



Akademik Eğitim ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi (AJESS Journal)

The Cultural Dimension in the Character of Emir Abdelkader al-Jaza'iri through the Book "Emir Abdelkader" by the German Traveler Karl Berndt, Translated by Abu al-Eid Doudou

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Article History

Received: 31/07/2026; Accepted : 10/09/2026; Published : 20/09/2026

Abstract:

As with European travel narratives that addressed Algeria, German travel discourse also includes travel texts such as that of Karl Berndt. His discourse carries epistemic and cultural content with creative and aesthetic literary value. In his account of Emir Abdelkader, Berndt portrays the Emir, in his cultural dimension, as a symbol, a hero, and a human being ahead of his time. The text also presents stereotypical images, representations, and structures concerning Algerian society. These structures and representations therefore deserve to be studied at the level of discourse through modern theories that can clarify the perspective and reveal implicit cultural meanings. These meanings concern both the Algerian Other and the European self, especially the German self, which approached Algeria through an Orientalist perspective and issued subjective judgments based on what it observed within a cohesive society attached to its customs and traditions.

Keywords: binaries; travel discourse; the Emir; cultural.

Introduction:

With the arrival of the nineteenth century, Algeria experienced a French campaign that led to expansion across its territory. This was followed by an increase in European journeys to Algeria, which was regarded as the gateway to Africa. German, French, and English travelers came to Algeria and lived there for periods of time, during which they became acquainted with Algerian society. After returning to their countries, they recorded their travel accounts according to what they had observed within that society. They therefore produced images shaped by their impressions and subjective viewpoints. These writings contributed to forming the image of the Algerian in the mind of the European reader. At a deeper level, they carried European images and perspectives derived from Western civilization and thus had two different sides: one positive and the other negative.

The positive side appears in the way they viewed Emir Abdelkader and described him as an intelligent heroic leader and as a symbol in his cultural dimension. They also described how he united the tribes and enacted laws. He was also distinguished by his humane treatment of prisoners, gaining international recognition as a leader and head of state who fought colonial tyranny and repression.

These travel texts also contained stereotypical images that represented Algerian society through a centralizing perspective. This perspective placed the Algerian Other at the margin and portrayed it as static and uncivilized, while magnifying the European self. Travel narration therefore produced binaries of the self and the Other, such as Christianity and Islam, backwardness and civilization, and East and West. These binaries offer insight into travel discourse, which analyzed Algerian society through a pre-existing culture shaped by identity and ideology.

The epistemic and cultural structures and representations found in the texts of German travelers will be examined through modern theories that reveal implicit cultural patterns within such texts and disclose what German travel discourse left unsaid. Particular attention will be given to the text of Karl Johann Berndt, translated by the Algerian writer Abu al-Eid Doudou, who brought together several German writings that represented Algerian society from a European perspective. Berndt entered Emir Abdelkader's army as a "captive," after which the Emir promoted him to the position of officer and interpreter. To understand the components of his travel discourse more fully, this study seeks to reveal the

image of the Emir in its cultural dimensions and to examine the representations and structures present in the text, including the binaries of the Algerian Other and the German self. It also seeks to disclose the implicit meanings of his travel discourse in its religious and Sufi dimension, as well as its educational and social dimensions, through what he expressed on the basis of what he saw and experienced in a society that revered its customs and traditions. These were embodied in celebrations, ways of life, attachment to beliefs, and love of homeland and religion, all of which reflected the character and identity of a cohesive Algerian society.

In light of the above, it is appropriate to ask:

Has the plurality of critical readings of Karl Berndt's travel text given the journey literary value?

To what extent have cultural patterns contributed to understanding the Algerian character, especially the character of the Emir, and to understanding the implicit meanings of the German Karl Berndt's travel discourse?

Accordingly, these two questions will be examined through a descriptive-analytical methodological perspective and an interpretive cultural approach that leads to epistemic results and facts. The discussion begins with the stages in the development of travel literature, then analyzes Karl Berndt's discourse by revealing the stereotypical images in his travel text, as in other travel discourses. It also examines representations of the self and the Other in his narrative, then probes the implicit patterns in Berndt's discourse, such as the religious-Sufi pattern in its cultural dimension, the educational pattern represented by language, learning the Qur'an, and writing, and the pattern of customs and traditions represented by wedding celebrations and the population's way of life in its cultural dimension.

1. The Literariness of Travel Discourse:

Anyone who considers travel literature as a term and as an independent literary genre must trace it through a historical chronology and follow the different stages through which critics and scholars in this field have passed. They have offered many readings and critical studies. Travel narration carries several forms of knowledge, including history, geography, the study and description of nature, place as the central axis of "travel," time, knowledge of people's conditions, and their customs and traditions. These components of travel discourse later came to serve aims related to aesthetics and creativity in literature, especially in travel writing. In this way, they achieve the intended purpose of inquiry into the literariness of the journey.

One critic and historian who surveyed the lives of prominent travel writers referred to this as the science of geography and wrote: "The first to do so was the Greek Eratosthenes, who died in 196 BCE. He was followed by many others, such as the traveler Strabo and the geographer Pliny, until Claudius Ptolemy, in the middle of the second century CE, wrote a comprehensive book on geography. When Islam came, this book became a source for scholars concerned with the description of countries. The Arabs translated it in the Abbasid period and called it Geography. They also translated Ptolemy's second book and called it the *Almagest*. These two books in particular were consulted in their writings on the science of geography."¹

At the beginning of the study of travel, it was called geography, or what researchers adopted in their studies as knowledge of countries. When visiting any country, the traveler described the beauty of nature, including mountains, terrain, plains, and valleys. He also described people's conditions, customs, and traditions. During the early Islamic and Abbasid periods, and with the development of Muslim scholarship, the material of these journeys later contributed to the development of geography.

