveness, because I fail to comprehend how the discourse of criminology has been able to go on at this level. One has the impression that it is of such utility, is needed so urgently and rendered so vital for the working of the system, that it does not even need to seek a theoretical justification for itself, or even simply a coherent framework. It is entirely utilitarian. I think one needs to investigate why such a 'learned' discourse became so indispensable to the functioning of the nineteenth-century penal system. What made it necessary was the alibi, employed since the eighteenth century, that if one imposes a penalty on somebody this is not in order to punish what he has done, but to transform what he is. From this point, a penal judgment, in other words saying to someone 'We'll cut off your head, or put you in prison, or just fine you because you have done this or that', is an act which no longer has any meaning. Once you suppress the idea of vengeance, which previously was the act of a sovereign threatened in his very sovereignty by the crime, punishment can only have a meaning within a

technology of reform. And judges themselves have gradually made the shift, without wanting to and without even taking cognizance of the fact, from a verdict which still retained punitive connotations to one which they cannot justify in their own vocabulary except on the condition of its being transformatory of the person condemned. Yet they know perfectly well that the instruments available to them, the death penalty, formerly the penal colonies, today imprisonment, don't transform anyone. Hence there is the necessity to call on those who produce a discourse on crime and criminals which will justify the measures in question.

Q. In short, criminological discourse is only useful for giving judges a semblance of good conscience?

A. (Foucault) Yes: or rather it is indispensable in enabling them to judge.

(Foucault, 1980, pg 47-48)

The link with the universities is obvious as universities house the human sciences and other knowledge bases. In a personal interview Foucault asserts that the university is the most obvious and least dangerous area where knowledge and power meet.

The exercise of power perpetually creates knowledge and, conversely, knowledge constantly induces effects of power. The university hierarchy is only the most visible, the most sclerotic and least dangerous form of this phenomenon. One has to be really naive to imagine that the effects of power linked to knowledge have their culmination in university hierarchies. Diffused, entrenched and dangerous, they operate in other places than in the person of the old professor. (Foucault, 1980, pg 52)

Finally the connection between the battle taking place

in society, power, and individual autonomy is obvious in this picture of a panoptic and disciplinary society where people become both the tools for the operation of power and the material on which power is exercised. Foucault describes it as follows:

Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organisation. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.

The individual is not to be conceived as a sort of elementary nucleus, a primitive atom, a multiple and inert material on which power comes to fasten or against which it happens to strike, and in so doing subdues or crushes individuals. In fact, it is already one of the prime effects of power that certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals. The individual, that is, is not the 'vis-a-vis' of power; it is, I believe one of its prime effects. The individual is an effect of power, and at the same time, or precisely to the extent to which it is that effect, it is the element of its articulation. The individual which power has constituted is at the same time its vehicle. (Foucault, 1980, pg 98)

Although Foucault's theory appears to dash all individuals' hopes for autonomy, he also points us to this same theory to discover ways in which we can liberate ourselves from the operation of power. Basically, in order to break up the hold that power has on us Foucault suggests that intellectual pursuits should continue with these types of investigations into the operation of power. This will allow us to understand where and how power operates and enable us to find ways of subverting the operation of power where it takes hold of us. In answer to a question in an interview on this topic Foucault answers:

What the intellectual can do is to provide instruments of analysis, and at present this is the historian's essential role. What's effectively needed is a ramified, penetrative perception of the present, one that makes it possible to locate lines of weakness, strong points, positions where the instance of power have secured and implanted themselves by a system of organisation dating back over 150 years. In other words, a topological and geographical survey of the battlefield - that is the intellectual's role.  
(Foucault, 1980, pg 62)

One tactic Foucault suggests that we can use to subvert power is to investigate where and how different bodies of knowledge have been suppressed in the strategic manoeuvres that take place in society that allow power to operate. By uncovering the existence of "subjugated knowledges" and revealing how they have been strategically discredited or disqualified in the battle taking place in society we bring them into play as a counterpower to fight the operation of

power of "official" knowledge. Foucault uses the term "archaeology" to describe the uncovering and unfolding of "buried" knowledges and the term "genealogy" to describe how and in what circumstances these knowledges could be brought into play in the "battle" taking place in society. Foucault describes this task as follows:

By comparison, then, and in contrast to the various projects which aim to inscribe knowledges in the hierarchical order of power associated with science, a genealogy should be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledges from that subjection, to render them, that is, capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse. It is based on a reactivation of local knowledges - of minor knowledges, as Deleuze might call them - in opposition to the scientific hierarchisation of knowledges and the effects intrinsic to their power: this, then, is the project of these disordered and fragmentary genealogies. If we were to characterise it in two terms, then 'archaeology' would be the appropriate methodology of this analysis of local discursivities, and 'genealogy' would be the tactics whereby, on the basis of the descriptions of these local discursivities, the subjected knowledges which were thus released would be brought into play. (Foucault, 1980, pg 85)

Habermas, in an essay on Foucault's work, describes the same above idea while often quoting Foucault's own descriptions found in Foucault's book of interviews,

**"Power/Knowledge":**

The genealogist directs his prospecting toward the dark ground proper to that local, marginal, and alternative knowledge "which owes its force only to the harshness with which it is opposed by everything surrounding it." These elements of knowledge are normally "disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity." There slumbers in them "a historical

knowledge of struggles." Genealogy, which raises these "local memories" up to the level of "erudite knowledge," takes the side of those who resist established practices of power. From this position of counterpower, it gains a perspective that is supposed to go beyond the perspectives of the given possessors of power. (Habermas, 1987, pg 280)

In deciding upon the validity of Foucault's ideas it is helpful to look at Habermas's insightful criticisms of Foucault's ideas. These criticisms highlight the crucial differences between Habermas and Foucault and raise the question of whether Foucault's analyses should be classified as "postmodernist".

