

Marjan Ivković

**Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade
The Two Dimensions of Foucauldian Critique and Engagement**

Habermasian critique of Foucault revolves around the argument of 'cryptonormativity', and in particular around the notion of Foucault's 'normative confusions' (Nancy Fraser), i.e. the idea that the intrinsically normative implications of Foucault's analysis cannot be reconciled with Foucault's persistent anti-normativism. As Habermas argues, Foucault is caught up in a contradiction between his explicit anti-normativism and the 'cryptonormativity' of his approach, which makes it impossible to fully translate Foucauldian societal diagnosis into social critique. I will argue that the critical implications of Foucault's 'genealogical' analysis cannot be exhausted by the Habermasian notions of 'cryptonormativity' and 'normative confusions'. Only one dimension of Foucauldian genealogy, I argue, can be understood through the notion of a classical critique of ideology, the 'debunking' of the normative order of contemporary Western societies through its juxtaposition with the empirical reality of the disciplinary power/knowledge dispositif. As it diagnoses modernity's 'unrealized promise' of emancipation and at the same time refuses to endorse the promise of emancipation itself (the 'normative legacy' of modernity), this dimension of Foucauldian does exhibit a 'productive contradiction', to use Habermas' term. However, I argue that Foucauldian juxtaposition of the disciplinary reality and the normative self-representation of contemporary capitalism can also be interpreted in a 'meta-normative' sense: it points toward the insurmountable 'gap' between the symbolic order of the disciplinary society and the totality of its mechanisms of subject-formation (which include non-symbolic aspects). I suggest we understand this 'gap' along the lines of Luc Boltanski's distinction between the 'world' (the totality of the disciplinary power/knowledge dispositif) and the 'instituted reality' (the symbolic order of the disciplinary society), and argue that a second, independent dimension of Foucauldian critique and engagement consists in the preservation of the 'hermeneutic contradiction' between the former and the latter as the condition of the possibility of individual and collective self-transformation.