

## Algerian Clothing Culture in Travel Books (19th- 20th century)

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### Abstract

*This research paper explores the scope of Algerian cultural manifestations featured in three travel books, at the last third of the nineteenth century and outset of the twentieth century, shedding light on a specific one, which is traditional clothing. The aim is to project the diversity of Algerian fashion and the specificity that characterised some parts of the country, in terms of costumes and styles, including inter alia, those for special events and festivities. Moreover, to identify the significance of traditional clothing in the Algerian society at that time frame, reiterating the importance of travel literature in its documentation. This examination involves some books of that era, especially chosen for discussion and citation. By shedding light on detailed accounts and narratives that provide an insight into Algeria's cultural prosperity, this paper delves into the characteristics of clothing such as styles, colours, fabrics existed within the specified timeframe (end of 19th- onset of 20th century). The paper is grounded in relevant works published at the time Algeria had been witnessing a turnout of Western intellectuals and artists, particularly from Europe. The three books are: A Woman in the Sahara, by Gordon Helen Cameron, 1914; Winters in Algeria, by F. A. Bridgman, (1890); Murrays Handbook for Travellers in Algeria and Tunis, by Sir R. Lambert Playfair, (1891). Following a roadmap to explore the cultural manifestation through the Algerian traditional clothing, this paper maps out places marked by a popularity of certain essential garments worn by men and women, in terms of where and how they were worn. The paper also includes detailed descriptions of different styles of clothing, summarized and cited from the mentioned works. Hence, the paper concludes the remarkability of the Algerian traditional clothing and its significance in daily life or on special occasions. Additionally, it identifies the status of the Algerian clothing in society with its diverse ethnicities.*

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## ثقافة اللباس الجزائري في أدب الرحلة (بين القرنين التاسع عشر والعشرين)

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الكلمات المفتاحية	الملخص
الجزائر، برونوس، ثقافة، حايك، قندورة، لباس تقليدي.	تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية نطاق التجليات الثقافية الجزائرية التي برزت في ثلاثة كتب من أدب الرحلة في الثلث الأخير من القرن التاسع عشر وبداية القرن العشرين، مسلطة الضوء على أحد جوانبها، وهي الملابس التقليدية. يسعى البحث إلى اإمطة اللثام عن تنوع الأزياء الجزائرية والتفرد الذي ميز بعض مناطق البلاد من حيث الأزياء والأنواع، بما في ذلك على سبيل المثال لا الحصر، الأزياء الخاصة بالمناسبات والاحتفالات. كما يسعى إلى تحديد أهمية اللباس التقليدي في المجتمع الجزائري في ذلك الإطار الزمني، مؤكداً أهمية أدب الرحلة في توثيقه. تتناول الورقة دراسة بعض الكتب من تلك الحقبة، والتي اختيرت خصيصاً للمناقشة والاقتياس. بتسليط الضوء على بعض الكتابات التفصيلية والسرديات التي من شأنها أن تقدم نظرة على الازدهار الثقافي الذي شهدته الجزائر، تغوص الدراسة في خصائص الملابس من حيث النوعية والألوان والأقمشة التي كانت موجودة في إطار زمني محدد (نهاية القرن التاسع عشر - بداية القرن العشرين). تستند الورقة إلى أعمال ذات صلة، نُشرت في وقت كانت الجزائر تشهد فيه توافد مثقفين وفنانين غربيين، من أوروبا على وجه الخصوص. أما الكتب الثلاثة فهي: "امرأة في الصحراء" لهيلين كاميرون جوردون، 1914، و"شتاءات في الجزائر" ل. ف. أ. بريدجمان، (1890) و"دليل موراي للمسافرين في الجزائر وتونس" للسير ر. لامبرت بلايفير، (1891). اهداء بخارطة طريق لاستكشاف التجليات الثقافية من خلال الملابس التقليدية الجزائرية، يحدد هذا البحث مواطن الانتشار الواسع لبعض قطع الملابس الأساسية التي ارتداها الرجال والنساء من حيث مكان وكيفية ارتدائها. تتضمن الورقة أيضاً أوصافاً مفصلة لأنواع الملابس المختلفة، ملخصة ومقتبسة من الأعمال المذكورة أعلاه. وعليه، يستنتج البحث تميز اللباس التقليدي الجزائري وأهميته في الحياة اليومية والمناسبات الخاصة، وتحديد مكانته في المجتمع باختلاف أعراقه.