Not far from the Arabic literary-geographical tradition, especially the knowledge of countries, the division of peoples, and the study of their history, the historian Abu al-Qasim Saadallah states: "Books of geography and regional description are important sources in historical studies. There is no doubt that the Omanis referred to such sources to learn what they contained about the history of their country."²

Similarly, Krachkovsky writes: "Ibn Khaldun's interest in semi-civilized nations represents a rare case in Arabic geographical literature. Contemporary ethnographers can find valuable material in his classification of races, and the separate section on the Berbers in his history has rightly been recognized as a distinct region within his work."³ From the foregoing, it becomes clear that the term did not become independent in itself. The sociologist Ibn Khaldun, for example, produced extensive work in ethnography, anthropology, civilization, and history. He was originally from Tunis and settled in Algeria, where he wrote the *Muqaddimah*, which is regarded as a distinctive reference in the field of sociology.

As the efforts of scholars and researchers continued in the field of travel narration, whether factual or imagined, the writer Jabbour Douaihy states: "The author of *Journey to Egypt and Syria* was the first to attempt what may be called the 'rationalization' of the travel book. He began by excluding details of the journey and 'personal adventures' because they were long and tedious. He organized information and observations into general chapters: natural conditions (climate, winds, plants, and so on). Thus, Volney's book may be regarded as the culmination of a long series of travel books whose styles ranged between narrative storytelling and the chaotic accumulation of observations. Although Sainte-Beuve found

¹ George Gharib, *Travel Literature: Its History, Major Figures*, al-Mas'udi, Ibn Battuta, al-Rihani, Dar al-Thaqafa, Lebanon, 1st ed., 1966, p. 26.

² Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Studies in Arab-Islamic History*, Alam al-Ma'rifa, Algiers, 2011, p. 361.

³ Ignaty Yulianovich Krachkovsky, *History of Arabic Geographical Literature*, vol. 1, Committee of Authorship, Translation and Publication Press, Cairo, 1963, p. 444.

in Volney's method 'a model to be followed in describing and studying any part of the world,' the nineteenth century restored subjectivity to travel literature, during which the travel book took shape as an independent literary genre."⁴

What can be observed in Douaihy's account is the noticeable development of travel narration. After having been characterized by disorder, an abundance of observations, and lengthy narrative style, it moved beyond these shortcomings. In the nineteenth century, travel texts became independent works in their own right. They came to be studied as a literary genre with epistemic and cultural content and with creative aesthetic and literary value.

Many journeys are also associated with migration and movement for military purposes. This is what we observe in the writings of the German "Karl Johann Berndt," who spoke about Emir Abdelkader and lived with him for a period of time: "Thus, the question of the journey, whether a journey of migration or a journey of settlement, became a question of movement from one place and homeland to another, and a question of choice and presence in another homeland. Despite

the negative nature of the decision that put this journey into effect, we must understand how it was a matter of life seeking to keep its pulse alive and a will to preserve life."⁵

Karl Berndt came with the French settlement as a soldier and was captured by the Emir's army, which benefited from his military experience. "In 1834, he joined the Foreign Legion, whose disadvantages he later discussed. He described it as a gathering of the refuse of the European continent and warned his compatriots against undertaking an adventure like his own, thereby confirming what others before him had said about this unit.

He arrived in Algeria in 1835. After the necessary training that he had to complete, he was sent to the front lines at Boufarik and in the vicinity of Blida. On 19 June 1835, he happened to leave the camp to go on an excursion with other Germans. Arab horsemen captured them and took them to the city of Medea."⁶

In this respect, the traveler's text intersects with Salah al-Din Ali al-Shami's view. The idea underlying the German Karl Berndt's experience is based on settlement because he belonged to the French army and was constantly in a state of flight from the Emir's army. The historical dimension is present in his travel narration whenever he recalls historical events and figures. We can also discern cultural dimensions throughout his discourse, which he repeatedly compared with his previous culture. In addition to the descriptions contained in his narrative, he recorded representations of the Other, namely the Emir and his army, while magnifying his own self and siding with it on many occasions when recalling his past.

Concerning the aesthetics of travel narrative, its artistic construction, and the narration of events through engaging artistic description, Asma Abu Bakr Muhammad states: "The literary value of journeys is manifested in the styles through which their material is presented. These styles raise them to the world of literature and elevate them to the level of artistic imagination. Despite the diversity of style in travel literature, including narrative storytelling based on engaging narration, it provides considerable intellectual pleasure."⁷

Travel narration is marked by literary enjoyment found in the traveler's style through the artistic construction of the travel account and the engaging artistic manner in which the journey is told. It also uses pictorial language and varying degrees of imaginative power according to the events and characters employed in the travel narrative. In addition, there is the element of surprise and wonder that frequently appears in travel narratives. These elements achieve aesthetic and literary value, especially in travel literature.

From the element of attraction and literary value, we move to the mechanisms of writing and the narrative components discussed by Chouaib Halifi. Travel narration became a literary genre with writing mechanisms and a mature travel discourse. He states: "Those narrative texts inevitably had to be written while the journey remained attached to preserving everything it had accumulated in written form since the fourth century AH. The problem of generic classification made an initial advance by framing these texts within a general category that came to be known as 'the journey.' The labels varied and multiplied. Some spoke of 'travel literature,' a clear indication of its belonging to the field of narrative as literary writing, since it contains narrative components and writing mechanisms that allow such classification to acquire legitimacy within the category of 'the literary.'"⁸

From the foregoing, it becomes clear that travel discourse was classified within the corpus of geographical and historical journeys. Over time, however, the journey acquired narrative components, writing mechanisms, and cultural and epistemic content such as the binaries of the self and the Other, characters, time and place, and events. Narrative thus imposed itself and became a literary genre and a form of travel narration addressed in literary studies and in our research.

