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RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Construction of the Scholarly Self in Ancient Algerian Prose Discourse: From Textual Authority to Authorial Agency in the Intellectual Traditions of the Islamic Maghreb

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Abstract

This study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of Algeria's accession to the Agreement on the Establishment of the Global Green Growth Institute pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 25-146, with a focus on the legal, environmental, and economic dimensions of this accession. The study concludes that Algeria's accession is grounded in clear legal foundations consistent with the Constitution and national legislation, and aligns with its environmental and sustainable development policies as well as its international commitments, including the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The findings also indicate that this accession goes beyond a merely protocol-oriented act, constituting instead a strategic step toward strengthening environmental governance and developing the national legislative and institutional framework. It contributes to the energy transition and the diversification of the national economy. Moreover, the accession provides Algeria with opportunities to benefit from financial and technical mechanisms for clean energy, the transfer of green technologies, national capacity-building, improved resource management, and the promotion of economic development through emerging green sectors—thereby enhancing both environmental sustainability and economic development.

Introduction:

Ancient Algerian literature, particularly its prose, is one of the most important chapters in the history of Arabic literature in the Islamic West. It embodies the fusion of Arab authenticity and local particularity, shaped by the interaction between Arab-Islamic culture and the Amazigh heritage and Maghrebian environment. However, much of this prose has been

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analysed purely within a rhetorical or historical framework, overlooking the intellectual structure of the writing self within it — what can be termed the 'scholarly self', which manifests in the texts as an intellect articulating knowledge and shaping cultural and social discourse.

Here, the concept of the scholarly self does not refer solely to a learned or articulate individual, but to a self that is aware of the writing process, using rhetorical and intellectual tools to establish its presence within and beyond the text. This self is not merely a transmitter of knowledge, but a producer of it. It possesses a dual authority: the authority of the text, imposed by its conventions and styles; and the authority of the author, which enables critical and creative awareness.

In this context, the aim of this paper is to explore the awareness of the scholarly self among Algerian writers, and to illustrate how authority transitioned from the text to the author, moving from formal domination to an individual awareness that reinterprets meaning.

The paper poses a central question: How does the authority of the scholarly self manifest in ancient Algerian prose discourse? What are the boundaries of the transition from the authority of the text to the authority of the author within the cultural and intellectual context of the time?

Using a dual methodology combining textual analysis and historical-critical approaches, the paper attempts to interpret ancient Algerian prose texts in light of the concept of textual authority as understood by ancient Arab critics, and the concept of the death of the author in modern criticism. The aim is to reveal the consciousness of writing within the intricacies of ancient Algerian prose discourse.

First: Foundations of the Study:

1. The Concept of the 'Scholarly Self':

The scholarly self encompasses literary and philosophical elements, as it involves an awareness of writing and the authority of knowledge within the text. Ahmad Barqawi describes the self, or 'ego', as follows: 'The ego is not merely sensations; the ego is not biology; the ego is social and cultural.' It is, therefore, a complex total existence that attains its distinction only through self-awareness. (Barkawi, 2009)" ... Because it exists in the world, the world exists in it.' This philosophical viewpoint regards the ego as a compound entity that transcends the physical body and biological sensations. It is a product of social and cultural interaction that grants individuals self-awareness of themselves and others. The 'ego' can only be understood through self-awareness, which enables a person to perceive their existence in the world and their relationship with it. Similarly, the world can only be understood through the ego's consciousness of it, thus affirming the dialectical relationship between the self and existence. This notion aligns with René Descartes's statement: 'Cogito ergo sum' (I think, therefore I am), linking the self to existence and conscious, knowledgeable thought about its surroundings.