### ***1- Introduction:***

Traditional clothing in travel books serves ceaselessly as a prominent theme which travel writers and artists embed in their works. Generally known that this type of clothing refers to garments worn daily or on special occasions by a group of people in a particular community or region, often distinct in styles, colours and materials. Such clothing bears a significant symbolism, mirroring aspects of cultural heritage and specificity in a given community. Remarkably, Algerian traditional clothing spilled much ink of those interested in history, as well as anthropology alike, particularly in the colonial era. Given such a theme intersects the aforementioned areas of studies, it is of paramount importance, for it could be deemed as a digging tool to explore deeper roots of local cultures.

As mentioned earlier, this research paper sets out to collect and analyse more information on the Algerian clothing mentioned in three travel books, first of which: *A Woman in the Sahara*, by the American travel writer, Gordon Helen Cameron (1914). It is an informative travelogue, in which the author provides the reader, through storytelling, with insights and perspectives, emanated from her personal experiences at the places she visited. It's a work that has been selected by scholars as being culturally important, in which historical, social, and anthropological studies intertwine. *Winters in Algeria* is no different, save that Bridgman (1980) gives a full picture of his stories, illustrating and portraying the people he meets and the places he comes across in his travels. It's worth noting that he is one of the American most well-known and well-regarded painters, known also as one of the world's most talented orientalist painters (Bridgman, 2024). Whereas *Murrays Handbook for Travellers in Algeria and Tunisia*, by Sir R. Lambert Playfair (1891), serves as a guidebook that provides practical information on destinations and best route recommendations for travellers to and in Algeria, offering historical, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds on each part of the country. Of course, authors' impressions and observations on culture, society and history combined, are common features in any travelogue, as they offer an insight into certain peoples and nations.

The map of clothing presented in this research paper, stretches across key areas visited by travellers where they came across traditional garments worn by men and women daily or on different occasions. The map indicates side roads leading to explore specific and essential garments which are as follows:

Haik: a voluminous piece of usually white cloth worn as an outer garment in northern Africa (Webster, 1828).

Burnous or (burnoose): a one-piece hooded cloak worn by Arabs and Berbers (Webster, 1828).

Gandoura: a long loose gown with or without sleeves that is worn chiefly in northern Africa (Webster, 1828).



The paper provides descriptive definitions of each of those garments as are mentioned in the three books. Their definitions are intended to be in consistence with the context, respecting the development of ideas and their logical flow.

Given the commonality of the genre of writing used in those works, as well as the places travellers usually frequented at that time in Algeria, their works often include a replay of scenes such as the fantasia performance, the Diffa and wedding festivities. Murray's Handbook (Playfair, 1891) for instance, played a major role in recommending sites to visitors and artists. Therefore, some places such as Bou Saada, Biskra, Ghardaia, Tlemcen and Constantine were among the most frequented destinations by travellers in general. This prompts to raise the following questions:

How similar are the narratives of the three authors in terms of clothing across different parts of the country?

Did Algerians share similar traditions of clothing? If yes, how similar were they?

Moreover, is sharing the tradition of clothing a manifestation of a shared sense of belonging?

