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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Ali Shariati: Re-imagining the *Critique* in Critical Theory

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Abstract: In this article, the author is trying to problematize the concept of critique in Critical Theory by arguing that we need to go beyond the traditional parameters of the Critical Theory Canon as defined by Euro-Atlantic historiographers and critical social theorists. But in order to achieve this goal the author has attempted to demonstrate alternative approaches in conceptualizing complexities of social reality by employing the concept of Istehmar as defined by Ali Shariati. What does Istehmar mean? How does Shariati articulate this concept in sociological fashion? How is this concept different than classical concepts such as anomie, alienation and disenchantment?

Keywords: Istehmar, Ali Shariati, Mazhab, Religion, Colonialism, Critical Theory.

Introduction

When we speak of Ali Shariati we refer to the texts which are left behind and composed by the Foundation of Ali Shariati which is entitled as *Collected Works*. These 36 volumes are the sources upon which we reformulate our analyses as far as Shariati is concerned. This is to argue that we do not re-imagine his intellectual legacy based on the assumptions

which have been made or devised *pro* or *con* in secondary literatures during these past fifty years. On the contrary, we work through his original works in Persian without relying on existing interpretations which are often at odds with Shariati's own ideas and perspectives. Having said this now we need to pose a question about the perspective Ali Shariati drew before us. To be blunt we believe that the social theoretical aspects of Ali Shariati have been neglected for more than five decades in academic circles around the globe. Most of academic discourses either focus on political significance of his ideas or interpret him within the frame of the 1979 Revolution in Iran in terms of *The Teacher of the Revolution*. Allow me to allude to one of these phony constructions of Ali Shariati in academic circles represented by Mansoor Moaddel and Stuart A. Karabenick. Mansoor Moaddel from University of Wisconsin-Madison and Stuart A. Karabenick from University of Michigan published a very interesting book in 2013 entitled *Religious Fundamentalism in the Middle East: A cross-national, inter-faith and inter-ethnic analysis* where in the first chapter they engage with Ali Shariati. They write,

"... Ali Shariati (1933-1977), a lay religious activist who rejected both liberalism and Marxism as Western fallacies. ... Shariati, a devote shi'i, more clearly addresses broader spiritual issues, the failure of other ideologies in empowering humans, and hence the significance of this Islamic alternative. Much of ... Shariati's statements were factually incorrect, permeated with the spirit of intolerance, and thus outright irresponsible" (Moaddel & Karabenick, 2013. 67).

Here we see a classically mis-represented example of Shariati's intellectual oeuvre by Moaddel and Karabenick. Why do we think this is a phony construction of Ali Shariati? First of all, the very concept of *Western Fallacy* does not exist in Ali Shariati's entire works but this is excerpted from the title of a translation by R. Campbell, i.e. *Marxism and Other Western Fallacies: An Islamic Critique*. This is the title of a book by Hamid Algar who is a British scholar in Persian Studies at the Faculty of Near Eastern Studies at University of California, Berkeley. He chose during the heated climate of the revolutionary moments few lectures of Ali Shariati after the Iranian

Revolution in 1979 and Campbell translated them into English and the title has nothing to do with Ali Shariati as he never considered Liberalism or Marxism as fallacies. (Miri, 2020. 113-121) On the contrary, he engages with Liberalism, Marxism, Existentialism and other western and eastern intellectual streams and there is no indication in the Collected Works of Ali Shariati where these intellectual paradigms are conceptualized as *Western Fallacies*. But Moaddel does not even bother to go beyond the journalistic characterizations of Ali Shariati and repeats unscholarly labels in his treatments of a world-class social theorist by calling him a *religious activist* or *devote shi'i* as though he was nothing but a fool who "provided an effective cover for the much more extremist and intolerant religious views espoused" (Moaddel, 2013. 67) by religious fundamentalists who fought against Shah of Iran. This is a prime example of what could be termed as *phony academic interpretation* of Ali Shariati which should be vehemently critiqued and discredited as these interpretative strategies seem to lack any interpretative understanding of *texts*. Secondly one could refer to Ali Shariati and the