⁴ Jabbour Douaihy, "Travel and European Travel Books to the East until the End of the Eighteenth Century," *Al-Fikr al-Arabi*, 1983, p. 65.

⁵ Salah al-Din Ali al-Shami, *Travel: The Seeing Eye of Geography in Geographical Exploration and Field Study*, Mansha'at al-Ma'arif, Egypt, 2nd ed., 1999, p. 22.

⁶ Abu al-Eid Doudou, *Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt*, vol. 2, Dar al-Umma, Algiers, 2009, p. 6.

⁷ Asma Abu Bakr Muhammad, *Ibn Battuta: The Man and the Journey*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1st ed., Beirut, 1992, p. 13.

⁸ Chouaib Halifi, *The Journey in Arabic Literature: Genre, Writing Mechanisms, and the Discourse of the Imaginary*, Maktabat al-Adab al-Maghribi, Morocco, 1st ed., 2002, p. 38.

Attention should also be drawn to the content of travel narration and to the traveler's call for the development of people's behavior in different fields. Samira Ansaad states: "The traveler's call upon his fellow citizens to change their conditions and raise their awareness is associated with modern journeys that witnessed the events of occupation, oppression, and intellectual stagnation among the general public."⁹ After the journey had been a form of travel in which the traveler narrated the features and geography of the place he had seen, modern journeys became a field of influence and mutual influence. The traveler called on people to change their conditions in order to become civilized and develop. This is clearly evident in foreign travel writings on Algeria and is what we shall observe in this research paper, especially in the case of the prisoners whom Emir Abdelkader brought close to him and from whom he benefited greatly in warfare and weapons production, such as rifles, cannon casting, and the construction of a gunpowder mill.

Among the benefits of travel literature, Abu al-Qasim Saadallah states: "It is true that its language is expansive and its style descriptive, and it is also true that the documentary value of this journey is almost nonexistent. However, the reader finds great literary pleasure in it, in addition to learning many things about "Inaya," its people, and its natural environment under French rule."¹⁰

In addition to what has already been mentioned about journeys, especially during the French occupation, the prisoners whom Emir Abdelkader brought close to him learned Arabic at his insistence. He benefited greatly from them in translation, in reading letters for him, and in learning about French army plans. The prisoners knew several languages, and the Emir also benefited from their military expertise. Travel literature also has shortcomings, including excessive description and simple language, which can make travel texts tedious and unhelpful. A serious researcher, however, who follows the events of the journey and reads its content and its enjoyable, engaging narrative style can benefit from the abundance of cultural knowledge contained in it, including history, geography, ethnographic diversity, medical knowledge, and many other fields.

3. The Image of Emir Abdelkader in Karl Berndt's Writings:

After the preceding readings on the literariness of the journey, its contents, writing mechanisms, and generic classification, we now enter the core of our study and the travel text of the German Karl Berndt. He presents a travel narrative rich in cultural approaches to Algerian society. He portrays the state of society and its cultural and ethnographic diversity and expresses his impressions of the Other with whom he lived for a certain period. His account offers an engaging narrative about the inhabitants of Algeria, the character of the Emir¹¹, people's dispositions, the description of nature, and acculturation between the self and the Other.

The image of Emir Abdelkader in its cultural dimension, which is the focus of this research paper, appears in many forms: social, religious, ethical, political, and civilizational. The Emir later became an international figure. This figure, who emerged from the tribe to become international, undoubtedly possessed exceptional qualities and a remarkable personality. He resisted the French enemy for fifteen years, fought it in the east, west, and even the south, and forced it to negotiate with him on equal terms. This will be observed later in our analysis of Karl Berndt's travel narrative.¹²

3.1. The Ethical and Humanitarian Dimension:

Emir Abdelkader was a figure of great moral and humanitarian qualities, especially in his treatment of prisoners. The Emir continually brought prisoners close to him, educated them, honored them, and provided what they requested, even though he was at war. This also characterized his dealings with his army, those close to him, and ordinary people. Karl Berndt writes: "His conduct on every occasion confirms the extent of his tolerance and his complete freedom from prejudice toward those who disagree with him."¹³ The Emir's manner of rule was gentle. Those who sat with him observed nothing but forgiveness, even toward his opponents, and this increased the affection of those close to him.

There are many instances of the Emir's tolerant and humane treatment, as many people, especially foreign prisoners, testified. Badia Hassani al-Jaza'iri states in this regard: "Foreign historians and supporters alike agreed that Emir Abdelkader's conduct was characterized by chivalry, dignity, and humanity. Under threat of punishment, he prohibited beheading, cutting off ears, and any acts of brutality, although his enemies practiced such acts and committed the most

⁹ Samira Ansaad, *The Journey to the Mashriq in Algerian Literature: A Study of Origin, Development, and Structure*, Dar al-Huda, Algiers, 2009, p. 36.

¹⁰ Abu al-Qasim Saadallah, *Experiences in Travel Literature*, Alam al-Ma'rifa, Algiers, 2011, p. 285.

¹¹ Emir Abdelkader: He belonged to the Banu Amir tribe near Oran. Among its members was this young marabout, Abdelkader, son of Sidi Muhyi al-Din, who was distinguished from an early age by his intelligence and courage. He succeeded in bringing all the Arabs, from Medea to Morocco, under his authority, sometimes through firmness and sometimes through leniency. He was then fighting the Saharan tribes in order to bring them under his authority as well, together with some Kabyle groups. This was due to admiration for his strength, keen intelligence, defense of their religion against the Christians, and establishment of a national state.