Additionally, the Algerian community at that time was subjected to colonial norms and restrictive measures, inflicting implications on the social sphere. Given that the travel writings discussed in this paper highlight several cultural aspects embodied in authentic traditional clothing, this invites to reflect on how Algerian traditional clothing and finery survived an era marked by colonial influence! Therefore, this raises pertinent questions: To what extent did Algerian dress express a form of identity in such an atmosphere? Furthermore, was the clothing culture in Algeria manipulated to attain colonial ends?

Grounding in the specified works, the paper employs a comparative approach which helps to highlight similarities and differences- including any possible nuances- in the authors' narratives, in terms of traditional clothing. This approach aims to extract valuable information using citations collected to serve a particular context, emphasizing the detailed descriptions of clothing styles across various regions presented in the three travel writings. Moreover, It enables to go beyond description and extends the breadth of understanding, diversifying the tools of researching.

The paper strives to project the diversity of Algerian styles of clothing and the specificity characterized essential attires, including inter alia, those for special events and festivities. Moreover, it seeks to identify the significance of traditional clothing in the Algerian society at that time frame, reiterating the important role that travel literature played in its documentation.

**2- Map of Cultural Manifestation:**

At the end of the nineteenth century, Algeria started to become a mecca to western travellers, discoverers, writers, painters and intellectuals. They often used to travel from England to Paris then to Algiers. The direct route from England to Algeria was through Paris and Marseilles. The traveller could either reach the latter place by the ordinary route, via Lyons, or by the more picturesque one passing through Clermont- Ferrand and Nîmes (Playfair, 1891).

While in Algiers, they would explore the suburbs like Blida in the south, before they sail across the Atlas towards Medea, Ksar Boukhari then to the place of Happiness (Bou Saada), in the northern Sahara. From this latter they would visit Biskra and Oued Souf, where threads of curiosity would draw them to go southward to Oued M'zab.

The Handbook for Travellers in Algeria and Tunis provides tourists with the best routes recommended to reach certain destinations:

From Algiers to Philippeville (Skikda now)- a route between Djidjelly (Djijel) and Constantine by Mila was opened in 1890, and a diligence should run daily, making the journey in two days. It would pass through a very fine scenery (Playfair, 1891. P 118).

**3- Road to Clothing:**

Notably, the Algerian clothing portrayed in several works, whether in writings or paintings, presented in elaborate garments made of luxurious materials; accessories and jewellery; headpieces and veils; henna and makeup; footwear and handkerchiefs.

The woman of Ouled Nail, especially the dancer, contributed enormously in featuring the Algerian cultural landscape, through dancing, garbed in distinctive garments and jewellery. She was often depicted in Western books and paintings richly attired in satin, or silk, or brocade of rose colour and pale blue, green and purple, or scarlet and gold, with long spangled veils, which depend from a diadem of blue and green enamelled silver, or a Sokhab brought low upon the forehead close to eyes that would render them larger and more lustrous by the Koheul which encircled them. Great Earrings partly rested on glossy hair plaited over wool which framed cheeks reddened with Khalouk where tiny, tattooed signs and crosses were, repeated also on the brow and below the carmine tinted lips. The neck and breast would be covered with jewelled chains: usually her arms, half bare, half veiled in wing like sleeves of gauze or lace, laden with great bracelets and studded with silver nails; and wide Khalkhal inlaid with cabochons, or coral, alluringly impeding the progress of her steps (Cameron 1914. 124-125).

In the same context, Bridgman (1890. 202) says that the women of Ouled Nail, or Nahil, as he writes it, had a towering headgear of plaited wool hung over their ears and bound by sashes and rich silk kerchiefs. Their faces were full of tattoos and paints; bright red spots the size of a dollar on each cheek, crosses and zigzag designs on the chin, cheeks, and forehead; their arms ornamented in the same way; eyebrows and lashes heavily