Habermas's general criticism of Foucault is that ironically, Foucault's method suffers from the similar problem of subjectivity that Foucault criticizes the human sciences for. Therefore Habermas claims that Foucault deludes himself in thinking that his picture of society is accurate and objective and the human sciences picture is false. Further and more generally, Habermas claims that beyond the problems of subjectivity for Foucault and the human sciences, the methodological problem of subjectivity raises a fundamental barrier to breaking through to freedom and autonomy in general.

Habermas's main criticism of Foucault is that Foucault is caught in the same situation that he accuses the human sciences of being caught in. That is, Foucault claims that the human sciences are a purely subjective will to knowledge which have evolved in the battle taking place in society and serve to allow power to operate effectively. In contrast, Foucault seems to assume that his method of genealogical historiography comes from high above, free of influences, to observe the happenings in society and describe them objectively.

Genealogy is overtaken by a fate similar to that which Foucault had seen in the human sciences: 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. Whereas, according to Foucault's diagnosis, the human sciences submit to the ironic movement of scientific self-mastery and end up in a unsalutary objectivism (or better yet - come to an end therein), a no less ironic fate overtakes genealogical historiography; it follows the movement of a radically historicist extinction of the subject and ends up in an unholy subjectivism. (Habermas, 1987, pg 275-276)

The problem of the connection between truth, power, and subjectivity is something that Habermas claims that neither the human sciences nor Foucault's method can avoid. Habermas refers to this problem as the "philosophy of the subject":

According to this philosophy, the subject can take up

basically two and only two relationships toward the world of imaginable and manipulable objects: cognitive relationships regulated by the "truth" of judgments; and practical relationships regulated by the "success" of actions. Power is that by which the subject has an effect on objects in successful actions. In this connection, success in action depends upon the truth of the judgments that enter into the plans of action; via the criterion of success in action, power remains dependent on truth. (Habermas, 1987, pg 274)

Habermas claims that Foucault in his theory of power has merely reversed the relationship between truth and power and assumed that this gives his studies objectivity.

Foucault abruptly reversed 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. But 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.

This criticism highlights the fundamental difference between Foucault and Habermas's views of how society operates. That is, Habermas believes that a rational society operates on the basis of "truth" in its statements and that "truth" rises out of consensus being reached between people in free and open encounters. Therefore, Habermas would see the process in the "philosophy of the subject" taking place collectively to reach "truth".

In contrast, Foucault believes that society partly evolves insidiously on levels that we are not aware of. Nobody appears to have had an overall plan that would explain the particular forms that society ends up taking. For Foucault the arrangements that result in society are the result of the ability of power to adapt and find new ways to operate where it is found out and opposed. We become unconsciously caught in the mysterious and constantly changing operation of power.

Dreyfus and Rabinow in their book, "**Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics**", describe power and the role it quietly plays in the evolution of society as follows:

Power is not a commodity, a position, a prize, or a plot; it is the operation of the political technologies throughout the social body. .... If power is not a thing, or the control of a set of institutions, or the hidden rationality to history, then the task for the analyst is to identify how it operates. (Dreyfus, pg 185)

and further:

This is the insight, and this is the problem. How to talk about intentionality without a subject, a strategy without a strategist? The answer must lie in the practices themselves. For it is the practices, focused in technologies and innumerable separate localizations, which literally embody what the analyst is seeking to understand. In order to arrive at "a grid of intelligibility of the social order ... one needs to be nominalistic, no doubt: power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attribute to a complex strategical relationship in a particular society" (HS 93). There is a logic to the practices. There is a push towards a strategic objective, but no one is pushing. The objective emerged historically,

taking particular forms and encountering specific obstacles, conditions and resistances. Will and calculation were involved. The overall effect, however, escaped the actors' intentions, as well as those of anybody else. As Foucault phrased it, "People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do does" (personal communication)." (Dreyfus, pg 187)

Therefore, Habermas is correct insofar as he accuses Foucault of being just as subjective as the human sciences however his criticism begins to lose effect if we choose to understand Foucault's analyses as not being particularly concerned with "truth". Foucault is more concerned with power and sees his work as helping us to become free of the control power has on us.

Allowing for this interpretation of Foucault's work, Habermas's offers a further criticism of Foucault's method. First, Habermas points out the problem that Foucault's theory runs into when it is applied to itself. Namely, if we say that Foucault's genealogical historiography in its investigation of the human sciences unmasks them for what they are and weakens them, then in Foucault's theory doesn't his own science, genealogical historiography, now become the embodiment and operation of power. Habermas questions whether there is any hope in engaging in this battle if there is no end in sight.

Every counterpower already moves within the horizon of the power that it fights; and it is transformed, as soon as it is victorious, into a power complex that provokes a new counterpower. Even the genealogy of knowledge

cannot break out of this cycle while it activates the uprising of the disqualified modes of knowledge and mobilizes this subjected knowledge "against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal, and scientific discourse." Those who conquer the theoretical avant-garde of today and overcome the current hierarchisation of knowledge, themselves become the theoretical avant-garde of tomorrow and themselves establish a new hierarchy of knowledge. (Habermas, 1987, pg 281)

This leads to a third and most important criticism of Foucault's work regarding the subjectivity of the actors in society. The next sentence in the above quoted passage reads:

In any case, they cannot validate for their knowledge any superiority according to standards of truth claims that would transcend local agreements.

The above sentence reintroduces Habermas's notions of "truth". What Habermas is saying is that even if a new hierarchy of knowledge comes into place in this battle it will only face the same problems as the previous hierarchy did if it does not ground itself on the basis of "truth".

The war against the operation of power could rage on forever without "truth". Habermas is implicitly saying that the members of a rational society freely come together and come to a consensus on how power should operate. They accept this operation of power as based on "truth" and do not try to upset it without good reason, whereas Foucault would likely say that it needs to be upset by virtue of its very

existence.