deconstructive approach he undertook vis-à-vis concepts such as *Islam*, *Shiism*, *Religion* and *Ideology* which are completely absent in Moaddel's engagements in his *Religious Fundamentalism in the Middle East*. The problem is not confined to regional studies discourses. On the contrary, we do not have theoretical engagements on his sociological and social theoretical concepts by mainstream academics at sociological departments in the world either. For instance, the work of Anthony Giddens on *Introduction to Sociology* does not have even a footnote on Ali Shariati and his multiple sociological concepts and intellectual contributions. Students of social theory and sociology are led to believe that outside the *sociological canon* there is no sociology and whoever talks about social theory or sociological concepts beyond the *academic disciplinary pantheon* is, at best, a heretic or, at worst, a crazed individual who does not understand the simplest alphabet of *science*. Of course, Shariati was very instrumental in the emergence of the revolutionary discourse in Iran but his *magnum opus* cannot be limited to this very significant dimension alone. On the contrary,

the revolutionary dimension in Shariati's work should not be interpreted as synonymous to the event of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 but this event could be treated as one of the possibilities of a *revolutionary intellectual paradigm*. This is to argue that we should not treat ideas in a linear fashion as though A begets B and later on C. On the contrary, the human reality is more complex than this linear understanding of ideas and events. It seems most of scholars who have focused on Ali Shariati have neglected this *methodological caution* by constructing a linear approach between Ali Shariati and the events of the Revolution in 1979. This means that we need to focus on Ali Shariati's social theory on its own grounds rather than reading it retrospectively (See for instance: Gheissari, 1998; Boroujerdi, 1996 and Abrahamian, 1989) in relation to the 1979 Revolution in Iran.

In other words, the prime question should be directed at the basic elements of his social theory rather than reconstructing Ali Shariati as the *Teacher of the Revolution*. We should ask new question and create fresh approaches in reading his *magnum opus*. What is his contribution to global critical social theory?

Could we reconsider Ali Shariati as a critical social theorist? What does it mean *critical* in relation to the Shariatian frame of theoretical reference? How should we define the *Critique* in the context of *Critical Theory*? Could we imagine alternative trajectories apart from the Euro-Atlantic parameters of the *Received Tradition*?

Critical Theory Revisited

If we agree that *Critical Theory* refers to a set of theoretical positions that focuses on reflective appraisal and critique of society, history, religion and culture in order to disclose and challenge power structures then Ali Shariati should be taken seriously as one of the most ardent critical theorists outside the Euro-Atlantic context of social theory. Of course, I am aware that the concept of critical theory is historically within sociology and social theory as well as social philosophy discourses construed in a fashion that one should believe that *critical theory* was established as a school of thought principally by the Frankfurt School theorists such as Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Erich Fromm, Herbert Marcuse and Max

Horkheimer. But this is not the whole story of *critical theory* seen through an intercivilizational and a global perspective. Why do I argue in this mode of analysis? If we look at any textbook on history of social theory today we can easily see that the Frankfurt School is considered as the principal *school* whence all that we affiliate today with the concept of *Critical Theory* started. Then how could one deny such self-evident facts? I do not deny these historical facts but what I am trying to argue is that these lines of narratives are not complete and do not consider the wider contexts of human intellectual traditions as far as the fundamental concern of critique is concerned and that is what Max Horkheimer conceptualized as the key core of critical theory. Horkheimer described a theory as *critical* insofar as it seeks "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them." (Horkheimer, 1982. 244) In other words, a theory is *critical* insofar as it problematizes the question of circumstances which lead to human enslavement. If this is the *core definition* of *critique* in critical social theory then we should expand beyond the Euro-Atlantic borders of critical theory as

existential parameters of *human condition* are not totally definable through *local categories* of Euro-Atlantic traditions. This is to argue that we need a more intercivilizational approach in constructing enslaving human conditions on the basis of *critical theory* in terms of *critique* rather than confining ourselves within the parameters of classical Frankfurt School and academic historiographers who narrate this line of story over and over without stepping outside the *eurocentric imagined container*. If we agree that critical theory could be defined as Max Horkheimer did in his classical essay *Traditional and Critical Theory*, as a social theory oriented toward critiquing and transforming society as a whole, in contrast to traditional/positivist theory oriented merely toward understanding or explaining it then Ali Shariati's type of social theory could be categorized as a *critical theory*. Because the core concepts of his social theory is

1. directed at the totality of society in its historical specificity (i.e. how it came to be configured at a particular point in time)
2. an advanced understanding of society by integrating all the major human

sciences, social sciences, and religious sciences as well as philosophy.