¹² Karl Johann Berndt: He was sentenced to imprisonment and expelled from the university in 1833. In 1834, he left Germany for northern France. In 1835, after a successful journey, he reached Algeria. They were transferred to the Mustafa camp in Algiers for training. In 1836, they moved with their unit to the outer lines at Douera and Boufarik. After an excursion in spring through Blida and the plains and mountains bordering Medea, they were captured by the soldiers of Khalifa al-Burqani in Medea.

¹³ Abu al-Eid Doudou, *Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader*, Johann Karl Berndt, vol. 2, Dar al-Umma, Algiers, 2009, p. 62.

atrocious deeds. The Emir, however, adhered strictly to the laws of war in Islam and to the Sharia imposed by God. He rewarded every mujahid who brought him a French soldier in good condition. If the prisoner complained of ill-treatment, the Algerian fighter was deprived of any reward and was punished.”¹⁴ This raised the Emir’s standing. It reflected his commitment to the tolerant teachings of his religion, which grant rights to prisoners, and his concern to enforce them and to reward the soldier who protected a prisoner and did not harm him.

The Emir lived a simple life as though he were an ordinary person: “Indeed, he lives a simpler and more modest life than most Arabs. He never wears garments decorated with gold or silver and regards that as a form of extravagance.”¹⁵

The Emir was ascetic and unpretentious, dressing and living like other people. Concerning his forgiveness and tolerance, the traveler states: “Since Emir Abdelkader, like all Muslims, believes in inevitable destiny, he regarded this as an expiation for the escape incident, returned Mohammedo’s horse to him, and bestowed his favor upon him.”¹⁶ Mohammedo had sold his horse and intended to escape, but he was arrested and imprisoned. The Emir then pardoned him and restored him to his normal life and former work. The Emir’s actions therefore repeatedly reveal his love of pardon and forgiveness and his generosity toward prisoners.

2.3. The Religious Dimension:

As is well known, Emir Abdelkader grew up in a religious environment that loved and honored knowledge. He memorized the Qur’an when he was young and studied in the zawiya under his father. Even in adulthood, he was familiar with works of literature and poetry and had broad knowledge of jurisprudence and religious questions. As Emir, he had many positions on religion that reflected his life and upbringing from childhood. Karl Berndt states: “He looked at me for a long time with a very stern expression. At first, I imagined that it expressed his disapproval because I had preserved that child’s life. Finally, he said to me: ‘I thank you, by Boumediene. You were right and acted as a believer should!’ He handed the child to one of his attendants and ordered him to care for him until his parents could be identified.”¹⁷

When Emir Abdelkader fought tribes that had not submitted to his authority, one of these was the al-Burjiyya tribe near Mascara. They had contacts with the French, and the Emir had warned them against this several times. He therefore launched an attack against them and ordered his soldiers to eliminate them. In the middle of the battle, Karl Berndt found a crying child whose parents had fled and saved him. When the fighting subsided, he thought the Emir would rebuke him. Instead, the Emir thanked him for this humane act, which called for compassion toward the young and the elderly, especially on the battlefield. This episode has a religious and Sufi dimension because the Emir thanked him in the name of the saint Boumediene, namely Sidi Boumediene al-Ghawth, who is well known in western Algeria.

Another episode that confirms and reinforces the religious-Sufi dimension of the Emir and of the people of Mascara and western Algeria as a whole concerns their attitude toward the shrine of Sidi Boumediene. The German traveler writes: “One of my two young friends believed that this was a scheme by the commander of the cavalry, who had become hostile toward me because of the favor I enjoyed with the Emir. He therefore wanted, on his own initiative, either to frighten me away from continuing on the path I had taken in learning Arabic, or to kill me and then soon obtain pardon simply by taking refuge at the shrine of Sidi Boumediene and entering from there into negotiations with the Emir, from whom he would receive favor.”¹⁸

According to this belief and custom among the people of the Mascara region, a killer could be pardoned simply by taking refuge at the shrine of Sidi Boumediene. This would occur after negotiations with the Emir to clarify the matter. In the attempted killing of Karl Berndt, the saint Sidi Boumediene thus held a special place in the beliefs of the community and the people of Mascara, and especially with the Emir, in relation to pardon, return, repentance from sin, and consequently forgiveness for a person who had committed an offense.

3.3. The Political and Strategic Dimension:

One manifestation of the Emir’s character was his political skill. This appeared internally in his forward-looking vision for building his state and army, and externally in his dealings with states, especially the French colonizer, with whom he negotiated on the principle of equality and whom he forced to sit at the negotiating table. Among the many such situations, we seek to record what Karl Berndt said about Emir Abdelkader. One quality that distinguished the Emir in equal negotiations was his refusal to deal with one of France’s generals. He wanted instead to conclude a treaty with the highest ruler of France, and “Louis-Philippe” signed a treaty with him. Berndt states: “Emir Abdelkader refused to have either war or peace except with the highest ruler of the French, not with one of their generals.”¹⁹

Indeed, he forced the French to negotiate, divided the territories with them, and organized commercial activity with them, especially by signing treaties and agreements. On negotiation, in which the Emir excelled, Karl Berndt states: “Since the French wanted to seize Constantine at any cost in order to avenge the defeat they had suffered, and since they

¹⁴ Badia Hassani al-Jaza’iri, *Emir Abdelkader al-Jaza’iri: His Life and Thought*, vol. 3, Dar al-Wa’y, Algiers, 2012, p. 56.

