

Abstract

Cultural Occidentalism, a comparatively new topic, is the subject-matter of our thesis. We endeavour, in this thesis, to investigate the possibilities of establishing and developing an occidental movement in the Arab World. A movement that is not similar in content, structure and tendency to that of Orientalism, but one that is based on the necessity to create and develop the capabilities of Arab intellectuals and thinkers to study the west, to excavate its elements of strength in rationalism, scientific knowledge, criticism, understanding, technology, philosophy and culture and accordingly to take the necessary steps needed to develop a new vision on how to use reason in all the realms of its epistemological production in the quest for human development and progress.

This, in addition, necessitates a full participation of intellectuals and thinkers in Arab culture renaissance, which can as well play a fundamental role in facing the challenges of globalization and in contributing to the development of those philosophical, cultural and scientific elements that are common among humanity as a whole.

The thesis is made of five chapters. The first one addresses the concept, aims and history of Occidentalism.

The second chapter discusses the way how Arab Islamic, nationalist and leftist intellectuals and political trends look at the west.

The third chapter addresses the phenomena of Arab consciousness that emerged in the twentieth century as a result of the continuous political defeats, and occupations, in particular, those moments of consciousness vis-à-vis the Other, i.e., the west and the role of social and political culture in the formation of the consciousness of the Arab

intellectuals and the relationship between Arab intellectuals on the one side and Arab heritage and ruling authority on the other.

The fourth chapter addresses the possibilities of and the conditions needed to create a unified Arab cultural project, taking into consideration all along the various idiosyncrasies of each of the Arab countries.

The fifth chapter raps up the various arguments presented in the previous chapters. Based on these arguments it is asserted that there is a necessity for an occidental movement to be established and developed via the engagement and interaction of Arab intellectuals and thinkers with the west whose aim of course is the creation of a more cooperative, tolerant and humane global reality. Such a movement should avoid the methods and the a priori negatively charged perceptions embedded in Orientalism, which prevailed throughout its history, and should subsequently endeavour to be positive in its perceptual and conceptual content and its intellectual lust to create a more humane world. In addition, the conclusion argues that Arab students together with Arab communities in different parts of the Western world could perhaps play a constructive role in the emergence, articulation and realization of such a movement.