smearred with black kohl. They wore musk odours and a profusion of chinking bracelets and jewellery in bold relief of design and colour against the classical arrangement of their costumes and heavy robes, which hung in ample and soft folds about them. Bridgman's (1890. 203) description focuses on their accessories and makeup. It was a brief description compared to Cameron's (1914), who gives a detailed account of their dresses, in terms of material, size, and tone of colour. She also writes about the worn jewellery with elaboration. Notably, the finery tools used by Algerians at that time were various and diverse. Some of them were frequently used, as integral pieces to the look, such as khalkhal, henna, tattoo, khalouk, leather boots, and veils. Bridgman (1890. P 29) mentions the word Khalkhal or (anklets) but with an (n) instead of the middle (l), saying: Large anklets filled with shot (khankhal) jingle as they move about. Bridgman (1890, P 229) adds that the women of Ouled Nail in Biskra used to wear bracelets, anklets and earrings made of silver. According to Cameron (1914. P 125), the Naili women put on a wide khalkhal inlaid with cabochons, or coral.

As for the henna or (henneh), which is mentioned in Cameron's (1914) book as a cosmetic for the nails and hands, appears frequently in Bridgman's (1890. P 132) book, as a mushy paste of henna, which wasn't only for hands, and feet, but it was used by women and girls to dye their hairs as well.

The hamsa (Khamsa) is generally agreed and widely known as an amulet that is believed to offer protection from the evil eye. It's also called (hands of Fatma), as explained by Cameron (1914. P 97), in her words she says: "khams, as the Mussulmen call these curious little silver ornaments (from the word Khamsa, meaning five excrescences, but it seems to be the number itself which is so important, and which runs seven very close in favour with the primitive inhabitants of North Africa. Perhaps it maybe said that whilst seven belong to the domain of magic, five has a beneficent religious significance. There are five dogmas in the Mussulman creed; five sacred duties to be performed by the true believer: five daily prayers to be said by him, each one with its five attitudes."

In Tlemcen, the woman was accustomed to wear a great deal of jewellery, and never put it off even when doing a hard work (Bridgman, 1890. 122). In her visit into the palace of Salah Bey in Constantine, Cameron described her astonishment when she first met Fatma, the daughter of the great Bey, dressed in a -fantastic and seemingly costly attire. In her words she says:

It was glittering with sequins and jewels and the little Turkish cap, set so coquettishly on her head, was richly wrought with gold and gems (Cameron, 1914. P 271).

### **3-1- Side Road to Haik:**





Remarkably, visitors of Algeria expressed their impressions, through writings and paintings alike, on a country that each region of which could stand as a country on its own, in terms of varied weather conditions, geography and diversity of traditions characterising that time. In Algiers, for instance, the street costume of women was always white, varying considerably in tone according to the material ; small stripes of blue or pink silk were occasionally seen in the haik. The ample pantaloons were put on over others of coloured prints or silk brocades, which were worn at home and were much narrower (Bridgman, 1890. P 29).

In her book, *A Woman in The Sahara*, Helen Cameron (1914, P 2) defines the word (haik), in the glossary, as a head covering which frames the face. Whereas Frederick Bridgman (1890), in his book *Winters in Algeria*, delves beyond Cameron's initial definition and adds further details:

The women's haiks are often made of hand-woven wools, very thick and warm, others of silk, while the poorer classes wear a few yards of thin white cotton stuff. The large haiks are about eighteen feet long by five feet wide (1890, P 28). It's worth mentioning that the word (haik) or *Alhuyque* as mentioned in the book of *Topographia Ehisto*, by Diego Haedo (1578- 1581. P 28), - a Spanish captive in Algeria, is believed to have marked its first appearance in recorded history. In 1663, there was a description of (haik) in a book entitled *Femme Maure D'Alger En Barbarie*, as follows:

A piece of cloth, in white or black or purple, long that it nearly extends down to the ground. They shroud themselves with, that nothing appears of their bodies except the forehead (Cramoisy, 1663. P 61).

