

Abstract

In this text, the relation of critical theory and religion is analysed, comparing Jürgen Habermas's late philosophy with the philosophy of his predecessor Theodor W. Adorno. The question I ask is: What changes has the relation of critical theory and religion undergone in the transition from Adorno's thinking to that of his successor? As I try to answer this question, I develop a specific understanding of Adorno's philosophy as a "contemplative eschatology", and perform an in-depth study of how, why, and with what consequences it has changed to a frame oriented towards reaching understanding. In so doing, I point out the ambivalence which the turn towards understanding breeds, and suggest the religious motives discovered in Adorno's work deserve further attention.