Deborah Cook, *Adorno, Foucault and the Critique of the West* (New York: Verso, 2018)[1]

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German and French traditions of critical theory are often seen as two opposing camps. The opposition is variously cashed out as that between divergent philosophical inheritances, forms of argumentation, social analyses, or normative commitments. While rapprochements are sometimes attempted—in reference, for example, to a common critique of power—the disagreements have remained more prominent than the agreements. In her study of Adorno and Foucault, Deborah Cook does not follow this common approach. Cook sets herself a twofold task: to demonstrate, firstly, that the social analyses of Adorno and Foucault are "complementary in important respects" (ix); and, secondly, that these analyses provide valuable resources for critique and resistance today. I shall consider each of these in turn, before articulating two systematic questions left unanswered by the book.

Cook foregrounds the social theory of Adorno and Foucault, using this approach to reassess the place of Marx in each philosopher's thought. Accordingly, although she acknowledges that Adorno was not an orthodox Marxist and that he strove to make the critique of political economy adequate to late capitalism, Cook nevertheless places him "squarely within a Marxist paradigm" (31). Adorno's Marxism, according to Cook, is perhaps seen most clearly in his claim that exchange relations provide the dominant logic of social life: all social phenomena and spheres of experience must ultimately assume the form of the abstract exchangeability of commodities (40–2). This Marxism is also highlighted when Cook distinguishes Adorno's views from those of Friedrich Pollock, and convincingly argues, against the typical analysis, that Adorno does not fully accept the latter's state capitalism thesis (33). Contra Pollock, Adorno believed that the political does not subsume the economic; domination maintains an irreducibly economic form (34).

Foucault, on the other hand, as the book makes clear, holds that domination involves a modality of power that is not irreducibly economic (37, 49). Yet, Cook challenges the common view that Foucault's social analysis is incompatible with a Marxist framework (38). Most generally, she argues that Foucault's characterization of power relations as ubiquitous does not license the inference

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that specifically economic relations are not also present in society (35–7). The "normalizing" and regulative modalities of power—evident in disciplinary institutions and biopolitics—should themselves be seen as imbricated with, and necessary to, the development of modern capitalism (42). Cook also marshals extensive textual evidence to defend the claim that Foucault saw himself as often drawing from and building on Marx, rather than refuting him (38). Ultimately, Cook seeks a middle ground between Foucault and Adorno, arguing that "power may not *always* be subordinate to the economy, but it will *often* be" (59). Cook reaffirms that critical theory requires a critique of capitalism; yet she also cautions against reducing the former to the latter (60).

Adorno's and Foucault's views on individuation follow, loosely, from their analyses of capitalism and power. If they both adopt theses stipulating the social construction of individuals, Adorno's account highlights the primacy of exchange relations in the reification of psychic life, while Foucault's emphasizes the effects of discipline and biopower in processes of normalization (61). That social construction imposes a specific *harm* is seen in each thinker's appropriation—nuanced and qualified, but still an appropriation—of Freud (61–70). This is not surprising in Adorno's case. The latter argued, as Cook shows, that instrumental rationality, in its quest to secure the domination of nature, ends by dominating *inner* nature, which includes non-instrumental rational capacities and instincts (64–5). Cook acknowledges that she is in controversial territory when she claims, on the other hand, that Foucault also adopted a qualified version of Freud's "so-called 'repressive hypothesis'" (67). However, she presents a strong case for it, arguing that the productive nature of power should not be separated from its corresponding, negative dimension-(67). The production of Foucauldian individuals does not occur as on a blank slate but rather requires the internalized repression of the forms of behavior rendered abnormal by the gaze of power (68–9, 73).