Moreover, Playfair (1891) mentions that the head of the Arab is always covered with the haik, bound round with cords of camel's hair and falling round the back and sides of his head and under the chin. He wears the white burnous, and occasionally a coloured one over it, slippers on his feet, or sometimes high red leather boots, and bare legs. Undoubtedly, the map of wearing the haik as a daily outfit was stretched out encompassing larger parts across the country and the blend of races who lived in Algeria at that time, of Arabs, Imazighen, Turks and Moorish). The Kabyles for instance, used to wear a dress of a whitish hue, sometimes black and white, consisted of the haik over the Chelouka or woollen shirt extending below the knee (Playfair, 1891. P 8). Whereas the women of Moorish origins, they attired a white creamy haik outdoors reaching below the knee, full white linen trousers fastened at the ankle, and slippers (Playfair, 1891. P 11).

As far as the key areas where people manufactured and traded with the haik are concerned, there were Bou-Saâda (Playfair, 1891. P 165), Constantine (Playfair, 1891. P 197), and Setif. The latter was the junction of many of the most important lines of communication in the country such as those with Algiers, Constantine, Bou- Saâda, the



Medjana, the Hodna and Bougie (Playfair, 1891. P 161). Setif was renowned of its manufacture of woollen goods, such as carpets, burnouses, haiks, etc. They were usually made by women, and were sold with high prices. The industry of the haik and the export of wool was prosperous in Constantine, where they weaved it in large numbers. Generally, the most prominent productions Arabs specialised in were leather goods, shoes, saddles, harness, and men's costumes. These latter were embroidered elaborately and most beautifully by the workmen of Arabs and Jewish tailors alike (1890, P 187-188).

Apart from its symbolism among social classes and religious norms that align with it as a modest dress, the haik was a means of disguise, used by Algerian women in the war of liberation against the French occupation in 1954.

### **3-2- Side Road to Burnous:**

The burnous or (burnoose) as written in a number of books, was and still is men's outfit in Algeria, symbolising dignity, status and nobility. It's a cloak with a hood, often made from wool, worn over their clothes. In Bou Saada, and particularly at the marketplace during the first decade of the twentieth century, the majority of vendors and customers used to wear a white gandoura, a long, sleeveless shirt; over which a burnous was worn, most usually the natural colour of the sheep from whose fleece it was woven. Some young men wore shirts of bright blue, heliotrope or yellow colour (Cameron, 1914. P 14). As for Arabs of the south, they wore a black burnous, a white haik, a Chechia, and bound with coils of camel's hair. The burnous which symbolised dignity, dyed upon choice: some shade of cinnamon, ginger or clove; of the blue grape, of red wine; of dates, or, of pomegranate juice (Cameron, 1914. P 15-16).

The tradition of wearing burnous dates back to a very long time that tracing it is no easy task for researchers and academics. Unequivocally, wearing the burnous wasn't confined to the ordinary people alone, even those with military and administrative positions wore specific burnouses ranged in different colours and styles. The Spahis for instance, had a brick red burnous on and a vest over it. Whereas the Mekhazni cavaliers had a grey blue burnous. (Cameron, 1914. P 39). As for the foresters, they wore a rich green burnous, evoking the wonderful woods they guarded (Cameron, 1914. P 88). However, the burnous was ranging from high to medium and low quality, and consequently priced differently.

In the end of the nineteenth century in Algiers, at palaces owned by governors, official balls were being held two or three times during the winter season, where Algerian chiefs used to wear ample cloth pantaloons, red leather boots in black leather outer shoes, several burnouses, one over the other, scarlet, black, fawn-colour, and pale blue (Bridgman, 1890. P 13). As for the Caid, they wore the official burnous of bright scarlet



on top of a white one, finely woven. Bridgman (1890. P 53) describes his tours in Algiers, on one of which towards the Casbah he says, in his words:

Leaving the noise of the shoemakers' hammers below us as we go higher and higher towards the Kasbah, rising a step in every two yards, we come upon a crowd of burnouses huddled together, closely packed on a long bench in front of a café, others choking up the entrances to little shops (Bridgman, 1890. P 53). Such *mise en scene* invites to contemplate the popularity of wearing the burnous back then, and how this habit reduced today to some special events and few people inside and outside Algiers.