In *The Method of Knowing Islam* Shariati argues that

"... for knowing about Islam, like any other religion ... movement or personality, one should learn about its milieu and epoch ..."
(2014. CW: 28; 5).

Then he goes on and explains by stating that

"... today it is not the era when we can believe in what we do not have knowledge about; in particular those who are educated, their duty as far as having a learned opinion about their beliefs are truly crucial ... and this is not solely an Islamic responsibility but an intellectual and human duty too" (2014. CW: 28; 55).

Here one may read these lines in a simplistic fashion and argue that these are not very critical statements but self-evident facts which should be upheld in any learned community. But to read Shariati in this fashion is to miss what Max Horkheimer alluded to half a century ago and that is the true component of a critical theory which is related to questioning *circumstances* which lead to human

enslavement. Horkheimer described a theory as *critical* insofar as it seeks to emancipate humanity from the conditions that enchain them. Now one may ask about the relation between Horkheimer's critique and Shariati's abovementioned quotes. In order to understand the link one should realize that Shariati was active as a public intellectual during 60s and 70s in the twentieth century in Iran where religion played a hegemonic role in the constitution of self and society and even the Communists conceptualized their slogans in *religious parlance*. For instance, Khosrow Golsorkhi (1944-1974) was a Marxist-Leninist from Gilan province who at the military court of Shah where he was sentenced to death referred to Imam Hussein as his role model who stood up against the second caliph of the Umayyad Caliphate Yazid ibn Mu'awiya (646-683). In other words, in a society where religion was the pivotal factor in society but at the same time, it has turned into an enslaving factor Shariati speaks of *knowing* religion rather than *emulating* precepts concocted by the clerical establishment. This is a paradigm shift from a religion which is formulated as a sacred taboo into a religion where each one of

us could read and reflect upon and take a stand about its epistemological significance or insignificance. If one takes a cursory look at the titles of books during the same period by religious scholars most of them talk about religion as a *belief* but Shariati speaks of *methodology* and how to obtain *knowledge* about religions. This is to argue that he takes religion as a form of epistemic problem and thinks about it and also shares his reflections on religion as an existential phenomenon. In *The Method of Knowing Islam* he has a chapter on *Pre-Islamic Context of Arabs* where he tries to draw a wide picture of how the worldview of Arabs is indebted to the wider Semitic and even ancient Babylonian as well as Sumerian civilizations as far as religions and sorcery are concerned. For instance, Shariati refers to beliefs among Arabs in the pre-Islamic era where they

"... believed that whenever someone is born a jinn is born at the same time with human baby as a familiar spirit ... and human beings obtain all their talents and inspirations through this spirit. If someone is a poet his familiar spirit is a poet and inspires him and if he is a seer then his jinn brings news from unseen or future. In

Surah Al-Jinn the verse number eight where it says 'And we have sought [to reach] the heaven but found it filled with powerful guards and burning flames' ... here it is clear that Koran is referring to these Babylonian belief systems and ideas where they believed that familiar spirits or jinns were trying to infiltrate to the divine and angelic realms in order to bring news for their kindred human twins ..." (2014. CW: 28; 55).

Here Shariati gives a sociological explanation of ideas which are found in Koran in a society where the majority believed that the sacred text is endowed upon humanity from the *heaven* without realizing that the material conditions of a culture needs to be inquired upon genealogically. Although what he does genealogically predates the Foucauldian approach in the French social theory discourses but there is no doubt that Shariati's insistence on cognition as a form of disenchanting religion sets the minds free to think for oneself rather than emulate institutionalized authorities as far as religious knowledge is concerned. Here one can discern the liberative effects of Ali Shariati's social

theory which target circumstances which led to the enslavement of human beings in a particular social context at a specific historical condition. The importance of Ali Shariati's critique is that it has all the conceptual paraphernalia in becoming an intellectual tool to inquire about institutions which may enchain intuitions of human spirits.

Now going back to the two core elements of critical theory one can restate that these two fundamental elements along with *ambivalence* about the decisive basis or foundation of social domination are distinguishing characteristics of *critical theory* which are shared by Ali Shariati and classics of the critical theory *a la* Horkheimer and Adorno.