In this context, the term is understood as the writer's own expression, where they reproduce prose discourse from the standpoint of a scholar and thinker rather than merely acting as a transmitter or narrator. Furthermore, a true writer carries the concerns of their society and cares for them as much as they care for themselves. They are a refuge for their joys and dreams, where the memory of the past converges with visions of the future, tying the writer deeply to their community and to what shapes their identity. This implies that a true writer is deeply connected to their society, embodying its hopes and sorrows and reflecting its memory and aspirations. In this way, their creativity becomes part of the collective identity and spirit (Hamoud, 2015).

In his analysis of ancient Algerian prose texts, Abdelmalek Mertad highlighted this dimension, tracing the trajectory of ancient Arabic literature in Algeria. He emphasised that it was not isolated from the significant movement of Arab creativity, but rather actively participated in it, producing texts of notable artistic and intellectual value. In his words, clear features of aesthetic cohesion and artistic maturity can be observed, reflecting the uniqueness of the Algerian experience within the broader Arab context: 'We have concluded that these ancient Arabic texts in Algeria exhibit a variety of artistic qualities that should be sought in any literature, including content, structure, imagery, vision and perspective (Mertad, 2009).' He affirmed that their artistic and intellectual components were integrated in such a way as to place them among the ranks of refined literatures. He viewed the ancient Algerian texts not merely as linguistic records or historical documentation, but as comprehensive creative works combining rich content with tight linguistic and stylistic construction, artistic imagery and profound intellectual and emotional perspectives. He also indicates that these texts possess vision and perspective: an intellectual viewpoint reflecting the creator's awareness of the world around them and an imaginative inspiration granting the literary work its aesthetic and symbolic dimensions.

Dr L'Arabi Dahou also refers to the adoption of cultural particularity in the Maghreb, even if it has an Eastern reference, framed by Arabism and Islam — "as it has been for all peoples" — considering the language of Islam to be the definitive source of this. He states: 'Thus, Arabic artistic prose has left clear and evident imprints on various sciences and arts around the world, and it is from this that what has grown in our lands, the lands of the Islamic Maghreb, has emerged.' This suggests that the written word becomes a cognitive agent that interrogates and reconstructs cultural and religious

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references in a language belonging to the Algerian context rather than to Eastern dependency. Ancient prose in Algeria was not mere repetition, but rather an intellectual reproduction of the spirit of the Arabic text. Since humans are products of their environment, living within and interacting with it, it follows that: 'If living beings are subject to time and space, and humans are most affected by these factors, then literature must consequently be influenced by them.' Therefore, literature is a mirror of humanity, and, since humans are affected by time and space, literature is necessarily shaped accordingly. The circumstances of the era and the writer's environment leave their mark on literary themes and styles, resulting in literary output that vividly expresses human interaction with temporal and spatial surroundings.

In his book Islamic Societies in the First Century, Shukri Faisal argues that awareness of the self in Arabic literature began to emerge from the moment it came into contact with the 'other' through Islamic conquests. He states: 'Observing literary life in the early Islamic period, when conquests were at their peak, created an upward trajectory for artistic prose, which gradually moved towards distant goals unhindered by obstacles. In fact, all dimensions of social, political and scientific life contributed to its artistic flourishing.' This perspective provides a comprehensive view of the development of artistic prose in early Islam, linking its flourishing to the significant civilizational movement experienced by the Islamic community at that time. It highlights the fact that literary prose was not isolated from reality, but influenced by the flourishing of political, social and scientific life, which facilitated its gradual evolution towards artistic and intellectual maturity. Faisal posits that literary growth was the result of comprehensive interaction between various aspects of life rather than an isolated individual effort. This makes prose from that era a true reflection of the vitality and cultural richness of the time.

This transformation enables us to connect the 'scholarly self' in ancient Algerian prose with the depth of the intellectual traditions from which it emerged, particularly during the centuries when cultural life flourished in Tlemcen, Béjaïa, Ghardaïa and other centres of learning.