Habermas claims that Foucault makes a

strategic decision (so full of consequences for Foucault's theory) to neglect the development of normative structures in connection with the modern formation of power. As soon as Foucault takes up the threads of the biopolitical establishment of disciplinary power, he lets drop the threads of the legal organization of the exercise of power and of the legitimation of the order of domination. (Habermas, 1987, pg 290)

What Habermas is leading up to in the above passage is that Foucault's theory of society only works if we do not take into account the subjectivity of the people in society. That is, Habermas claims that if we take into account the subjectivity of people in society we see that people have freely, rationally and collectively come to agree on certain arrangements for the operation of power. In the "constitutional state" the political order has "transferred ideologically from the sovereignty of the prince to the sovereignty of the people" (Habermas, 1987, pg 289) and the power to legislate and regulate is now in the hands of the people collectively. In addition, Habermas will also point out that people have subjectively made progress towards greater freedom through this process, contrary to Foucault's apparent assertions that people have become more tightly controlled.

This uncircumspect leveling of culture and politics to immediate substrates of the application of violence

explains the ostensible gaps in his presentation. That his history of modern penal justice is detached from the development of the constitutional state might be defended on methodological grounds. The theoretical narrowing down to the system of "carrying out" punishment is more questionable. As soon as he passes from the Classical to the modern age, Foucault pays no attention whatsoever to penal "law" and to the "law" governing penal process. Otherwise, he would have had to submit the unmistakable gains in liberality and legal security, and the expansion of civil-rights guarantees even in this area, to an exact interpretation in terms of the theory of power. However, his presentation is utterly distorted by the fact that he also filters out of the history of penal practices itself all aspects of legal regulation. In prisons, indeed, just as in clinics, schools, and military installations, there do exist those "special power relationships" that have by no means remained undisturbed by an energetically advancing enactment of legal rights - Foucault himself has been politically engaged for this cause. (Habermas, 1987, pg 290)

Therefore, Habermas shows us how Foucault's stoic and ascetic approach in his theory of power largely fails to take into account how people are subjectively involved in his "battle taking place in society". That is, Foucault's theory takes such an objective approach in its analysis of society that it refuses to allow for the subjectivity of the actors themselves in the society.

In any event, Habermas concludes that despite all these criticisms of Foucault's work which generally rise out of the "philosophy of the subject", even the "philosophy of the subject" itself cannot provide the answers we are looking for in relation to freedom and autonomy. According to Habermas

this philosophy has an inherent problem that makes it unable to deal with humankind's desire to avoid controlling forces and become autonomous. In such a desire or endeavour, the philosophy of the subject is caught between the individual trying to avoid controlling forces, while at the same time, and in direct conflict with the former goal, the individual in trying to take charge of one's own existence ends up confining oneself with an objective description and definition of oneself which tends to inherently restrict. Habermas puts it as follows:

.. freedom, as the principle of modernity, cannot be really grasped by means of the basic concepts of the philosophy of the subject.

In all attempts to grasp self-determination and self-realization, that is, freedom in the moral and the aesthetic senses, with the tools of the philosophy of the subject, one immediately runs up against an ironic inversion of what is actually intended. Repression of the self is the converse side of an autonomy that is pressed into subject-object relationships; the loss - and the narcissistic fear of loss - of self is the converse of an expressivity brought under these concepts. That the moral subject has to make an object of itself, that the expressive subject must surrender itself as such or, from fear of externalizing itself in objects, close in upon itself, does not correspond to the intuition of freedom and liberation; rather, it brings to light the constraints upon thought proper to the philosophy of the subject. (Habermas, 1987, pg 292)

Although it is beyond the scope of this paper, it should be pointed out that at this stage of his critique Habermas goes on to propose what he calls "communicative rationality" or "communicative reason" as an alternative way to use our ability to reason that will avoid the above problems of subject-centred reason.

For the purposes of this paper, the next issue that presents itself in the scope of Habermas's critique of Foucault is "postmodernity".

In his critique Habermas points out that Foucault acknowledges that his radically objective approach is not really so objective, but only in order to assert that historical objectivity is always an illusion in any case. Habermas goes on to quote Foucault from one of his essays, **"Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"**, where Foucault aligns himself with Nietzsche and expressly states that his slant on history is put on intentionally in order to reach "the lingering and poisonous traces in order to prescribe the best antidote."

"Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal their grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy - the unavoidable obstacles of their passion. Nietzsche's version of historical sense is explicit in its perspective and acknowledges its system of injustice. Its perspective is slanted, being a deliberate appraisal, affirmation, or negation; it reaches the lingering and poisonous traces in order to prescribe the best antidote." (Habermas, 1987, pg 281-282)

In addition, Habermas, again quoting Foucault from **"Nietzsche, Genealogy, History"**, points out that this method assumes that there is no right or truth.

".. all knowledge rests upon injustice (that there is

no right, even in the act of knowing, to truth or foundation for truth)." (Habermas, 1987, pg 278)

In light of this aspect of Foucault's approach Habermas suggests that Foucault's analyses are "postmodernist". A "postmodern" approach can be characterized as one that has given up the search for "truth" in favour of an experimental attitude where people simply try new ways of organizing themselves and new social practices and go with whatever "works" for them. Implicit in the notion of what "works" for people is the idea that they assume that they have the ability to be free and autonomous without being particularly concerned with an overriding idea such as universal "truth".