¹⁵ Abu al-Eid Doudou, *Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader*, Johann Karl Berndt, vol. 2, Dar al-Umma, Algiers, 2009, p. 62.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹⁷ Abu al-Eid Doudou, *Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader*, Johann Karl Berndt, vol. 2, Dar al-Umma, Algiers, 2009, p. 108.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, *Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader*, Johann Karl Berndt, pp. 130–131.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

believed that possession of this city would bring great profit and gain to their colony, they were inclined to conclude peace with the Emir on suitable terms so that they could devote all their forces to attacking the city of Constantine. The Emir's demands were considerable, and all prisoners of war were handed over to him before the peace was approved."²⁰

We can see the extent to which the Emir imposed his logic, especially before sitting at the negotiating table and particularly in securing the release of all Arab prisoners, which was in fact achieved. This reflects the strength of the Emir's character in imposing his terms and the force of his political shrewdness at the same time.

The Emir's political image becomes even clearer in negotiation and in his dealings with merchants on the one hand and the French on the other. Berndt writes: "At first, some speculators came to conduct negotiations connected with wholesale trade, but the Emir imposed harsh conditions on them. They therefore returned from where they had come without achieving what they wanted and without thinking of returning again. The shrewd Emir knew that he could not gain more from dealing with these men than he could gain from the French government, which wished to conduct itself toward the Arab Emir with nobility and generosity if he maintained his relationship with it. In matters both large and small, it adhered to the principle of winning over the inhabitants through leniency."²¹

The traveler acknowledges the Emir's intelligence and his ability to benefit from negotiations. He imposed harsh conditions on the merchants, which brought benefit to the Emir through the taxes imposed on them and therefore to the treasury of the Emir's state. At the same time, he negotiated with the French and imposed conditions on them, while keeping trade open with them, especially the sale of wheat and their movement. He knew how to make himself the beneficiary and winner in negotiations.

During his long siege of the city of Tlemcen, which forced the French to withdraw from it, and upon his entry in a scene worthy of him and reflective of his image as Emir and ruler of the country, Karl Berndt writes: "Hardly had the Emir crossed the threshold of the New Gate when eleven shots thundered from the fortress. Women's ululations rose from the rooftops, horse racing began, and the riders' rifles continued to fire. Even the Emir's horse seemed to understand the meaning of this celebration and repeatedly reared violently beneath its royal rider, who sat calmly upon it, with that particular cheerfulness on his face that quickly won all hearts.

When he entered the Mechouar, or the citadel, the smell of incense spread through it to drive away what remained of the spirits of the Christians! The Emir then entered the mosque there and performed the prayer, after which he went to the house that had been prepared for him."²² This celebration and imposing "protocol" surrounding the Emir as he entered Tlemcen as its conqueror, with his army in orderly formation and amid great joy among the people of the city, reflects an image of an Emir who gave each matter its proper place and time. He wanted his entry into Tlemcen and its conquest to be an occasion of joy and gave the event a ceremonial character befitting a statesman, Emir, and leader with foresight in managing the affairs of his country.

3.4. The Civilizational Dimension:

Among Emir Abdelkader's merits in developing his country and bringing in everything related to civilization and progress was his constant concern for this direction. Karl Berndt states: "There he met another German who claimed that he could build a gunpowder mill. The Emir was informed about him and, after signing the treaty, asked both of them to come to the city of Tlemcen to establish the gunpowder mill there. Mohammedo would then prepare the powder in it."²³ We repeatedly see the Emir seeking whatever could benefit the development of his army and state. He brought skilled labor and raw materials and benefited from these European prisoners in military matters such as cannon casting, rifle production, and the establishment of a gunpowder mill. This reflects the civilizational image to which the Emir continually aspired in developing his army and country.

5.3. The Educational Dimension:

Another image of the Emir appears in his treatment of prisoners. He was extremely generous toward them, paid for their education from his own money, and was keen for them to learn Arabic and religion. Karl Berndt states: "I too had a project, supported by Mohammedo, with whom I had a strong bond of friendship. I wanted to learn Arabic reading and writing, that is, to study the Arabic language so that my knowledge of it would have value. Because Mohammedo enjoyed considerable favor with Emir Abdelkader, he first spoke to him about this matter. The Emir did not reject my project, especially because we had presented its religious aspect to him, as though I had a real enthusiasm that drove me to learn the Qur'an's verses, prayers, and noble rulings. One day I went to him and asked him to permit me to do so. He granted my request and appointed a student, at his own expense, to teach me Arabic."²⁴ The Emir's love of religion and the Arabic language is evident here. As soon as Europeans asked him to learn Arabic, he agreed and was generous with them by paying the cost of their instruction. This was especially true when they expressed a desire to learn matters of religion, such as the Qur'an and the noble Prophetic traditions, in which case the Emir quickly responded to their request.

4. Binaries of the Self and the Other in Karl Berndt's Travel Text:

Travel discourse is the product of several pre-existing ideas that govern it. This is evident in the German Karl Berndt's treatment of binaries such as civilization and backwardness, Islam and Christianity, and captivity and freedom.

²⁰ Ibid., Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt, p. 109.

²¹ Ibid., pp. 121–122.

²² Ibid., Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt, pp. 127–128.

²³ Ibid., p. 129.

²⁴ Ibid., Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt, p. 129.