2. From the Authority of the Text to the Authority of the Author:

Historically, the concept of textual authority in ancient Arabic criticism has been based on the idea that meaning resides within the text rather than in the author's intention. This concept was articulated by Abd al-Qahir al-Jurjani (d. 471 AH), who stated: 'Composition is nothing but arranging your words in accordance with the rules of grammar, adhering to its laws and principles, and understanding its pathways. Therefore, do not deviate from them.' This indicates that textual authority was grounded in the text's internal structure rather than the writer's intentions. Roland Barthes (1915–1980) also expressed this idea in his renowned essay The Death of the Author, in which he wrote: "Attributing a text to its author means stopping and restricting the text, giving it a definitive meaning." This implies that linking a text to its author limits its potential meanings, as understanding the writer's background can constrain the reader's interpretation of the text within a narrow, fixed framework. Therefore, attributing a text to an author stabilises its meaning and prevents it from opening up to new readings. However, liberating the text from the author's authority enables it to evolve through multiple readers and interpretations, giving it an independent life.

A critical reading of ancient Algerian prose reveals that the Algerian writer was not entirely absent from their text, but rather vividly present — not through self-serving subjectivity, but through their scholarly voice. This voice directs the discourse, constructing argumentation and meaning, particularly in prose genres. The writer is the orchestrator of the discourse they create. This aligns with the views of the French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984), who questioned the concept of the author, stating: 'The author is not merely the individual who wrote or spoke a text, but the author as a principle of collecting discourse; a unit and source of discourses' significations; and a focal point of their coherence.' Therefore, the author is not merely a name attached to a text, but an organisational principle that regulates the production of meaning.

According to Bahz Ibrahim Bakir, the peculiarities of prose discourse during the Rustamid period are characterised by 'concise phrasing, precise terminology, logical sequence, simplicity of discourse and the exclusion of irrelevant material'. This, he says, "suggests the beauty of the imams' style and their rhetorical prowess". As an imam, the scholarly author was able to structure the discourse by producing prose that combined stylistic beauty with rhetorical capability. This ensured that the text's contents emerged from meaningful thought suitable for life at that time.

This highlights the importance of authority in discourse production, where it plays a key role in favouring certain strategies over others. Therefore, the authority of the writer controls the direction of the discourse by selecting and highlighting certain strategies, making it a crucial element in shaping its content and modes of impact. Thus, the transition from the authority of the text to that of the author in ancient Algerian prose does not represent an opposition to heritage, but rather a manifestation of a writing self with epistemic awareness. This writing self transcends the mere functions of transmission and narration, taking on the roles of foundation and contemplation. The author does not merely express themselves through writing; they recreate the world according to their perceptions and understanding. This underscores the importance of authority in discourse production.

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This conception brings us closer to the nature of the self in ancient Algerian prose, where the religious intertwines with the cultural and the scientific with the aesthetic. This reveals the writing self to be a scholarly entity with multiple voices. It does not speak solely from a position of epistemic authority, but also from a sense of belonging to a civilisation.

Second: The Formation of the Scholarly Self in Ancient Algerian Prose:

Since the fourth century AH (the tenth century AD), Algeria has experienced a significant intellectual and literary renaissance, thanks to its scientific centers, which became beacons of cultural illumination in the Islamic West. These centers produced scholars, jurists, and literati who combined eloquence with knowledge, leading to the emergence of literary prose that transcended mere preaching and education to encompass contemplation and analysis. In this regard, Adel Noyehd, in his book *Dictionary of Notable Figures in Algeria*, praises the uniqueness of Algerian civilization under the influences of Arabic and Islam, stating: "Algeria has had, throughout the ages, since God blessed it with the gift of Islam and it was colored by the Arab identity, a glorious history full of accomplishments. Its notable figures—men, imams, sultans, and kings—have had a profound impact on both Arab and Islamic civilizations.'" He emphasizes that since the advent of Islam and its Arabization, Algeria has contributed significantly to Arab and Islamic civilization, with its men, scholars, and sultans leaving a clear mark on its historical glory and the trajectory of both civilizations.