It's widely known that the process of manufacturing the burnous goes through stages, from the collection of material, which is wool, to spinning, weaving, dyeing then sewing. Perhaps men and women both take part in its production. However, the weavers of burnous in the past were the women, who usually worked on it stretched on a frame, squatting on the ground, as many as three in a row on average (Cameron, 1914. P 10). Cameron (1914) documented her visit to one of the houses of Ghardaia, where one of the M'zabite women showed her a burnous, just completed at that time, of a pretty brown shade rather affected by the M'zabites, which had been daintily finished with stitching in pale pink silk and was priced at sixty francs. In addition, she got to know the Bidi (a very fine Burnous) being stretched on a great frame (Cameron, 1914. P 149).

**- Burnous of Si Mahmoud Saadi:**

In the light of the influx of European travelogues and scholars that Algeria witnessed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whose documentations combined, give an insight into the Algerian cultural milieu, some figures had been influenced by the Algerian society and culture, like Etienne or (Nasreddine) Dinet and Isabelle Eberhardt. This latter (1877-1904) was a Russian Swiss writer and explorer, whose impressions on the life of wandering in the Algerian Sahara, were marked by a magnificent visualising power and a wonderful, expressive language. She admired the Algerian clothing and considered it "more suitable for the life and the country than the garments of a European woman (Cameron, 1914. P 345)." Moreover, "she preferred a burnous to a petticoat and the sand hill to the domestic hearth (Cameron, 1914. P 348)," for she was haunted by the love of the Algerian Sahara where she spent years rejoicing a life of exploration on the Hauts Plateaux, in the Tunisian Sahel, and the Sahara of Constantine, as was named at that time. She was generally known with the pseudonym *Si Mahmoud Saadi*. She wrote several books as a production of her experiences and impressions, such as *The Nomad*, *Rakhil*, *In the Shadow of Islam*, and *Note de Route*, (Road Note). To the Algerians, the burnous served as a protective garment against cold and sandstorms alike, but to Eberhardt, it was more than that. In 1901, at the little village of Behima, about eight miles north of El Oued, Isabelle was attacked by a madman, who struck her a violent blow on the head (fortunately protected by the hood of her burnous) (Cameron, 1914. P 348). That incident was believed



to have occurred in the aftermath of Eberhardt's conversion to Islam, and precisely to the Zaouia of El Kaderia. The burnous helped her in terms of protection as well as disguise to move freely across different places, hiding also from the authorities, who were tracking her movements (Cameron, 1914. 339-451). Bridgman (1890. 88) was also lent a thick burnous in Blida, not only for protection from the unexpected chillness, but also for means of disguise. Since the burnous assumed the form of a voluminous haik, he put it on so he could visit the wife of the cemetery-keeper, in whose presence and other unveiled female guests, men were naturally not allowed admission.



*Si Mahmoud Saadi (Isabelle Eberhardt) (Cameron, 1914. P 340)*

### **3-3 Side Road to Gandoura :**

Given that the word (gandoura) appears often when the burnous is mentioned, whether in Cameron's (1914) book or Bridgman's (1890), the map of which extends nearly along the map of burnous for it's an essential piece in men's clothing, in particular.

However, this long, loose, often sleeveless garment worn by men and women alike, made of various fabrics, including silk, wool and cotton and adorned with different patterns. Cameron (1914. P 2) defines it in singular, as a sleeveless shirt worn by men, also as an under-frock worn by women. She uses the Arabic plural form of the word (guenader) instead, whenever she refers to more than one; same thing applies to (mendil) and (mendilat) (Cameron, 1914. P 3).