Habermas claims that Foucault's theory sounds of postmodern rhetoric and is based on postmodern assumptions when he says:

Foucault's criticism is based more on the postmodern rhetoric of his presentation than on the postmodern assumptions of his theory. (Habermas, 1987, pg 282)

Further Habermas goes as far as to suggest that Foucault himself justifies his analyses on the basis of being postmodern:

Only with the introduction of normative notions could he begin to tell us what is wrong with the modern power/knowledge regime and why we ought to oppose it." Once, in a lecture, Foucault addressed this question in passing and gave a vague suggestion of postmodern criteria of justification: "If one wants ... to

struggle against disciplines and disciplinary power, it is not toward the ancient right of sovereignty that one should turn, but toward the possibility of a new form of right, one which must indeed be antidisciplinarian, but at the same time liberated from the principle of sovereignty." (Habermas, 1987, pg 284)

The short answer to Habermas's suggestion is revealed to Habermas in Foucault's essay "What is Enlightenment?".

In this essay, Foucault clearly aligns himself with the project of modernity and gives us a further sense of how he sees his work being in line with the project.

In order to make an examination of the specific details of Foucault's essay more meaningful and applicable to the notions of modernity and postmodernity it would be useful at this point to draw a brief comparison of Foucault's and Habermas's conceptions of the task for mankind in the pursuit of autonomy.

In looking at Habermas's and Foucault's ideas it could be suggested that a major difference between the two is that Habermas sees humankind being quite reflective about their surroundings and therefore in general quite rational, whereas Foucault sees mankind as being quite restricted in their ability to be reflective of their surroundings, (and therefore quite restricted in their ability to be rational), because of the very overwhelmingness of their surroundings. Therefore, Foucault seems to suggest that in order for people

to become reflective and rational about their surroundings we have to constantly be raising counter arguments to the powers in place. Habermas, himself, acknowledges that Foucault's approach in this regard operates allegedly by giving people a heightened ability to perceive their environment more clearly:

From this position of counterpower, it gains a perspective that is supposed to go beyond the perspectives of the given possessors of power. (Habermas, 1987, pg 280)

However, as we have seen Habermas clearly point out, the problem that immediately arises is that in order to do this Foucault leaves reason and rationality out of the picture for the moment. That is, Foucault in his selective reading of history chooses to ignore the use of reason and rationality employed by the actors in society themselves in the construction of current power relations. For Habermas that makes the idea untenable as a legitimate approach for taking up the project of modernity.

In looking at Foucault's essay "What is Enlightenment?" we find Foucault giving us a new and clearer statement of how he sees himself taking up the project of modernity despite the inconsistencies of his methods with that project. Basically, the answer that Foucault provides is that he sees modernity as an attitude or ethos where people are constantly looking for a "difference" in the present. To that end

Foucault finds it necessary for people to become aware of how history has constructed us and determined us so that we can free ourselves from those inherited aspects and practices that are no longer necessary in the present to our autonomy. In this sense Foucault is looking for a "difference" in today from the past.

In order to do this Foucault claims that we have to conduct the types of historical investigations he has done in very specific areas, not so that we can uncover how power operates, but so that we can see how we have progressively constructed ourselves in the course of history to the point we are at now. The point of doing this is that by grasping this historical progression we can become free to change ourselves in new ways and reinvent ourselves and experiment with going beyond the limits imposed on us by the conceptions of ourselves people in the past found necessary to generate in order for us to autonomous beings. Foucault wants to take these into account and emphasize the present as opposed to the past and look for ways that we can find new and better ways to be autonomous beings today.

We must try to proceed with the analysis of ourselves as beings who are historically determined, to a certain extent, by the Enlightenment. Such an analysis implies a series of historical inquiries that are as precise as possible; and these inquiries will not be oriented retrospectively toward the "essential kernel of rationality" that can be found in the Enlightenment and that would have to be preserved in any event; they will be oriented toward the "contemporary limits of the necessary," that is, toward what is not or is no longer indispensable for the constitution of ourselves as autonomous subjects. (Foucault, 1984, pg 43)

Foucault claims that these "historical inquiries that are as precise as possible", (such as his investigation into the penal practices in "Discipline and Punish"), should always aim at answering the questions of:

How are we constituted as subjects of our own knowledge?  
 How are we constituted as subjects who exercise or submit to power relations? How are we constituted as moral subjects of our own actions?  
 (Foucault, 1984, pg 49)

Finally, at the end of the essay Foucault summarizes the task he sees for modernity as follows:

The critical ontology of ourselves [what is our nature or being] has to be considered not, certainly, as a theory, a doctrine, nor even as a permanent body of knowledge that is accumulating; it has to be conceived as an attitude, an ethos, a philosophical life in which the critique of what we are is at one and the same time the historical analysis of the limits that are imposed on us and an experiment with the possibility of going beyond them. (Foucault, 1984, pg 50)

In his essay, "Taking Aim at the Heart of the Present: On Foucault's Lecture on Kant's 'What is Enlightenment?'" , Habermas offers a critical response to Foucault's essay in which he basically claims that Foucault is only getting himself further into contradiction with this essay. In addition to Foucault's original problem of the contradiction generated by trying to avoid subjectivity through radical

historicism, Habermas claims that Foucault is now also adding further levels of contradiction. That is, Habermas asks: How can Foucault now claim to want people to reinvent themselves by "pursuing a difference in the present" when, in his own social theory, he accuses this same type of pursuit and the results thereof (such as the human sciences) as being tools for the insidious operation of power.

Whereas, however, Foucault had previously traced this will to knowledge in modern power formations only to denounce it, he **now** displays it in a completely different light: as the critical impulse that links his own thought with the beginnings of modernity, an impulse worthy of preservation and in need of renewal. (Habermas, 1989, pg 178)

Habermas summarizes the full extent of Foucault's contradictions as follows:

Equally instructive is the contradiction in which Foucault becomes entangled when he opposes his critique of power, disabled by the relevance of the contemporary moment, to the analytic of the true in such a way that the former is deprived of the normative standards it would have to derive from the latter. (Habermas, 1989, pg 178-179)

One final criticism of Foucault in this regard that might be added is that, even if we were to overlook Foucault's contradiction of his own social theory in taking up the critical impulse of people reinventing themselves, we are still left with a dilemma. Namely, people would be trying to reinvent themselves on the basis of admittedly

false or slanted information generated by Foucault's historical inquiries which consciously distort or omit the historical subjectivity of the actors in society in the first place.