Furthermore, when discussing the texts of Abdalwahab al-Rustami, Rabah Boulnar mentions: 'Here we note texts by Abdalwahab al-Rustami... He delivered sermons, offered advice and wrote letters that demonstrate a high level of intellectual sophistication, worthy of recognition and appreciation. This includes the sermon in which he appointed Al-Samah ibn Abi Al-Khattab as his deputy in Tihert. This statement highlights the importance of the intellectual and literary output of 'Abd al-Wahhab ibn 'Abd al-Rahman al-Rustani (d. 247 AH), who was not only a political leader and religious imam, but also a skilled orator and writer. Through his sermons and letters, he demonstrated a high level of intellectual maturity and stylistic refinement. Notably, his sermon upon Al-Samah's appointment embodies both persuasive and guiding dimensions, exemplifying his intellectual and political stature. These texts reflect the imam's views on authority, justice, and the principles of good governance, as well as his rhetorical style, which is founded on clarity and persuasion.

In his sermon, he stated: 'You, O Muslims, know that Al-Samah is my minister, the dearest to me and the most loyal to my state. I prioritise you over myself in order to fulfil your desires, and so I have appointed him over you. He will conduct himself as a Muslim should and will not commit acts that may provoke God's wrath or contradict us.' Rabah Boulnar comments on this text, saying: 'It features a literary elegance not seen in the preceding era, and contains glimpses of duality and artistry in embellishment and confirmation of meaning. Its strength and richness are evident in its jurisprudential expressions and lofty ideas.' This suggests that Abd al-Wahhab al-Rustani's style was beautiful and distinct from that of his predecessors, characterised by the use of powerful words and profound meanings, and the effective blending of religious thought with literary aesthetics. His expression was organised and meticulous, reflecting extensive knowledge and refined taste, making his writings powerful in meaning and beautiful in style.

This intertwining of knowledge, literature and religious manifestations paved the way for the emergence of the scholarly self: the Algerian writer spoke not only as a literary figure or jurist, but also as a linguistic scholar and cultural leader. He strove to establish a distinctive Maghrebi Arab cognitive discourse. This inclination towards rhetorical craftsmanship suggests that the literary tradition in ancient Algeria recognised the expressive potential of language, using it as a conceptual system capable of representing knowledge and identity simultaneously.

Third: Manifestations of the Scholarly Self in Ancient Algerian Prose:

The voice of the scholarly self emerged prominently in ancient Algerian prose through three main manifestations.

1. Guidance discourse:

This aspect particularly represents the art of correspondence. "A message is what a person writes to another, expressing particular or general matters, where the writer usually speaks spontaneously, without artifice or refinement. Sometimes, it seeks eloquence and delves into nuanced meanings, raising it to a high literary level. It is one of the most notable forms of ancient Algerian prose and an effective means of expressing thoughts and conveying guidance, sermons and instructions in various fields, including religious, political and social ones. This genre has contributed to the development of refined educational discourse with the aim of influencing the recipient to act or report something. Thus, the essence of discourse in messages fundamentally lies in prompting the recipient to take action or reach an understanding, thereby highlighting its persuasive and communicative nature. Furthermore, the art of correspondence relied on rhetoric and eloquence to persuade and guide the recipient, whether in correspondence between scholars and their students or between rulers and scholars regarding worldly and religious matters. It served as a tool for disseminating values and knowledge, and a means

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to root Algerian thought within the context of high literature and purposeful reform, manifesting the spirit of reform and awareness.