Ahlam Othmania states: "Travel literature is governed by a set of historical, political, religious, social, and other factors. It reflects a set of binaries and oppositions such as the self and the Other, Islam and unbelief, woman and man, white and black, and others."²⁵

Travel texts generally carry the writer's cultural background even when it is not explicitly stated. Our analysis of Karl Berndt's discourse reflects a real image of the writer's European culture, which carries many contradictions between two cultures and two societies: the society of the Algerian Other and the German self. The traveler Karl Berndt was a captive of Emir Abdelkader, which means that he was not a prisoner in a jail. The Emir incorporated him into his army, gave him the rank of officer, and employed him as an interpreter who wrote and translated the Emir's letters. He also worked in artillery and supervised the management of wheat stores, meaning the sale of wheat to the French. All these privileges brought Karl Berndt close to the Emir, his army, and ordinary people, especially the family that honored him after he tried to escape while injured and wounded. His travel text therefore became rich in binaries of the self and the Other, especially through the perspective of a narrator who experienced a real journey. Chouaib Halifi states in this regard: "The discovery of the Other becomes at the same moment a discovery of the self. It is an adjustment that affects both the outside and the inside. The necessity of the Other comes from the fact that it contains good and evil, harmony and difference. These are states in which the most prominent social and cultural values are embodied."²⁶

This is what we observe in Karl Berndt's travel text, which contains many binaries between the self and the Other. Expressing his love for his country and Europe, he says: "I would live and die among the Arabs. But I would soon remember Europe, my homeland, my parents, my friends, my brothers, and my friends, and I would quickly change my decision."²⁷ Karl Berndt took part in several battles with the Emir and his army, and his life was saved more than once. During his first attempt to escape, he stayed with an Algerian family. They honored him and bandaged his wounds until he recovered. When the Emir's officers learned that he was alive, they went to the house of Uncle Mansour, recovered him, and returned him to the Emir. Whenever he remembered his homeland and family, however, he changed his mind and nostalgia for his country and relatives returned. In the same context, especially regarding the self/Other binary in travel discourse, Leila al-Obeidi states: "There we find a dominant feature of travel discourse, or one of its requirements and constants: the magnification of the cultural self accompanied by a lowering of the value of the Other."²⁸ This is what we observe in Karl Berndt's discourse. He spoke from the standpoint of a pre-existing culture acquired from his European civilization. We can discern a form of centrality in the structure of his discourse and, consequently, contempt for and marginalization of the Other.

On learning Arabic and fasting during Ramadan, Karl Berndt states: "I had learned Arabic to the point that I could speak fluently with the Arabs. My good friends therefore tried to make me a true Muslim. They imagined that I was completely serious about it because I was more careful to observe the Ramadan fast than they were. Muslims have one month in the year during which they fast."²⁹ According to Karl Berndt, the Algerian Other believed that he was Muslim. He says that his friends treated him kindly and that he was better than they were at fasting, which represents a "magnification of the self," especially in the act of fasting. He states that they believed he was truly fasting. In fact, he did fast, but he treated the fast as an outward performance by following the prescriptions of Muslim law.

Karl Berndt continues his account, especially in magnifying the self, and says: "Such conventional expressions seem attractive at first sight, but anyone who knows the true value of the outlook of this people, accustomed to servitude and religious fanaticism, and who sees in such principles, without being opposed to Christian mercy and humanity, the opposite in practice."³⁰ Here he is very explicit in magnifying the self. He describes the Other in harsh terms such as servitude and religious fanaticism, while saying of his own side that it possesses a special mercy in its dealings. These binaries reveal his position and give us a clear image of what he kept implicit within himself. During Karl Berndt's frequent movements, which Emir Abdelkader assigned to him while he supervised the wheat stores, he states: "When the accountant asked the interpreter who these people were, he answered that we were officers of the Emir who had carried letters to the commander. The French accountant then remarked that I had a European appearance. I smiled involuntarily. As soon as he noticed this, he asked me in French whether I was French. Everyone was surprised when I answered him in French that I was German."³¹ Karl Berndt repeatedly keeps many things implicit, especially when he is asked about his origin and reveals his nationality, smiling and even showing joy. Whenever he remembers Europe or his family, he expresses a positive response. Even though he was one of the Emir's officers or an interpreter, these matters

²⁵ Ahlam Othmania, "Representations of the Social Pattern in the Travels of Abu al-Qasim Saadallah," *Journal of the Laboratory of Linguistic and Literary Studies*, Guelma, Algeria, vol. 10, no. 3, March 2024, p. 24.

²⁶ Chouaib Halifi, *The Journey in Arabic Literature: Genre, Writing Mechanisms, and the Discourse of the Imaginary*, Al-Amal Printing and Publishing Company, Cairo, 2002, p. 301.

²⁷ Abu al-Eid Doudou, *Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt*, vol. 2, Dar al-Umma, Algiers, 2009, p. 103.

²⁸ Leila al-Obeidi, "Features of the Image of the Other in Selected Examples of Classical Travel Literature," *Fasl al-Khitab*, Tiaret, Algeria, vol. 11, no. 1, March 2022, p. 138.

²⁹ Abu al-Eid Doudou, *Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt*, vol. 2, Dar al-Umma, Algiers, 2009, p. 112.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

appear ordinary to him. When his country is mentioned, however, he shows happiness and joy. This falls within his magnification of the self and his pride in his European identity, a feature we frequently encounter in his travel text.