Overall, in the context of modernity a weighing of Foucault's and Habermas's views leads to the conclusion that if accept the suggestion that Foucault's work is not particularly concerned with "truth", the only way we could justify Foucault's ideas is on the basis of postmodernity. That is, we could see people as doing things differently than the they were done in the past for no other reason than that they are free and that they can experiment and reinvent themselves to the extent that they are able to find and implement new social practices and ways of social organization. In addition, such experimentation by people is not guided or driven by any overriding goal such as "truth". However, a closer examination of the notion of postmodernity is first necessary before a serious suggestion of adapting Foucault's ideas to postmodern uses can be made.

### **Richard Rorty**

In his essays "Education Without Dogma" and "Habermas

**and Lyotard on Postmodernity"** Richard Rorty criticizes the ideas of those authors who support the project of modernity and argues for his own view of postmodernity. An examination of these essays allows us to uncover some of the key differences in beliefs between those who support modernity, such as Habermas, and those who support postmodernity. These differences underlie postmodernity's abandonment of metanarratives in favour of emphasizing greater freedom and experimentation. This examination allows us to weigh these two different and conflicting conceptions of our basic beliefs and choose which conception should justify and direct our actions including our actions in relation to the university.

To begin with, in his essay **"Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity"**, Rorty criticizes modernity's metanarrative of "truth" or "rationality" as being a needless concern with trying to find a common ground or unification for all mankind's activities based on a presupposed picture of man. In Rorty's view no such unification is needed. He believes that mankind can pursue its various activities without the need of a metanarrative to guide and coordinate its activities. Instead Rorty just wants to trust in what he calls "civic virtue":

.. no such metanarrative is needed. What is needed is a sort of intellectual analogue of civic virtue - tolerance, irony, and a willingness to let spheres of culture flourish without worrying too much about their "common ground," their unification, the "intrinsic

ideals" they suggest, or what picture of man they "presuppose". (Rorty, 1991, pg 171)

Further, in Rorty's view humankind's activities can and should be divided into "social life" and "intellectual life".

More generally, one should see the intellectual qua intellectual as having a special, idiosyncratic need - a need for the ineffable, the sublime, a need to go beyond the limits, a need to use words which are not part of anybody's language-game, any social institution. But one should not see the intellectual as serving a social purpose when she fulfills this need. Social purposes are served, just as Habermas says, by finding beautiful ways of harmonizing interests, rather than sublime ways of detaching oneself from others' interests. (Rorty, 1991, pg 176)

These two claims made by Rorty highlight two separate and important issues concerning his notion of postmodernity. The first, and more important, of the two passages highlights a most important difference between Habermas' and Rorty's conception of mankind's basic nature. The second passage is a key assumption about the social sphere in Rorty's view of postmodernity and is an assumption which Foucault claims cannot be made in his version of the project of modernity.

First, looking at the second passage, the issue that can be raised is that in Rorty's conception of "social purposes" he does not allow people to collectively investigate "sublime ways of detaching oneself from others' interests", whereas

Foucault would claim that people collectively engaging in such investigations is a key part of the project of modernity.

Rorty characterizes this difference between Foucault and himself as follows:

He [Foucault] was not willing to think of himself as speaking as a member of any "we," much less use "we liberals" as I have been doing. As he said,

"I do not appeal to any "we" - to any of those "we"'s whose consensus, whose values, whose traditions constitute the framework for a thought and define the conditions in which it can be validated. But the problem is, precisely, to decide if it is actually suitable to place oneself within a "we" in order to assert the principles one recognizes and the values one accepts; or if it is not, rather, necessary to make the future formation of a "we" possible, by elaborating the question.

This is, indeed the problem. But I disagree with Foucault about whether in fact it is necessary to form a new "we". My principal disagreement with him is precisely over whether "we liberals" is or is not good enough. (Rorty, 1989, pg 64)

As we have seen, Foucault's ideas such as in his essay "What is Enlightenment?" reflect his desire to deconstruct such notions as "we" to see what role they have played in our determination over history in order to possibly create a new "we" which takes us beyond our old limits.

Rorty backs his claim to go no further than the present "we" with this instruction:

Privatize the Nietzschean-Sartrean-Foucauldian attempt

at authenticity and purity, in order to prevent yourself from slipping into a political attitude which will lead you to think that there is some social goal more important than avoiding cruelty. (Rorty, 1989, pg 65)

The problem with Rorty's position is that as long as people feel the need to pursue autonomy and feel that there is a "social" factor that affects their pursuit they are naturally going to try different ways of dealing with that "social" factor. These people would see their work as possibly reducing cruelty in society and improving society for everyone.

Rorty himself admits in his essay "**Education Without Dogma**" that some people in society are going to

start noticing everything that is paltry and mean and unfree in their surroundings. With luck, the best of them will succeed in altering the conventional wisdom, so that the next generation is socialized in a somewhat different way than they themselves were socialized. (Rorty, 1989, pg 204)

More important to the plausibility of Rorty's notion of postmodernity, in the first passage, Rorty raises the idea of letting mankind's various spheres of activities flourish without worrying about the need for a unifying metanarrative or what picture of man these spheres presuppose. This idea raises a key difference in beliefs between modernity and Rorty's view of postmodernity.