Attar Tawati states: 'Other manuscripts from the Maghreb and Andalusia were primarily collected for educational purposes, and in my opinion, they serve as a living model for anyone wishing to learn the art of writing.' This statement reflects the value of manuscript letters in the Maghreb and Andalusia as educational materials primarily aimed at training and enhancing the skills of scribes. The fact that they were 'collected for the purpose of learning' suggests that these manuscripts were not just historical documents, but rather a methodological model to be emulated in letter-writing and the art of writing. The statement highlights a clear appreciation for the role of these manuscripts in conveying rhetorical styles, organising meanings and training learners to construct coherent and effective texts. Describing them as 'a living model for anyone who wishes to learn the art of writing' affirms their ability to embody the practical principles of the art of correspondence, providing real-life examples, mature applications and robust techniques to assist students in acquiring functional and literary expression skills simultaneously.

One of the letters that exemplifies guidance and instruction is the following message: 'Guidance and Direction for Imam Aflah ibn Abd al-Wahhab, addressed to his congregation.' We highlight the following excerpts: 'The best counsel among people is to be conscious of God and to adhere to His obedience... May God have mercy on the Muslim who dedicates themselves to seeking knowledge. O gatherers of Muslims, follow the righteous examples of your ancestors and oppose those who follow misguided innovations and misleading desires...' This section clearly illustrates the presence of guidance and instructional methods in the message. Imam Aflah ibn Abd al-Wahhab begins his address by calling for consciousness of God and obedience to Him as the foundation of individual and communal righteousness. Such religious guidance is direct, aiming to embed spiritual values. He then moves on to cognitive guidance, encouraging the pursuit of knowledge and accountability towards it. This reflects Imam Rustami's concern for nurturing the recipient scientifically and ethically, and building their consciousness. He urges followers to emulate the righteous ancestors, a practice based on setting a good example to encourage upright conduct. The instructive aspect is further reinforced through a warning against the innovators and the desires of the heart, alerting listeners to threats to the unity and integrity of the community. Thus, the message intertwines religious guidance, moral awareness and social instruction, reflecting its role in reforming behaviour and guiding the faithful community.

2. The Persuasive Discourse:

This aspect represents the art of rhetoric in particular. Al-Jinni (d. 392 AH) defined discourse as 'the sounds by which every group expresses its intentions'. Discourse is the vocal means by which people express themselves and achieve their aims, making it closely linked to the social and cultural context of each community. Abdelmalek Mertad states: 'Every Rustamid imam had a unique collection of sermons dedicated solely to him, and he did not imitate others. Rather, he relied on himself.' This highlights important features of ancient Algerian rhetoric, particularly during the Rustamid state, when the scholarly self became a key focus of discourse and a source of authority. The existence of a specific collection of sermons for each imam indicates independence of style and the uniqueness of each orator's perspective. This reflects a scholarly self that shapes discourse based on knowledge and experience rather than imitation. The text emphasises this individualistic character by stating that the imam 'relies on himself', meaning he draws upon his rhetorical skill and jurisprudential knowledge, adding authenticity and clarity to the discourse.

Furthermore, the fact that sermons were often delivered impromptu reflects the speaker's confidence in their knowledge and ability to recall texts and information when needed. This is a prominent trait of ancient Algerian rhetoric, which relied on immediate knowledge and the capacity for direct persuasion. It combined stylistic independence, clarity of thought and the strength of the scholarly self, granting it a distinct character in the history of rhetoric in the Islamic West.

For example, Al-Barouni cited the sermon of Ahmad ibn Mansur, one of the Rustamid state's speakers, in Al-Azhar Al-Riyadhiyya when mentioning him through Ibn al-Saghir: 'I attended many sermons from their orators... the fifth being Ahmad ibn Mansur...' Al-Barouni listed five orators from the Rustamid state, but did not provide their biographies. Here are excerpts from his sermon: 'Praise be to Allah, who began creation with His blessings and encompassed them all with the beauty of His favours... He created places and times, then ascended to the heavens while it was smoke (Surah Fussilat: 11). He made the Quran a guide for the pious and a source of guidance for believers, as well as a judge between disputants. Indeed, He counted everything in numbers, and I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, alone with no partner, and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, who proclaims the command and extinguishes the fire of disbelief...'