Istehmar as a Cerberus Theory of Power

In my understanding Shariati seems to have addressed three major problems of 1) Colonialism; 2) Despotism/Dictatorship/Authoritarianism and 3) Imperialism. Surely we can discuss various interpretations of each of these concepts in reference to Shariati's intellectual legacy. Put it differently; one could ask about and compare the similarities and differences

between the Shariatian approach to hegemony and, for instance, Gramsci's understanding of hegemony (Gramsci, 1971) or Shariati's perspective on authoritarianism and the Frommesque approach on this concept but what I am interested in here is not these issues. On the contrary, I am interested in how Ali Shariati weaved these already existing sociological concepts into a novel mode of understanding social reality in terms of *emancipation* and *repression*. This is to argue that Shariati realized that colonialism as a historical force could not be possible if something prior to the rise of this repressive historical force has not occurred in us. Shariati speaks of the concept of *Istehmar* but the question is how to translate this term into English from Persian. The root form of this term is *Hemar* in Arabic which refers to *Equus Africanus Asinus* or simply a *Donkey*. However the term *Istehmar* does not refer to this domesticated animal characterized by long ears, a lean, straight-backed build, lack of true withers, a coarse mane and tail, and a reputation for considerable toughness and endurance. On the contrary, the concept of *Istehmar* is a conceptual invention by Shariati

which refers to a state of being whereby you (both as an individual and as a society) may get deprived of two fundamental qualities; 1) human self-consciousness and 2) social self-consciousness. (Shariati, 2013; CW: 20. 214) In Shariati's view,

... Istehmar is equivalent to mental deviation of human being; deviation of human consciousness and awareness; deviation of human orientation –be it individual or the whole society- from human self-consciousness and social self-consciousness. Any factor which divert these two forms of awareness ... or divert the attention of an individual, a generation or a society from these two types of self-consciousness ... that factor is agent of Istehmar ... even the most sacred of all factors ... (CW: 20. 215).

Now that we know what *Istehmar* as a concept refers to then it may be easier to find an English equivalent to it. The equivalent of this term in English is *Stupefaction* which refers to the *state of being stupefied*, i.e. falling into oblivion (the state of being unaware or unconscious of what is happening around one); falling into unconsciousness (the state of being

unconscious); and insensibility (lack of awareness or concern; indifference). In other words, a stupefied individual or group/society/nation has all the three characteristics of being oblivion, being unconscious, and being insensible and unable to analyze what is happening around him/her or even his/her society. Now that we know how *Istehmar* is conceptualized then it could be easier to reconnect it to the threefold aforementioned problematique of Colonialism-cum-Despotism-cum-Imperialism.

To put it differently, Shariati seems to argue that the emergence of stupefaction is a phenomenon which predates 1) Colonialism, 2) Despotism/Dictatorship/Authoritarianism and 3) Imperialism. What does it mean? How could this phenomenon be conceptualized? In order to understand this equation we need to remember that Shariati is aware of the *particularity* of social contexts and that means in each society (based on their respective *particular* historical contingencies) you may be faced with different forms of stupefying modes of submissions.

Said differently, in a society like Iran (or the Muslim World in general) where religion (Mazhab) has historically been the engine of social transformations the religion itself could function as a *stupefying instrument* of the masses. But in the West, which is purportedly the heir of Greco-Roman civilizations where art, philosophy and law reigned supreme) we should look for other stupefying instruments for mass submission. One can find a delicate dialectic in Shariati's sociological analysis where he insists that religion which could be an emancipative force in one social context but the same religion could function as a repressive force in another socio-cultural-historical-economic context. Critical social theorists have always reflected upon the question of *particularity* but Shariati took one step further by arguing that *particularity* is in dire need of rethinking in relation to religion as one of the most complex phenomena in human history. It may not be an exaggeration to suggest that *Mazhab versus Mazhab* (Religion versus Religion) is a theoretical attempt by Shariati in terms of critical theory which is not based on a dialectical approach to religion but a rethinking of religion in terms of a *polylectical*

approach. But now the question is how did Shariati conceptualize *Istehmar* in reference to the three aforementioned historical obstacles that have suppressed humanity from self-actualization/liberation?