As for the type of gandoura worn by the Jews, Bridgman (1890. P 32) says that it was the piece of garment that differed from that of the Muslims', and it was square in shape, sleeveless, a little longer than broad, reaching to the knees, with large openings for the arms, and one for the head. The material was wool, thickly and tightly woven, and in a great variety of stripes, very large and very narrow, with lozenge, zigzag and comb-shaped ornamentation in the weaving.

In Tlemcen, and particularly during the first decades of the twentieth century, the city streets were teeming with little kids attired in different pretty clothes arrayed in an

infinite variety of costumes. They used to wear a gandoura or a sleeveless chemise (shirt) reaching nearly to the ankles. Beneath it, they would wear a white chemise with gauze sleeves. The gandoura came usually in printed calico, glaring in colour with spots, stripes, birds, branches, and leaves. Sometimes, it's of rich brocade or light silk; over the first they often wore a second gandoura of tulle with a design in it, ordinarily nothing more or less than common white lace curtain stuff. All the materials hang limp, and flutter in running. Round the waist a broad ceinture, and over the shoulders a little bodice. On the head a conical cap, almost always of crimson velvet, decorated with a golden thread (Bridgman, 1890, P 131-132). It's worth mentioning that children and unmarried girls wore the caps with a strap under the chin; married women would tie them on with a coloured handkerchief, besides the strap (Bridgman, 1890, P 132).



*Young Girl from Tlemcen (Bridgman, 1890. P 129)*

#### **4- Fashion within Fantasia**

In the book *A Woman in the Sahara*, Cameron (1914) initiated her chapter *Fantasia* with a quote by Isabelle Eberhardt describing the fantasia as:

Occasion precieuse de revetir des costumes brilliants, de faire galoper dans le vent et la fumee quelques chevaux fougueux et surtout de faire parler la poudre (Cameron, 1914. P 86). "A precious opportunity to put on brilliant costumes, to make a few fiery horses gallop in the wind and smoke and most importantly, to make the powder speak."

Traditionally, Algerian horsemen perform a vibrant ceremonial show called *fantasia*, where they fire their rifles into the air and gallop their horses in a line, attiring special and elaborate garments. Notably, the *Fantasia* used to attract many visitors from Algiers, France, England and even America during the colonial era (Cameron, 1914, P 91). Cameron (1914) dedicated a whole chapter, as mentioned earlier, in description of the breathtaking cavalcade performance when she was visiting Ghardaia. In her words she says:

“Oh! The delight of displaying their magnificent horsemanship before the admiring crowd; of reining in their nervous restless steeds, pawing the air in their excitement at the tumult; or, of backing them into the little knot of onlookers at their heels (Cameron, 1914, P 89).

In the M'zab, the horseman's garment was a long coat of red velvet, lined with silk of a lighter shade and richly embroidered with gold thread, framing the face with a haik of white silk. As for his horse, it usually had a saddle cloth of crimson velvet, its trappings inlaid with gold and with gilded box stirrups (Cameron, 1914, P 92). They used to put on boots made of rose red Filali (Cameron, 1914, P 89) with golden acorns on the insteps.

Therefore, the fantasia was a kaleidoscope of colours, music, dancing, and clothing interplayed and inseparably intertwined, depicting a purely Algerian *mise en scene*.”

### **5- Story of Survival:**

Notably, the Kabyles had been renowned of handcrafting intricate traditional jewellerys, invariably made of silver, before they substituted it with base metal. It's worth noting that Kabyle jewellers had never worked in gold. Two descriptions were usually made, one enamelled and the other plain, or only ornamented by the admixture of small pieces of coral (Murray, 1890, P 146). Their jewellerys were marked by their geometrical designs, enamelled by different colours.

