

Secularism and Critique

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Abstract

In the lively debate over the question, “Is Critique Secular?” very fundamental questions have been raised about critique itself, which go beyond the issue of its secularist presuppositions. In this paper, I argue that overcoming the secularist presuppositions of critique requires releasing ourselves from a picture of critique that continues to hold us captive. In his contribution to the “Is Critique Secular?” debate, Talal Asad exposes both the limitations and dangers of this picture of critique, but nonetheless remains in its grip. Looking closely at Asad’s argument, and pointing out its affinities with a number of contemporary “critiques of critique” I will show how we might release ourselves from this picture of critique, and practice critique differently, without secularist (and Western) presuppositions.