Such overlapping social analyses lead Cook to endorse Foucault's own acknowledgement of the "striking parallels" between his account of disciplinary society and Adorno's notion of an "administered world" (1). Yet, if there is thus an analytical convergence, so there is a normative convergence. This comes out most clearly in how Cook places both philosophers in the same tradition of Kantian critique—chapter 5 is titled, plainly, "Critique" (123–51). She argues that the Kantian inheritance extends beyond the interest in a search for the conditions of possibility of (self-)knowledge, though it is the latter that commentators often foreground when discussing Foucault's debt to Kant (4). Cook further proposes that Adorno and Foucault share "strong normative commitments to autonomy" (x). Critique is consequently indexed to these commitments; it aims to secure those psychological and political conditions necessary for the achievement of individual and

collective autonomy. This is chiefly pursued by "making visible the social, political and economic forces that have shaped all individuals" (140). Self-reflective awareness of these forces opens the possibility of more autonomous modes of reasoning and self-formation (ibid.).

Of course, for both Adorno and Foucault, individual practices of critique are by themselves insufficient for the achievement of true autonomy, whether on an individual or societal level; such autonomy remains precluded by broader structures of integration and domination that only collective political practice can transform (141–2). However, Adorno and Foucault believe that the possibility of such transformation depends, at least minimally, on the forms of mature, reflective awareness that are fostered by their critical projects (140, 144). Moreover, Cook argues that these projects also provide significant *analytical* resources for social transformation (ibid.). With this argument, Cook establishes an important contribution to contemporary critical theory. In the overlapping critiques of capitalism and power, she locates a diagnosis of the "racist and authoritarian tendencies in the West," which remain with us today (ix). This book argues for the relevance of a formal concept of critique in Adorno and Foucault, but it also implicitly advances a bolder argument: that the social theories of Adorno and Foucault are in many respects *correct*. These theories, along with Cook's nuanced qualifications, provide analytical tools for a more lucid understanding of society today (159). This book thus represents not only a careful synthesis of two thinkers and two traditions often considered opposed but also makes a convincing case for the continuing relevance of Adorno and Foucault to contemporary critical theory.

I shall now conclude by canvassing two questions attendant upon the book's relative neglect of each philosopher's systematic commitments I do not consider this neglect a shortcoming but rather a justifiable choice to foreground social theory. The first question concerns Adorno's account of autonomy. The book reconstructs this account on the model of Kantian maturity (123). Thus, one may ask: does the reconstruction remain incomplete until Adorno's specifically Hegelian or dialectical commitments are likewise explored? For example, absent from the book is a detailed discussion of the self's dependence on the other. Yet, such a discussion seems necessary given that Adornian autonomy involves not just self-legislation but also the self-reflective acknowledgement of this dependence. It is thus unthinkable without a kind of ethical responsiveness to the object. The book's relative prioritization of Kant over Hegel certainly brings striking convergences between Adorno and Foucault into view (see 123–51). However, a discussion of Adornian autonomy—and thus, of the normative content of Adorno's thought—seems to require reference to Hegelian commitments perhaps not found in Foucault.

The second question asks whether the "complementarity" of Adorno's and Foucault's social analyses might not be challenged by a consideration of the metaphilosophical divergences between their methods. Adorno's critique of exchange is a critique of the subordination of particular to *universal* (47–8). On the other hand, Foucault's genealogical method famously eschews an analysis of universals, in favor of empirical studies of *singular* knowledge-power configurations. What remains unclear from Cook's analysis is the ultimate metaphilosophical compatibility of these divergent approaches. To avoid a charge of eclecticism, an explicit exposition of this compatibility seems to be required. Without such an exposition, one might legitimately request an account of why such a philosophical pluralism is defensible on normative-critical grounds.

This book readily admits—and often underscores—the numerous divergences between Adorno and Foucault (see, e.g., ix–x). Thus, these questions do not undermine Cook's broader exegetical aim of establishing a series of convergences between two thinkers and traditions without collapsing one into the other. It is in establishing such convergences that this book achieves its further analytical and practical aim: to "argue that critical theory continues to offer important resources for critique and contestation during this turbulent period in our history" (ix). By carefully explicating and synthesizing those resources found in Adorno and Foucault, this book makes a significant contribution to the transformative project inscribed in critical theory since its inception.