

Jalal-Ale-Ahmad and 'Critical Consciousness': A Comparative Study

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Abstract : One of the most important contributions that Edward Said has had in the realm of critical theory is his insistence on the worldliness of the text and the critic. By this, Said meant that the critic and the text must be considered in their 'material' contexts. Foregrounding the substantial role of a critic as embodying what he refers to as 'critical consciousness', a true critic, Said maintains, is one who can stand between the 'dominant culture' and 'the totalizing forms of critical systems.' Considered as one of Iran's major contemporary intellectuals, Jalal Ale Ahmad is responsible for introducing the idea of 'Westoxication' in Iran, constructing a social paradigm of the necessity to return to tradition in contemporary Iran. The present paper intends to study Al-Ahmad's definition of the orient versus the occident, his criticism of the 'machination' of contemporary Iranian society, and his solution to the problem of 'Westoxication'. The objective of this study is to see whether Ale Ahmad can be considered as embodying the spirit of 'critical consciousness' as described by Said as the necessary tool in the hands of an intellectual who is simultaneously attached filitavely to his culture but can detach himself affilitavely through employing critical consciousness.

Keywords : Westoxication, filiative, affiliative, machination

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