As we saw earlier, in an examination of Habermas's essay

"Knowledge and Human Interests", the project of modernity presupposes a picture of mankind that is at the very root of the project. That is, Habermas claims that beyond the drive towards self-preservation, people have within themselves a natural force that urges them toward utopian fulfillment. Further Habermas claims that we can only move towards utopian fulfillment or the "good life" through rationality or truth in our statements.

In contrast Rorty reveals in his essay "Education Without Dogma" that he believes humans are simply a species of animal that are largely determined by their socialization but which are also able to realize their socialization and change aspects of the society that they were socialized in. Rorty leads us to believe that "growth" is the moral end for mankind and that "growth" occurs when mankind takes control of its evolution by changing its environmental conditions.

This notion of a species of animals gradually taking control of its own evolution by changing its environmental conditions leads Dewey to say, in good Darwinian language, that "growth itself is the moral end". (Rorty, 1989, pg 201)

As well, Rorty claims that what gives people "hope" and is a necessary condition for their "growth" is

"the ability to believe that the future will be unspecifiably different from, and unspecifiably freer than, the past". (Rorty, 1989, pg 201)

Next, in "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity" Rorty goes further to describe how he sees mankind by stating that he would like to characterize the instigating force behind our pursuits, whether it is the pursuit of freedom or the pursuit of building a better bridge or any other pursuit, as simply "theoretical curiosity". Rorty wants to

.. break down the opposition between what Habermas calls "merely technologically exploitable knowledge" and "emancipation," by seeing both as manifestations of what Blumenberg calls "theoretical curiosity."  
(Rorty, 1991, pg 172-173)

Rorty claims that by characterizing the instigating force behind mankind's pursuits as simply various co-existing types of "theoretical curiosity" we can abandon modernity's unifying metanarrative of "truth".

Therefore, in Rorty's estimation mankind is a particular species of animal which first undergoes socialization, then experiences "growth" in the act of taking control of its own evolution by changing its environmental conditions. This progression takes place through the process of its pursuits of various theoretical curiosities with no one particular curiosity overriding the others. Finally, Rorty offers no suggestion of what is behind or causes our "theoretical curiosities".

In contrast to the last point, Habermas claims that there is a natural force within people that urges them toward utopian fulfillment. Rorty claims that the "pursuit of truth" is just a notion that has been passed on through our socialization. He seems to suggest that we can free ourselves from this notion and just see ourselves as simply having various co-existing theoretical curiosities.

This raises problems for Rorty in his notions of "growth" and "hope". In Rorty's notions of "hope" and "growth" he suggests that "growth itself is the moral end" and that the condition of "growth" is "hope". Further he defines "hope" as "the ability to believe that future will be unspecifiably different from, and unspecifiably freer than the past". "Growth" occurs when people take control of their own evolution by changing their environmental conditions. Finally, this occurs in the process of people's pursuits of their various theoretical curiosities.

In contrast, looking at Habermas's conception of mankind, what would appear to give people "hope" and allow them to experience "growth" is the ability to believe that they are attempting to operate on the basis of "truth", that their actions are rational, and that they are continuing to move in a forward direction. In light of Habermas's conception of mankind, Rorty's ideas of "hope" and "growth" seem inadequate.

That is, people do not expect to experience true "growth" by recklessly taking control of their evolution through haphazard pursuits of their theoretical curiosities about various things such as freedom or technology. Before people become engaged in pursuits or decide to carry them any further typically they want know that they are going in the right direction, towards the better. Rorty recognizes this in "Education Without Dogma" where he claims that some students in examining their environments will recognize that

.. despite the progress that the present has made over the past, the good has once again become the enemy of the better. (Rorty, 1989, pg 203)

For Habermas the desire to define the better and move towards the better is reflected in the common interest that people appear to show in "truth". Rorty lacks a conception for defining the "better" or, at best, his conception of haphazard pursuits is inadequate for defining the "better".

At the same time in comparison to Habermas, Rorty's idea of "hope" seems inadequate. Rorty's claim that people's "hope" lies in the belief that "the future will be unspecifiably different and unspecifiably freer" appears incompatible with the idea that people want to believe that their activities are worthwhile and meaningful. For many people the thought of engaging in activities which change their environment to something "unspecifiably different and

unspecifiably freer" does not generate very much "hope". In contrast, what does often give people "hope" is the belief that there is a correct or true direction to move towards and that they are heading in that direction.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the primary focus and research in this paper has revolved around the work of Michel Foucault and the relationship of his work to higher education. The works of Kant, Habermas, and Rorty have been examined to the extent that they help develop and flesh out certain aspects of the work and ideas of Foucault in **"Discipline and Punish"**.

An impressive or attractive aspect of **"Discipline and Punish"** that strikes the reader is the tone of the work. The tone of his work is very intense and passionate and inspires the reader to see himself as a subversive force or source of resistance who is coming up against forces or circumstances which attempt to dominate him.

For example, the following series of quotes from **"Discipline and Punish"** captures the tone of the work and will serve as useful examples to further explore the tone of

the work and some of the other key aspects of Foucault's work.

[pg 16] If the penalty in its most severe forms no longer addresses itself to the body, on what does it lay hold? The answer of the theoreticians - those who, about 1760, opened up a new period that is not yet at an end - is simple, almost obvious. It seems to be contained in the question itself: since it is no longer the body, it must be the soul. The expiation that once rained down upon the body must be replaced by a punishment that acts in depth on the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations. Mably formulated the principle once and for all: 'Punishment, if I may so put it, should strike the soul rather than the body' (Mably, 326).

[pg 91] But this recourse to 'sensibility' does not exactly express a theoretical impossibility. In fact, it bears within it a principle of calculation. The body, the imagination, pain, the heart to be respected are not, in effect, those of the criminal that is to be punished, but those of the men who, having subscribed to the pact have the right of exercising against him the power of assembly. The pain that must exclude any reduction in punishment is that felt by the judges or spectators with all the hardness of heart that it may bring with it, all the ferocity induced by familiarity, or on the contrary, ill-founded feelings of pity and indulgence: 'Thank God for those gentle, sensitive souls on whom those horrible executions exert a kind of torture' (Lacretelle, 131). What has to be arranged and calculated are the return effects of punishment on the punishing authority and the power that it claims to exercise.