5.The Cultural Dimension in Karl Berndt's Travel Text in Light of Cultural Patterns:

There is no doubt that Karl Berndt's German travel text carries a substantial epistemic and cultural store derived from the European civilization to which he belonged. From the beginning of his journey from his country, the traveler describes the signs of civilization he observed and compares them with what existed in the places to which he traveled. This also reflected his psychological state through the representations he produced, from the beginning of his journey when he joined the Foreign Legion in North Africa, to his captivity in Medea, his joining Emir Abdelkader's army in Mascara, and his knowledge of towns and urban life in Miliana, Oran, and Tlemcen. His contact with the Emir, participation in military activities beside him, work as his interpreter, and supervision of wheat stores gave him knowledge of Algeria and its people. All these activities contained in Karl Berndt's travel text made it rich in complex and interwoven cultural content. In this context, Muhammad Bouazza states: "A journey inward, toward stories of origins and beginnings, and a migration outward, toward stories of exile and cultural difference, where the narrative fragments between the violence of writing and the violence of the imagined in a process of duality between inside and outside, between the self and the Other, between past and present. This imposes on the rhetoric of the text a condition of textual and cultural hybridity active in the dynamics of narration and expressing itself in a plural narrative discourse."³² At one point, the traveler criticizes France's repressive policy; at another, he speaks of the hospitable and generous people of the country; elsewhere, he describes them and labels them barbarians. At times, he speaks of Europe as the center of power and mercy; at others, he speaks of the Emir's strength and places the Algerian Other at the center of power. He sometimes admires himself for fasting, sometimes mocks the Arabs because they believed he was Muslim, and sometimes rejoices at a celebration with drinks because it reminds him of his past. The narrative therefore changes according to the traveler-writer's psychological state, as the balance of his discourse shifts between the Algerian Other and the German self.

What confirms our argument concerning the magnification of the German or European self is that, in some cases, we observe the opposite. In his narrated discourse, we can discern truthfulness and objectivity when he states: "Indeed, victory gave our lord and master great courage, so he decided to exploit this enthusiasm and attack the French that very evening."³³ In such a situation, his narrative discourse appears objective and speaks about the Algerian Other as though he were a member of the Emir's army. It conveys respect for the Emir and describes the condition of the Emir and his army as they prepared for war, attacked the French, and defeated them.

He continues in the same discursive tone when he states: "In order to lure the enemies out beforehand, the Emir sent a group of his fighters on leave for a day or two so that the French would think that his army had dispersed, and his stratagem succeeded. The French army marched toward Tlemcen and continued on the first day without anything blocking its way. On the second day, shortly after sunrise, we attacked them fiercely from all sides."³⁴

Here the strength of the Emir's character, his expertise in the arts of war, and the heroism he displayed against the French become clear. He knew how to defeat them with firm determination even when they were superior to him in numbers and equipment. This forms part of the heroic pattern and the strength of the Emir's character that we study in its cultural dimension.

5.1. The Educational Pattern: The Emir combined practical experience in heroic military action with an intellectual dimension in which he was also distinguished scientifically. He was a poet and a jurist in religion, loved the Arabic language, and had broad knowledge of works on language, literature, and grammar. He employed this experience in dealing with foreign prisoners, especially Karl Berndt, who served as his interpreter and read letters to him. The Emir's need for translation was essential, especially under wartime conditions. Berndt states in this regard: "Mohammedo succeeded in convincing the Sultan that I was the right man for this position because I could read and write German and French. In addition, I had mastered Arabic, Spanish, and Italian, so that in this mixture of nations, created by the circumstances of the work under way, I could be the best judge and the best interpreter."³⁵ Karl Berndt's travel discourse shows the extent of the Emir's concern to treat prisoners well. He honored Karl Berndt and his companion Mohammedo and gave them the rank of officer in his army, especially Berndt, who served as his interpreter and wrote letters for him. He also gave them horses, rifles, and saddles and paid from his own money, not from the treasury, for their instruction in Arabic and religion. The Emir's forward-looking perspective therefore reveals the educational pattern in its cultural dimension. This was among the reasons for the Emir's success and the development of his army, especially through his use of prisoners and their military expertise for the benefit of the Emir and his forces.

5.2. The Social Pattern: Concerning the customs and traditions discussed by Berndt, especially the generosity, hospitality, and munificence of the people of the country, he states: "I had not forgotten anyone, and according to the circumstances

³² Muhammad Bouazza, *Cultural Narratives: From the Politics of Identity to the Politics of Difference*, Beirut: Manshurat al-Ikhtilaf; Algiers: Manshurat al-Ikhtilaf, 1st ed., 2014, p. 158.

³³ Abu al-Eid Doudou, *Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt*, vol. 2, Dar al-Umma, Algiers, 2009, p. 78.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 133.

³⁵ Ibid., *Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt*, p. 79.

and the customs followed there, I was generous to a considerable degree.”³⁶ In this case, Karl Berndt’s travel discourse contains a magnification of the self in his generosity, while he states at the same time that such generosity was a custom followed by the people of the country, who had previously hosted and honored him, and to whom he therefore returned. He continues: “Although the Arab is usually miserly, he becomes generous on such occasions. In this way he gave the musicians more than one hundred dollars, a very large amount for this country, which suffers from a shortage of cash.”³⁷ On many occasions, we observe that Karl Berndt contradicts himself. This is related to his psychological state. At one point he praises the people of the country for generosity and hospitality, while at another he describes them as miserly. He speaks from the position of the center and says that the people and country suffer from an economic crisis and lack financial resources, while at the same time an Arab can be generous during a musical celebration. This is what we observe in his representation of the country: while speaking about customs and traditions related to generosity, he does not remain consistent in a single opinion.

In addition to the subject of customs and traditions and his description of celebrations held in Algeria, his perspective remains centralizing in relation to the customs and traditions he observed in Algerian society, especially dance and its connection with religion.

