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“The idea of truth is central to Theodor Adorno’s philosophy,” begins Lambert Zuidervaart in his new book, *Adorno, Heidegger, and the Politics of Truth*, but nowhere “does Adorno spell out in detail how he understands the idea of truth” (p. 1). This is the central task Zuidervaart sets for himself: finding and reconstructing Adorno’s conception of truth that Adorno himself never explicitly provided. To find and understand Adorno’s conception of truth, the author employs a reading methodology he describes as a “systematic reconstruction for the sake of critical retrieval” (p. 2). This methodology entails a close reading of Adorno’s more mature and relevant texts, which in the case of this book consists of Adorno’s *Negative Dialectics* (1966) and *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), and mining them for relevant passages that provide insights into Adorno’s theory of truth. The critical retrieval consists of juxtaposing that reconstruction of Adorno’s conception of truth with a competing philosopher’s conception of truth to further understand Adorno’s through comparison—this is the role Martin Heidegger plays in this book. This critical retrieval composes the other half of Zuidervaart’s project, which is to reconstruct Adorno’s concept of the truth to reveal issues and viable solutions to the present, which the author sees as a post-truth society.

The book has seven chapters and can be divided into two parts. The first four chapters reconstruct Adorno’s theory of truth, and the last three explain its modern importance to philosophy. Zuidervaart argues that Adorno’s philosophy of truth is also his philosophy of history as Adorno viewed truth as dynamic constellations of social relations that are socio-historically determined. In other words, truth exists for Adorno not as an object in itself but as the culmination of social relations that are historically constituted. This is why in the three central polarities the author finds in Adorno’s conception of truth—the polarity of subject/object, the polarity of concept/thing, and the
polarity of history/transcendence—it is the latter that is the most crucial to Adorno's conception of truth. Moreover, Adorno made this quite clear in his critique of Enlightenment thought, modern rationality, and capitalism in his and Max Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment (1944) that laid the groundwork for the inversion of the Hegelian positivistic dialectic into Adorno's negative dialectic, which critiqued historical progressiveness. Whereas Hegel saw the Absolute unfold in history toward actualizing the liberal ideal, Adorno saw Auschwitz and domination in the dialectic of enlightenment, modernity, and liberalism. Nevertheless, while Adorno's philosophy of history has been characterized as negative and minimalist by other Adorno scholars, Zuidervaat's goal is to argue against that position and uncover the kernel of positive hope for a macro world without the suffering that undergirded Adorno's truth and philosophy of history.

Chapter 2 examines Adorno's polarity of history/transcendence through a critical reading of Adorno's “Meditations on Metaphysics” in Negative Dialectics. The author argues that Adorno's historically contingent concept of truth is connected to Adorno's theory of transcendence, which he arrived at by secularizing Immanuel Kant's theory of human agency. While critical of positive historical teleology, Adorno still viewed the emergence of a true society, in the Marxian historical dialectic sense of overcoming capitalism, as possible. This is why Adorno's aphoristic statement “The ray of light that reveals the whole to be untrue ... is none other than utopia ... which is still to be revealed,” is central to Zuidervaart's account of Adorno's politics of truth (p. 17).

Chapters 3 and 4 examine Adorno's truth polarities of subject/object and concept/thing, respectively, and he puts Adorno in dialogue with the philosophies of Edmund Husserl and Heidegger. Chapter 3 focuses on Adorno's polarity of the subject/object dialectic and its relationship to truth, which the author attempts to reconstruct by highlighting Adorno's critiques of Husserl's phenomenology and Heidegger's ontological understanding of the subject/object. Chapter 4 provides a lucid discussion of Adorno's engagement with Heidegger over the polarity of concept/thing in truth. Adorno critiqued both philosophers but ultimately shared Heidegger's critiques of Husserl and thus both Adorno and Heidegger shared a similar view of truth. Zuidervaart argues Adorno and Heidegger agreed that truth is temporal and contingent on history. The core of their disagreement was in how to interpret truth's temporality. Heidegger may have viewed truth as temporal, but he also viewed it as a state of being that had been unauthenticated by a corrupting past. Adorno disagreed and viewed truth as a constant subject of becoming constructed by historically specific social relations, where truth can be produced in the future through a critical augmentation of present material conditions through human agency.

Chapters 5 through 7 compare Adorno's dynamic constellation of truth to contemporary politics of truth, first by squaring Adorno's truth with power and then with aesthetics. Chapter 5 compares and contrasts Adorno's theory of history, truth, and power with Michel Foucault's, and the chapter suggests constructive critiques of both that could benefit modern feminist critical theory. Both Adorno and Foucault viewed truth and power as sociohistorical relations that form via processes of history, and both were critics of modernity and its normativity. Foucault, however, stressed historical discontinuity and specificity in his historical analysis of power augmentation from the medieval episteme to the modern episteme. Foucault stressed that power was an immanent and fluid social relationship, not a repressive or contractual one, where historically specific truth regimes like the disciplinary modern episteme emerged from producing new historical discourses of knowledge specific to that epoch's material conditions. This synopsis of Foucault is arrived at by Zuidervaart by engaging with Foucault's late-career lectures on biopolitics and gene-
alogies of power. Adorno, on the other hand, while sharing Foucault's aversion to the metanarrative of the progressive Enlightenment, maintained an adherence to a socioeconomic transcendence of history that could overcome what Adorno saw as the historical continuity of domination. This domination clouds the truth of utopia for Adorno. The author situates Foucault as someone who believed in a historically based truth that is produced by immanent changes within social formations, a true subject without an object, while seeing Adorno as a philosopher who viewed truth as a historical dialectic of becoming toward a true state of sociality, a true state of being free from domination and suffering.

This chapter provides an excellent comparison of the two philosophers' conceptions of history and truth. However, the author mischaracterizes Foucault's position in some instances, which a stronger engagement with the primary literature could have avoided. For instance, Foucault does not simply relegate the modern truth regime to "scientific truth" alone, nor does Foucault restrict "truth to science." Foucauldian discourse formations, however, encompass all social domains that help reinforce historically specific forms of truth. Changes in art, for example, began Foucault's archaeological method in *The Order of Things* (1966), which also looked at how political economists and philosophers ushered in modernist ways of knowing.[1] Foucault's genealogical method in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) analyzed these nondiscursive institutions, which included the regimentation of the body in the factory, the barracks, and the prison, which took place not just in the discourses of science.[2] Science only made up one of the numerous discourses Foucault analyzed and thus anti-science sentiments are not outside modernity's discourse, as Zuidervaart suggests (p. 91). Nevertheless, this is only a minor point that does not distract from the overall arguments regarding the similarities and differences between Adorno and Foucault on the subject of history, power, and truth.

Zuidervaart ends his critical retrieval of Adorno's conception of truth by reconstructing Adorno's aesthetic theory of truth in his *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), and with a concluding chapter that provides the author's summation and a constructive critique of Adorno's theory of truth. With an economical 140 pages, a short appendix explaining Adorno's life and thought, and a robust bibliography, this book is both an accessible introduction to Theodor Adorno and his philosophy of truth and an important contribution to the philosophical scholarship that links Adorno's truth to Heidegger's and Foucault's, making it of interest to current scholars of each. But it is also a book with its own politics of truth, one derived from Adorno, that humanity has the power and agency to produce a utopia where the false has become the true.

Notes