[pg 102-103] Let us hear once more what Servan has to say: the ideas of crime and punishment must be strongly linked and 'follow on another without interruption ... When you have thus formed the chain of ideas in the heads of your citizens, you will then be able to pride yourselves on guiding them and being their masters. A stupid despot may constrain his slaves with iron chains; but a true politician binds them even more strongly by the chain of their own ideas; it is at the stable point of reason that he secures the end of the chain; this link is all the stronger in that we do not know of what

it is made and we believe it to be our own work; despair and time eat away the bonds of iron and steel, but they are powerless against the habitual union of ideas, they can only tighten it still more; and on the soft fibres of the brain is founded the unshakable base of the soundest of Empires' (Servan, 35).

[pg 308] And that ultimately what presides over all these mechanisms is not the unitary functioning of an apparatus or an institution, but the necessity of combat and the rules of strategy. That, consequently, the notions of institutions of repression, rejection, exclusion, marginalization, are not adequate to describe, at the very centre of the carceral city, the formation of the insidious leniencies, unavowable petty cruelties, small acts of cunning, calculated methods, techniques, 'sciences' that permit the fabrication of the disciplinary individual. In this central and centralized humanity, the effect and instrument of complex power relations, bodies and forces subjected by multiple mechanisms of 'incarceration', objects for discourses that are in themselves elements for this strategy, we must hear the distant roar of battle.

"Discipline and Punish" incites doubts in the reader about the legitimacy of prisons, but going beyond prisons what it really incites in the reader is pessimism or doubts about our surroundings in general in terms of social institutions and social organization. Perhaps the more common response a reader might have to Foucault's work is that it provides fuel for or confers greater legitimacy upon doubts that people already have about social organization and institutions.

Evidence of such doubts might be seen where people in their conversations about such social institutions such as the legal system, the government, the university, or the

police reveal an apathy towards or rejection of these institutions. For example, often in people's conversations; police or politicians are viewed negatively, justice is strongly associated with money or the ability to pay for it, and university education is seen just as something that you have to "get through", an institutionalized hoop you have jump through in order to be able to move about in society. Such conversations symbolize that people don't trust or believe that these institutions stand for what they are claimed to stand for.

In addition to the apathy or disgust with social organization and institutions people may exhibit in their conversations, people's attitudes towards these institutions are manifested in their behaviour. People "play" these institutions in order to accomplish their own private objectives under the safety of the umbrella these institutions provide. They are often free to openly and publicly proclaim that they are "playing" some social institution because most people are already aware that this or that action is what many people do. It becomes commonly accepted. People not having any inclination to "play" the system may feel the pressure to "play" the system the same way everyone else does. People who are disgusted by "playing" the system may do it themselves because they have to in order to attain their legitimate goals.

An observation of this type of occurrence was submitted to an e-mail discussion group arising out of a higher

education course at OISE. The author, a medical school instructor at University of Toronto, made this observation which was widely accepted and commented upon by other participants of the discussion group:

In many ways, the structure of modern multiversity education seems to conspire against the ideals put forth in our class discussions and the readings. The single biggest barrier I find with my students is that dreaded 5-letter "M" word: "MARKS". Most undergraduate students simply do not believe me if I say I really want to know their opinion, especially if it differs from my own. They have been raised and have succeeded very well all through their secondary school days by simply asking which hoops they should jump through. In fairness to them, they have every right to be skeptical of professors who encourage them to think freely. The currency of undergraduate academic life is the grade point average, and students are as risk averse with it as most adults are with their RRSPs. In a very real way, marks represent their future - their chances of getting good residency positions, or good jobs or post graduate education. In this way, undergraduate education IS so much more like high school than we like to believe. For too many students, learning comes secondary to the marks they get. This situation is NOT their fault - it is complicated by an overall social structure which tells them that marks are the way to secure their future career potential, and that in the past conformity = high marks, so why rock the boat now? In this way, undergraduate education varies so markedly from adult education or even the "higher education" we talk about class. As long as the professor wields power over students in the form of marks, I would suggest that most students will opt for the path of least resistance and simply do what ever is required to get the best marks possible under the circumstances. (Austin, 1997)

In contrast to Foucault's tone of work that inspires people to see themselves taking up positions of resistance to subjugation brought about by the infestation by power of

social organization and institutions, other authors have taken a more optimistic viewpoint of how people can deal with the apathy and pessimism they feel towards social organization and institutions. For example, Dieter Misgeld's essay **"Education and Cultural Invasion: Critical Social Theory, Education as Instruction, and the "Pedagogy of the Oppressed"** highlights how Habermas attempts to deal with these types of issues in a more optimistic way.

Habermas believes that people, through open and unhampered communications, can label certain things as true or truthful and construct their society on those grounds. Participation in creating their own world including the social organization and institutions in their world will help to eliminate the apathy and pessimism people feel towards their social organization and institutions. Habermas associates this form of interaction amongst people with his emancipative interest or the interest in autonomy.

Given Habermas's view he would support the creation of formal frameworks and institutions which would facilitate forms of interaction amongst people in the interests of emancipation or autonomy.

Misgeld suggests that Freire's **"Pedagogy of the Oppressed"** is an example of an educational framework that puts Habermas's ideas into practical action.

Habermas's vision of how apathy and pessimism toward social organization and institutions can be eliminated

highlights the most conspicuous part of Foucault's work in "Discipline and Punish". That is, Foucault does not seem to give the reader any guidance about what actions or road will eradicate their doubts, apathy, or pessimism. For guidance Habermas offers his emancipative interest of humankind with its concepts of truth and autonomy.