He argues that all the three forms of oppressions, i.e. colonialism, despotism and imperialism are possible to be institutionalized provided the stupefaction has occurred in both society and within the abode of individuals by *owner of capital, owner of power and owner of ideology*. Of course, it should be noted that these powerful networks do operate in different societies (and in different historical contexts) in various distinct forms but Shariati has not squarely but mainly focused on the Islamicate contexts in applying his concepts and networks of ideas. However this does not entail that we cannot employ his conceptual framework in analyzing other social realities and historical contexts. On the contrary, he firmly argues that these three forms of ownerships are discernible in all human societies and conditions but under different guises. For instance, he refers to the symbolic language of sacred texts where they try to depict the contours of these forms of

ownerships in premodern societies and communities. Shariati mentions characters from both Koran and history of religions as incorporated in Muslim texts and historical records, i.e. Pharaoh, Korah, and Balaam. Although I am certain that all of you are familiar with these names but allow me to describe each of them in brief and then explain how and in what sense Shariati conceptualized and even symbolized them within his *critical theory* frame of analysis.

Pharaoh is the general title employed for the monarchs of ancient Egypt; Korah or Kórach is a character who appears in the Book of Numbers of the Hebrew Sacred Text and also in four different verses in the Quran, known for conspiring against Moses through his wealth. Korah is represented as the owner of astounding possessions; Balaam is a diviner in the Torah (Pentateuch) whose anecdote commences in Chapter 22 of the Book of Numbers. Every ancient reference to Balaam considers him a non-Israelite, a clairvoyant, and the son of Beor. But Shariati uses these concepts in a symbolic fashion in order to construct his *theory of social change* in a deeply traditional society where religion

rather than economy functioned as the base. He argued that Pharaoh, Korah and Balaam are different symbols of subjugations of humanity and

"We should realize that each of them could become the base and others could act as superstructures in any social order. It should not be thought that only capital could function as the base. For instance, despotism in our history has incessantly functioned as the base ..." (CW: 2014. 28: 613-614).

Based on the Shariatian polylectic in a colonial, despotic/dictatorial/authoritarian or imperialistic social structures and global order religion could be an instrument of individual or social stupefaction.

Problematizing the Concept of Religion

Of course, one should ask about the concept of religion in the Shariatian frame of theorizing as this concept within sociological discourses is equivalent to any *belief system* and in this sense it is distinct from normative definitions which one may encounter in other discourses. Shariati employs frequently terms such as *Din* and *Mazhab* but it is not clear if he

distinguishes between them or uses them interchangeably. In common use in Persian language the term *Mazhab* refers to *denomination* in English and the term *Din* is used as an equivalent to *religion* but these common usages cover very critical problems which are lost in translation. Additionally it seems that Shariati once in a while uses these concepts in a novel fashion and this means that *Din* is employed sometimes in terms of religious studies discourses but *Mazhab* is an existential yearning of human being in breaking the walls of religious subjugation as institutionalized by organized forms of hierarchized religions where ecclesiastical institutions are developed in order to minister the spiritual dimensions of human existence. Shariati in *The Method of Knowing Islam* refers to Henri Bergson (CW: 2014. 28: 131) and his two concepts of *Ouverte* (*Open Society*) and *Fermée* (*Close Society*) but the interesting point is that he seems to equate in this context the concept of *Mazhab* with the concept of *Jame'h*, i.e. *Society*. We know that in Persian these terms are not equivalent as *Mazhab* refers to denomination and *Jame'h* is tantamount to society but why does Shariati

uses them interchangeably? This is a question which has not been analyzed in details and as far as I understand this distinction between *Din* and *Mazhab* if understood in reference to the Shariatian social theory it could assist us in conceptualizing his *critical liberation theology* beyond the dichotomies of tradition versus modernity or classical categorization of religions as conceptualized both in sociology of religions and religious studies discourses as well as in reference to theological paradigms.

In other words, Shariati's concept of *religion* should be understood in terms of *deconstructive approach* prior to the *deconstructionist turn* in philosophy, theology and social theory. He deconstructs religion and Islam in general and Shiism in particular by focusing on the relationship between *text* and *meaning*. In his view, if we are not going to be stupefied by colonial forces, authoritarian establishments and imperialistic order we have to embark upon *ref-form of religion* as it has been transmitted to us through historical institutions created by complex forms of ownerships: *Pharaonic* (forms of domination related to political power); *Korahic* (forms of dominance related to economic control);

Balaamic (forms of submission related to ideological manipulation).

