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Critical Inquiry: The Missing Key to Development

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Extended Abstract

Critique, in its essential meaning, is the process of identifying hidden inefficiencies within the internal logic of a system. It is applied to theories, laws, programs, works of art, policies, and other creative or developmental constructs. While often viewed as a means of detecting weaknesses for later correction, such corrective outcomes are secondary byproducts rather than its primary mission.

In the hierarchy of knowledge, the true function of critique lies in its role in advancing scientific progress. Every branch of human knowledge—whether aimed at organizing material life or enriching cultural and spiritual existence—must undergo a transparent, measurable, and reproducible process of validation. Only when it successfully passes this process can it be used as a reliable pillar of development. Critique is precisely this process: it activates the essential qualities of science, subjects its claims to the test of reality, and verifies their necessity and truth. In the empirical sciences, experimentation serves as a form of critique, testing governing theories through observation. In theoretical disciplines, critique is conducted through reasoned argumentation. The establishment of any new scientific discipline has always depended on two prerequisites: openness to critique and the existence of a specialized system of critique suited to that field (Chomarat-Ruiz, ۲۰۰۸).

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These places critique not as a secondary, retrospective evaluation of outputs but as a fundamental, pre-existing condition for the creation of science itself. In this role, critique is an inherent capacity of science, enabling it to produce applications and .generate benefit

Because utility is a necessary condition of science, and critique is the means of establishing utility, its central role in development becomes clear. An active critique is part of science itself and a condition for its completeness. Conversely, approaches .that see critique solely as a tool for revealing flaws in finished work render it passive

In today's world—where development is not only a permanent human necessity but also a path toward transcending subsistence and meeting higher social needs—the active role of critique gains particular urgency. It becomes a stage in the evolution of .science, laying the groundwork for more refined and complete versions of knowledge

Active critique is also the primary mechanism for transforming pure science into applicable, beneficial science. As a latent capability embedded in scientific propositions, it enables verification of theories before they are translated into products or practical achievements. It can even challenge the very foundations of a scientific field, and if adequate answers are not provided, invalidate them entirely. .The scientific criterion of falsifiability itself emerges from such critical processes

For Iran—a young society with ambitions to achieve high standing in the global socio-economic system—scientific production is a strategic imperative for national development, independence, and strength. Achieving this requires more than educational expansion and research infrastructure; it demands a reassessment of existing scientific methodologies and a renewal of approaches to reasoning and validation. Without such renewal, innovation is nearly impossible.

Elevating critique to a central methodological principle—from .theory generation to product evaluation—is essential

Pursuing this vision, the Nazar Research Center has established the first scholarly journal dedicated to scientific critique in spatial studies—a field examining space as a historical–geographical phenomenon shaped by the interaction between society and its environment, and humanity with history. The inaugural issue, The School of Nazar Critique, is offered to the scholarly community with the hope that it will foster rigorous, contextually grounded .critique as a driver of scientific advancement

critique is not merely a tool for identifying flaws but a fundamental, active component of science itself—essential for validating knowledge, fostering innovation, and ensuring development.

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