This religious sermon is a clear demonstration of the strength of persuasion and argumentation, relying on solid faith-based and rational foundations. It begins by outlining the attributes of God, such as His power in creation and generosity. These attributes are supported by references to Quranic verses, lending the argument both rational and textual depth. In the context of persuasion, evidence plays a pivotal role, as "the witness, regardless of its type, provides the grounds for argumentation and the potential for persuasion and influence, reaching both the intellect and the heart of the reader with ease" (Sahrawi, 1999). What greater evidence could there be than the Noble Quran and its verses? When the speaker

presents the Quran as guidance for believers, employing verse eleven from Surah Fussilat, he uses a persuasive approach that highlights the book's authority and ability to unify meaning and adjudicate matters. The speaker also affirms the prophethood of the Messenger (peace be upon him) by referencing his role in revealing the truth — proof based on the message's impact on reality and history. The speaker concludes by illustrating the distinction between the learned and the ignorant: those who recognize God's power, the truth of the Prophet and the place of the Qur'an elevate their understanding and faith, while the ignorant remain steeped in heedlessness. Thus, the sermon combines textual and rational arguments to present its meanings in a way that strengthens persuasion and enhances the impact of admonition on listeners' souls.

This discourse showcases the authority of the reflective self that appeals to reason and grants itself independent epistemic legitimacy. This reflects the Algerian writer's awareness of their role as a scholar, thinker and preacher.

Abdelmalek Mertad states: 'The imams and speakers had such culture, knowledge and mastery of expressing the stirrings of their souls and the turmoil of their thoughts, enabling them to innovate in their delivery of sermons and take them to new heights, anticipating the development and control of the art of speech and the embellishment of words. This reflected the cultural level they had attained in terms of knowledge, as well as their capacity for improvisation and their ability to influence the audience." This is what gives ancient Algerian rhetoric its distinct nature, with its roots in the scholarly self. The speakers enjoyed extensive culture and a high ability to express their ideas and emotions, which gave their discourse authenticity and depth. These rhetorical features are evident in their speeches, characterized by creative delivery and a gradual sermon structure that strengthens the argument and captivates the audience. Additionally, their use of linguistic aesthetics serves to enhance the meaning and persuasiveness of their discourse. Their improvisational skills demonstrate complete mastery of their epistemic and rhetorical tools, making their sermons profoundly impactful and representing a prominent model of influential rhetoric in Algerian heritage.

3. Emotional and Intellectual Discourse:

This aspect particularly represents the art of maqamat (rhetorical anecdotes), which are brief narrative tales containing verses of poetry. They revolve around the adventures of a witty protagonist who is eloquent, knowledgeable, crafty, and successful through trickery and wit. Rich in action, dialogue and debate, they often include humour or wit and are narrated by a single storyteller. The structure of discourse in a maqama carries clear emotional and intellectual strength as the story is based on lively narratives filled with action and dialogue that captivate listeners' emotions and attention through humour, wit and amusing situations. At the same time, the protagonist's witty character highlights the intellectual aspect — eloquent and knowledgeable in language — as he employs his knowledge and cunning to confront reality, showcasing linguistic intelligence and argumentative skill.

Collectively, these elements operate within a realm of symbolic conflict. The story serves not merely as entertainment, but as a battleground where the protagonist's linguistic and cognitive superiority over his adversaries is displayed. He triumphs in the realm of reason and cleverness over ignorance and superficiality. Emotional discourse, through rhythm, movement and delightful situations, serves to enhance intellectual discourse, producing a text that shapes the community's symbolic awareness and affirms the status of language and acuity in Arab culture. As has been said, 'Every writer has a set of influences that shape their intellectual, cognitive and creative foundation, and these influences quickly manifest in their work (Farag, 2019). Writers are influenced by diverse knowledge and cultural sources, and these influences swiftly manifest in their works, shaping the contours of their thought and creativity.