5.3. The Religious Pattern: At the beginning of the French colonial entry into Algeria, Algerian society preserved its customs and traditions and valued knowledge and scholars. Qur’anic schools and zawiyas were widespread in the cities and villages of Algeria. There were circles of dhikr, Qur’anic recitation, readings of al-Burda, and poems in praise of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. These practices were also used at weddings. Karl Berndt states: “A characteristic of almost all these dervishes is that they become insane, especially while chanting certain religious hymns and litanies. They begin moving rhythmically in the circle that has been formed until exhaustion overcomes them and they fall to the ground as though dead.”³⁸ We repeatedly find him speaking from the standpoint of the center in his view of the Algerian Other, especially by describing them as becoming insane and falling as though dead. Yet, when connected to the religious aspect, this was a sacred practice among Algerians: the dance of the dervishes, their recitation of al-Burda in praise of the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him, and their chanting of religious invocations in a circle in which students of the mosque or zawiya gathered. In the same context, describing dance and its relation to the religious-Sufi dimension among the people of Algeria, especially Mascara, he states: “Such mad dancing is not confined to people who are truly insane. There are countless sane people who are afflicted by this condition. I was astonished when, one day, a number of musicians came to our camp and one of the dervishes began to perform a mad dance to their music. Soon more than forty soldiers rose, seized by the same madness, and began leaping here and there until they fainted and fell to the ground. Some demonstrated their courage by swallowing pieces of glowing coal or placing them in their mouths without suffering any harm.”³⁹ Here the travel discourse speaks from the position of power and the center. It describes the dervishes and students as having lost their reason on hearing music, while soldiers joined them to hear this hadra in which they praised the Prophet, peace and blessings be upon him. Berndt calls it an affliction practiced by the insane and also by people who are otherwise sound of mind. For our purposes, however, the dervishes were students who studied language, jurisprudence, and the Qur’an and were not insane. They performed the dance in a circle and struck the frame drum. They practiced it in joy and as a form of blessing connected with the righteous saint, praising him and praising the Messenger, peace and blessings be upon him. Other people joined this hadra or dance. They placed burning coals in their mouths and danced over them. These were Sufi symbols, such as dance and singing, practiced by the people of Mascara and by other Sufi orders.

In his description of weddings, Berndt presents these customs in detail: “The wedding celebration was held, and we Germans, Spaniards, Frenchmen, and some Kouloughlis gathered on the appointed day in a café. From there, we went to the bride’s house, firing our rifles continuously. When we arrived, we fired our rifles together in a single volley, and the women inside the house answered with ululations. The bride’s uncle and guardian came out and led us into the house. We stood in two lines and fired together several times, and we performed military games in the Arab manner. Two of us would rush toward one another each time and fire at the moment they met, then return to their places while making martial movements and waving their rifles above their heads.”⁴⁰

What is noticeable is the extent to which these European foreigners were influenced by cultural elements, such as the Arab way of celebrating, especially at weddings, where gunpowder was fired frequently and women answered with ululations after the shots. It was also customary among the Arabs for women to veil themselves or remain inside their homes. The dance had a particular form in which two men, each carrying a rifle, faced one another and walked or ran quickly toward each other. When they met, they fired the gunpowder. This martial dance was also performed in cases of victory in war or on receiving good news during wartime. The prior meeting took place in the café to arrange preparations for the wedding. The bride’s guardian, who was her uncle, was also present and served as her guardian in marriage. This text is rich in the sacred status of customs and traditions for the Algerian Other, who reveres these customs and traditions and respects the principles of religion. Karl Berndt’s discourse was truthful in what it conveyed about the atmosphere he

³⁶ Ibid., p. 135.

³⁷ Ibid., Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt, p. 136.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 136.

³⁹ Ibid., Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt, p. 137.

⁴⁰ Ibid., Historical Translations: Emir Abdelkader, Johann Karl Berndt, pp. 140–141.

witnessed at the wedding of his companion Mohammedo. From the foregoing, we discern a pattern of customs and traditions, especially in his description of the manifestations of the “joyous celebration” in its cultural dimension. These practices are rooted in this conservative society, which takes pride in and reveres its identity.

Conclusion:

In this research paper, I have attempted to show the true image and its representations within Algerian society during that period, as conveyed to us by Abu al-Eid Doudou through his translation of the writings of German travelers to Algeria, especially Karl Berndt’s narrative discourse on Emir Abdelkader and the events he experienced in captivity.

The narrative discourses of German travelers to Algeria require further study in order to determine the extent of their truthfulness through cultural criticism, to reveal their implicit meanings and what the Germans did not say about the Algerian Other, and to compare them with other European travel discourses, such as French and English travel texts. These texts likewise praise the character of the Emir and disparage Algerian society in order to draw closer to the Emir and to present him as civilized and loyal to French authority. This is a major fallacy that steals our symbols from us and attributes them to itself, and it is something we also discern in the German Karl Berndt.

Although European travel texts include French and English examples, German travel texts are relatively few. The late writer, translator, and comparatist Abu al-Eid Doudou made considerable efforts to transmit these travel texts and writings to us. They are highly important both as historical material that should not be overlooked and as creative aesthetic material in the field of travel literature, thereby making them available for readers to draw upon.

The multiplicity of representations of the Algerian Other in the travel text and the magnification of the German self do not remain fixed on one principle. At one point, Berndt describes the Algerian character as generous and munificent; at another, he calls it greedy and barbaric. At one point, he praises Islam and is careful to fast; at another, he describes Christianity as merciful and remembers one of his European nights of eating and drinking. This multiplicity of perspectives in Karl Berndt’s writing places his travel discourse within the sphere of subjectivity rather than objectivity, despite the many structures and representations in which we can discern truthfulness and objectivity.

Through Karl Berndt’s travel text, his relationship with Emir Abdelkader, and his closeness to him, we conclude that the Emir held great symbolic status as an experienced military and political leader, an intellectual, and a thinker in his religious-Sufi dimension. We also discern from the foregoing the importance of travel literature in understanding the Algerian character and how the Other represented it in its cultural and literary dimensions.

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