

مركز التنوير المعرفي

Epistemological Enlightenment Centre



Sudanese Ethics

Critical Revisions on Nordenstam's Model

Contributors:

Dr. Abdalla Ibrahim AL Shukri. Dr. Mohammed Abdalla AL Naga

Dr. Haider Ibrahim .

Dr. Sabri Mohammed Khaliel.

Dr. Idris Salim.

Dr. Shamsaddien Yonus Najmaddin

Dr. Khalid AL Mubarak .

Dr. Sulaiman Yahya Mohammed

Translated by: Abdalla Humaida

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web site: www.tanweer.sd E-mail: info@tanweer.sd

Tel(+249) 157904679(+249)183229804 fax(+249) 183- 229726- P.O.Box: 10766

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Abdalla Humaida

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Preface

*Prof. Mohamed Abdalla Alnagarabi**

The book written by professor Tore Nordenstam in the 1968 came at a time when this newly independent country – the Sudan – was still trying to find its way in the world and a formulate some sort of identity of its own. Being not an easy task, continuous dialogue particularly between the intelligentsia was part and parcel of the intellectual life of that period. Social life on the other hand was not far from this fervid questioning: western rules of modernity versus traditional rules and norms. Both traditionalists and modernists were

trying to play a major role in reshaping the social and cultural life of the country.

The study of values and ethics, on the other hand is not an easy job in the social sciences. Descriptive theory explains how things are, whereas normative or prescriptive theory tells us how things ought to be. Ethics is about what should be, not what is. However the period under consideration, witnessed a vast argument about the relativity versus universality of ethics and values in philosophy and the social sciences. The same applies for methodological trends. Nordenstam tried, as can be seen in this book, to mould different techniques to study his targeted group. This endeavor, ostensibly produced some of the debates in this volume.

It is evident that this book which appeared in the mid sixties of the twentieth century was a welcome contribution to the Sudanese studies in an area that witnessed an absence of genuine research. The fact that prof. Nordenstam is a European, playing the role of an outside observer gave the book its value as a pioneer in the study of Sudanese ethics.