In Tlemcen, there were several jewellers' shop where they used to work in silver, making anklets, haik pins, bracelets, using rude instruments, furnaces, bellows and anvils (Bridgman, 1890. 131). It's worth mentioning that in the dawn of the French colonisation in Algeria, the city of Tlemcen had been impressive in terms of prosperity and urbanism marked by the Andalusian architecture, before impoverishment and forced exile had to inflict its population. In 1833, jewellerys in Tlemcen were a substitute of cash when the inhabitants were forced by the French to pay them (Bennoune, 1988, P 38-39). In 1868, the colonial power in Algeria decided to abolish the urban craft corporations altogether, which made their industries gradually disappear, that the number of the Algerian artisans declined from 100,000 in the mid nineteenth century, to 3,500 in 1951 (Bennoune, 1988, P 66-67).

It's generally known that Algeria was subjected to one of the most drastic forms of cultural colonialism (Hannoum, 2010, P 01) where which Western writers and scholars were invited to help to document colonial narratives, aiming at shaking and reshaping the components of the Algerian identity, through a production of a specific knowledge.

Despite the important role played by art in the Algerian context, through the transmission of the colonial narratives and stereotypes as an effective means to naturalise the effects of conquest and rules (Hannoum, 2010, P 06), it undeniably helped, yet unintentionally by some, to archive and save the heritage from decline. However, this

research is not meant to delve into the intentions behind art, but it's necessary to emphasise one of the factors that helped to sustain the cultural heritage through the colonial endeavours to show the Exotic Algeria. For the French colonisation, it was necessary to demonstrate the magnitude of difference between the Algerian culture and the French one.

In this respect, Hannoun (2010, P 5) raises a series of correlative questions:

What is exoticism if not a form of otherness, and what is otherness in the 19th century if not a form of racial difference, and what is racial difference if not civilizational difference itself, and what is the latter, if not an assertion, a justification of difference, that is inequality in rights? (Hannoun, 2010, P 5). These questions prompt a reflective thinking on the idea that the Algerian clothing culture was within the picture of Algeria being produced and represented by the colonial power.

However, the breadth of the cultural manifestation across Algeria was well beyond French control, as the Algerians' resolute voices, strongly defended the components of their identity, resisting any acts of distortion, division, uprooting and replacement.

#### **5- Conclusion:**

Given the wealth of literature produced on Algeria during the nineteenth and twentieth century, it could be overwhelming for researchers and scholars to review all the available writings. However, research papers often open more windows of knowledge, as it's likely to come across forgotten, rare books, which would enormously enrich knowledge of the past. However, this research paper doesn't only shed light on the importance of the subject itself, but it also refers to how valuable travel books are when employed as an entrance into intertwined sciences and fields of studies.

Remarkably, clothing culture in Algeria in the nineteenth and twentieth century mirrored its significance within the social sphere. On one hand, it was a means of communication with the other, a non-verbal behaviour that could convey messages and tell incredible stories about themselves. On the other hand, it served as a means to demonstrate unity and connectivity among local communities. Thus, addressing the subject of clothing as a historical inquiry is always in liaison with culture, social aspects, values, norms, religion, and anthropology in general.

Given the blend of ethnicities of Arabs, Berbers and Moorish, who were part of the social texture, the fashion of clothing among them was permeated by a certain degree of distinction and uniqueness. Yet, the tradition of wearing burnous or gandoura for instance, marked no borders within the country, encompassing big cities and hinterlands. Furthermore, the custom of wearing burnous was popular among all social classes without exception, but with various types that differed in material, use and colour. In this light, the burnous which has long been perceived as prestigious, luxurious and fashionable, amounts to serve as a national attire.



To sum up, the Algerian traditional clothing in the last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and outset of 20<sup>th</sup> century, representing costumes, jewellerys, footwears and accessories, mirrors not only an intricate craftsmanship and artistry skills, but also a survived culture that stood against the uprooting winds under a substitute cultural influence.

In short, the travel writings which this paper dealt with are intended to serve as a testament to the deep rootedness of the Algerian culture of clothing across the country and among its community.

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