Foucault refuses to rely on such concepts because he believes that it would just be playing further into the established regime of power.

It is not Foucault's intention to continue that counterdiscourse which modernity has carried on with itself from its very beginnings; he does not want to refine the language game of modern political theory (with its basic concepts of autonomy and heteronomy, morality and legality, emancipation and repression) and turn it against the pathologies of modernity - he wants to undermine modernity and its language games. His resistance is not to be justified as a mirror image of the current power: "If that were all," responds Foucault to a corresponding question from Bernard-Henry Levy, "there wouldn't be any resistance. Because resistance has to be like power: just as inventive, just as mobile, just as productive as it is. It has to be organized and stabilized like it is; like it, it has to come from below and be strategically shared." (Habermas, 1987, pg 282-283)

When Foucault is asked for alternative principles to unify or direct our resistance in order to have some better direction he gives no clear answers.

For example, in response to questions such as: where can these genealogical historiographies hope to lead to other than playing into the game of power; and what common unifying ground do they rise out of Foucault provides the following

comments:

And, after all, is it not perhaps the case that these fragments of genealogies are no sooner brought to light, that the particular elements of knowledge that one seeks to disinter are no sooner accredited and put into circulation, than they run the risk of re-codification, re-colonisation? In fact, those unitary discourses, which first disqualified and then ignored them when they made their appearance, are, it seems, quite ready now to annex them, to take them back within the fold of their own discourse and to invest them with everything this implies in terms of their effects of knowledge and power. And if we want to protect these only lately liberated fragments are we not in danger of ourselves constructing, with our own hands, that unitary discourse to which we are invited, perhaps to lure us into a trap, by those who say to us: 'All this is fine, but where are you heading? What kind of unity are you after?' The temptation, up to a certain point, is to reply: 'Well, we just go on, in a cumulative fashion: after all, the moment at which we risk colonisation has not yet arrived'. One could even attempt to throw out a challenge: 'Just try to colonize us then!'.

and

At all events, we must proceed just as if we had not alarmed them [adversaries of Foucault's methods] at all, in which case it will be no part of our concern to provide a solid and homogeneous theoretical terrain for all these dispersed genealogies, nor to descend upon them from on high with some kind of halo of theory that would unite them. (Foucault, 1980, pg 86-87)

If we look to Foucault's interviews and other writings we find some guidance but overall his vision of ideal existence, "the good life" to use Habermas's term, seems a mystery even to Foucault himself.

The center, then, seems still to be found in Marx's phrase: man produces man. It's all in how you look at it. For me, what must be produced is not man identical

to himself, exactly as nature would have designed him or according to his essence; on the contrary, we must produce something that doesn't exist and about which we cannot know how and what it will be.

Secondly, let's think about the verb "to produce."

I don't agree that this production of man by man occurs in the same way, let's say, as that of the value of riches, or of an object of use, of the economic type. It's a question rather of the destruction of what we are, of the creation of something entirely different, of a total innovation. (Foucault, 1991, pg 121-122)

Foucault's major concern seems mainly to not to get pulled down by the force of the dynamic that he calls "power". To that end the major goal of his investigations would be to expose the operation of power in different areas and how it takes hold of people in order that we can break free. Where the cumulative gains in freedom will lead to Foucault does not predict, but he tells us that it will allow us to create ourselves.

The initial issue raised at the start of this paper was the assertion that people's actions are to some extent determined by their beliefs. To this original assertion it might be added that our beliefs are essentially another way of saying "the way we make sense of or think of the world we live in". While a close examination and criticism of Foucault's work has been the focus of this paper, on a more general level each of the authors mentioned in this paper have something useful to contribute to a discussion about

what people seek to make sense of the world they live in.

For example, on a general level, communication amongst people is obviously important in order for them to be able to exchange their ideas in making sense of world. Here, Habermas's ideas about free and open communication come into play. At the same time Rorty emphasizes that there is always a private sphere for individuals which people do not want to bring out into communications with other people because they don't believe that the public sphere of communication with others holds the solution to all their problems. Finally, to some extent Foucault's work points out the problem of trying to find solutions through public discourse.

For example, if we take the discipline of criminology. Most people would say that they think criminology is a good and necessary thing because the information and knowledge it publicly provides contributes to people's sense of legitimacy of the penal system just by virtue of the fact that there is a public conversation in the area of punishment for crime taking place and reasonable people like themselves are involved, and they themselves could get involved if they wanted to. This lends legitimacy to Habermas's idea of communicative reason.

At the same time, Foucault's ideas reveal a potential and dangerous obverse side to collective undertakings to understand and order society. Foucault's investigations demonstrate how what he calls "power" penetrates into these undertakings and the operation of the institutions generated

by them. The result can be disciplines and institutions that ignore and violate the dignity of the people they are meant to be useful to. Rather than contributing to people's understanding of the world and their sense of legitimacy of human actions, disciplines such as criminology can end up eradicating the legitimate need of people to understand and be meaningfully involved in their world. When this happens institutions and academic disciplines such as criminology lose legitimacy in the eyes of people.

Making an unequivocal choice between Habermas's and Foucault's theories is a task that would require means beyond the work of this paper and is a task that may not be solved adequately in any event. On the basis of this paper the proper conclusion would be that both Habermas's and Foucault's theories provide valuable insights into social organization and institutions. Habermas gives us useful concepts which serve as effective tools for social organization and action, while Foucault's theory gives us a valuable insight into how the manoeuvring and operation of "power" undermines peoples efforts towards legitimate social order and institutions. Finally, the field of higher education appears to be an area in which Habermas's and Foucault's theoretical and historical perspectives allow us to understand both possibilities and problems in the development of institutions.

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