We can reference Ibn Hamadoush's Maqama al-Harkliyya (d. 1200 AH), highlighting the uniqueness of the scholarly self, especially when the protagonist is both writer and actor in the events. 'The position of the narrator in the narrative is significant as it directs the narrative discourse in the desired direction', because the narrator is a decisive element in guiding the narrative. They choose the perspective and determine what is said and how it is said, thus granting the narrative discourse its form, meaning and impact on the audience. Ibn Hamadoush states: 'I descended into an inn that resembled the houses of flames or the churches of monks. No doubt it is from the houses of rebellion... until night stretched its wings and the sky lit its lamp... The voices calmed, and we became like the dead... It was only the clamour of voices, the calling of singers and the pushing and shoving of 'give and take' that awoke me."

This prose excerpt from the maqama reveals a clear specificity of ancient Algerian literature, showcasing the writer's ability to blend thought and emotion through powerful descriptive language. His use of metaphors such as 'houses of flames' and 'churches of monks' reflects a broad cultural awareness and a strong sense of the self as a scholar with knowledge of religious and social spaces, which he uses to create profound meaning. The emotional aspect is also evident in the richness of the sensory imagery: 'Night stretched its wings,' 'the sky lit its lamp'; these images lend the text a vivid poetic character. The intellectual dimension is evident in the writer's interpretation of the setting as a place of 'rebellion', indicating that the narrator is not merely descriptive, but also authoritative in their judgement, evaluating the setting and revealing its values. Meanwhile, scenes such as "the clamour" and "the calling of singers" highlight a sense of observation and precision

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in imagery, emphasising the presence of an educated and aware self that is intellectually and emotionally engaged with its surroundings.

This blending of spiritual and intellectual knowledge emphasises the characteristics of the 'scholarly self', writing from a place of deep experience and transcendent awareness, and transforming the act of writing into an emotional and intellectual endeavour.

Fourth: Results of the study:

We can summarise the main results obtained through this scientific paper as follows:

1. The 'scholarly self' in ancient Algerian prose is not a concept imported from Eastern literature, but an authentic literary and intellectual experience deeply rooted in a distinctive cultural context.

2. Ancient Algerian prose featured a scholarly self that was uniquely connected to political and social realities. 3. Algeria experienced complex political transformations from the Rustamid state to the end of Ottoman rule (776–1830 CE), compelling the writer to navigate between the authority of the ruler and that of the pen. This resulted in a dual discourse blending obedience and critique, as well as eloquence and reason.

3. The Algerian writer was a scholar, thinker and educator who aimed to produce knowledge derived from their environment, using language as a tool for epistemic authority rather than for mere rhetorical embellishment.

4. The authority of the text shifted to that of the author. This transformation is embodied in ancient Algerian prose, which balances eloquence and reason, the subordinate and the creative, and emotion and thought. This cultural perspective reflects the coexistence of literature and its creator as a thoughtful scholarly self, not merely imitative.

5. The voice of the scholarly self in ancient Algerian prose is not just a speaker, but engages from a position of comprehensive knowledge. This self exerts its influence through guidance, persuasion and conviction, fulfilling educational, social and religious functions.

Thus, ancient Algerian prose reflects a conscious interaction with Arabic prose discourse while maintaining the distinctiveness of Algerian writing.

Ethical Considerations

This study is based exclusively on the analysis of historical and literary texts and does not involve human participants, personal data, or experimental procedures. Therefore, ethical approval was not required. The authors confirm that the research adheres to accepted academic standards of integrity, originality, and proper citation.

Author Contributions

- Dr. Helal Chafia: Conceptualization of the study, theoretical framework development, supervision, and critical revision of the manuscript.
- Warda Guendouz: Data collection, textual analysis, drafting of the manuscript, and literature review.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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The Construction of the Scholarly Self in Ancient Algerian Prose Discourse: From Textual Authority to Authorial Agency in the Intellectual Traditions of the Islamic Maghreb
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