We can take as an example Shariati's approach to Shiism and see how he worked out his theory in relation to this historical form of religion in a non-western context. He conceptualizes two forms of Shiism, i.e. Shiism of *movement* and Shiism of *institution*. In his understanding, Shiism of the movement creates its own specific *episteme-bearer* which is conceptualized as an *Alim* but the Shiism of institution establishes another form of *episteme-bearer*, i.e. *Ruhani* or *Cleric*. Interestingly enough each of these actors are posited differently vis-à-vis the power; an *Alim* is construed in *opposition* to the established power but a *Ruhani* is construed in terms of being *alongside* the power. Although these concepts may be interpreted as two forms of Shiism but it could rightly be seen as two historical epochs of Shiism too. Before the establishment of the Safavid Empire, one can discern an *oppositional* pattern as far as the Shiite scholars and their overarching position towards power are concerned and a *conciliatory* position after the establishment of the Safavid Dynasty. This is how Ali Shariati

interprets Shiism or any kind of religious movement in regard to power.

In other words, his conceptual framework of Shiism could be used in understanding the sociological positioning of religious institutions in terms of their *relation* towards power. For instance, when we look at the Shiite religious authority in contemporary contexts of Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Azerbaijan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia then we can analyze these different forms in terms of their respective positioning towards the political power. It must be noted that Shariati did not mention the third form of Shiism where the religious authority is not either *against* the power or *alongside* the power but it is as a matter of fact the power itself. Said differently; when the political power and religious authority are one and the same then the question could be: what are the consequences of such restructuring of social institutions in terms of emancipative or repressive power of religion? In *Alawite Shiism and Safavid Shiism* (2013) Shariati analyzed in details the first and the second forms of Shiism and was of the opinion that when the religious authority kept their distance from power religion could function as a form

of *liberating force* but when clerical establishment were created as an ecclesiastical institution and at the disposal of the political power then religion turned into a form of *stupefying factor* in subjugating the masses. However, we have not another form of Shiism where there is no distinction between the religious authority and the political authority (or to use the Christian dichotomy of *Church and State*) but the whole society is ecclesiticized then the question is whether in this form of social organization in reference to colonialism, authoritarianism and imperialism human agency is more stupefied or liberated?

Conclusion

Of course, one could ask about the concept of power in Shariati and how he defined the complex dimensions of it but it is obvious that his concept of power as a Cerberus Monster (Three-Headed Entity) demonstrates that *emancipation* is not an easily achievable task which liberals, socialists or even various schools of Islamists have depicted for us. This means that the *theory of change* in each of these modern ideologies which promised the

transformation of human society into an earthly paradise has been premised on –if not false but- naïve foundations which should be fundamentally critiqued and even discredited extensively. To me it seems the concept of *Istehmar* is a heuristic strategy in problematizing the complexity of power in relation to the question of emancipation/liberation which lies at the heart of any prophetic religion or any form of religion which aims at some form of *transcendence*. (Byrd & Miri. 2018) Does Shariati conceptualize the *mission* of world religions at a meta-religious level? In his book *Ensan* (Human Being) he argues that the mission of all prophetic engagements as crystallized in various world religions is based on three common principles of *self-consciousness*, *morality*, and *muksha* or *emancipation*. (Shariati, CW: 24; 1983. 253-276) The meta-religious conceptualization of Shariati is a very important topic but I have explained this issue in details elsewhere (Miri, 2018. 11-33; Miri, 2021. 129-138) and shall not repeat this here.

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علی شریعتی: بازنگری در نظریه انتقادی

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چکیده: نویسنده در این مقاله سعی دارد مفهوم نقد در نظریه انتقادی را با این استدلال که ما باید از پارامترهای سنتی نظریه انتقادی که توسط تاریخ‌نگاران اروپایی-آتلانتیک و نظریه‌پردازان انتقادی اجتماعی تعریف شده است فراتر برویم. اما برای نیل به این هدف، نگارنده سعی کرده است با به‌کارگیری مفهوم استحمار به تعریف علی شریعتی، رویکردهای جایگزینی را در مفهوم‌سازی پیچیدگی‌های واقعیت اجتماعی نشان دهد. استحمار یعنی چه؟ شریعتی چگونه این مفهوم را در قالب جامعه‌شناسانه بیان می‌کند؟ این مفهوم چه تفاوتی با مفاهیم کلاسیک مانند آنومی، از خود بیگانگی و افسون‌زدایی دارد؟

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واژه‌های کلیدی: استحمار، علی شریعتی، مذهب، دین، استحمار، نظریه انتقادی