

## Plagiarism of Jahiliya Poetry in Izutsu's Qur'anic Studies

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### Abstract

Orientalists mainstream in studying of poetry of Jahiliya or pre-Islam era were divided between two main attitudes: Orientalists considered Jahiliya poetry nothing, but a plagiarized poetry fabricated by Muslims in first century after Hijrah. The other attitude is the group who accept the fact of existence of Jahiliya poetry. Toshihiko Izutsu have studied Qur'an in Semantic approach and he depended on Jahiliya poetry in exploration and analyses of religious ethics of Jahiliya, world view of that era and the shift towards Islamic religious ethics and its world view. He didn't find that plagiarism is strong hypotheses and he refused it Based on many evidence. This paper tries to position Izutsu in this issue in his deserved place in map of ideas and context of orientalists and researchers of Islamic studies.

**Keywords:** Orientalists, Jahiliya Poetry, Pre-Islam Era, Religious Ethics

### Introduction

Arabic language richness was one of the empowerment factors of spread of Islam as it was the language of Qur'an (AlFarooq & Riaydi, 2022). Jahiliya is an Arabic concept taken from the same word which means: to be ignorant or to behave with stupidity. It refers to the period of time and state of affairs in Arab land before the advent of Islam in 610 CE. It begins with the later era of Himyar kingdom at 300 CE that means it lasted for 3 centuries. This concept is translated as the "Age of Ignorance". Jahiliya was a pagan lifestyle and paganism was the main character. In social life we find that tribal affiliation was praised highly, and the poet was a tool of expressing this. The importance of poetry was presented in choosing the greatest poems to be put on the walls of K'aba (Saeed, 2020).

Jahiliya poetry is that genre of literature produced during one and half century before Islam emergence (Tekin, 2022). The term Plagiarism means to quote someone else without citing the source. In our topic it refers even to the idea of fabricating (Tekin, 2022). AlTabaal (2022) means also "attribution of sayings to another person other than the original source of this sayings".

The importance of studying plagiarism of Jahiliya poetry is actually related to Qur'anic studies as Jahiliya poetry represents the language of Arabic in Qur'an revelation era. This poetry influenced understanding Qur'an's meaning. This issue is also related to miraculous nature of Qur'an's language which is the main proof of authenticity of prophet Mohammed (peace and blessing be upon him) message. Orientalists tried to weaken the authenticity of Jahiliya poetry to refuse the miraculous of Qur'an in linguistics aspect (AlMalky, 2019).

From what mentioned above It is obvious that Jahiliya poetry which is the genre produced by Arabs in last 150 years before Islam was the main context of Arabic language which Qur'an dealt with. Based on that any doubts in authenticity of a poet reflects on understanding of an aspect of Jahiliya lifestyle in religious or worldly affairs. It adds more difficulties in deepening our understanding of Qur'an and approving its miraculous nature.

### **Literature Review**

Plagiarism in Jahiliya poetry has been discussed through many papers from different perspectives. Masrwah (2016) has discussed Plagiarism of Jahiliya poetry in British and German Orientalism as a PhD thesis in Arts- Jelali Liabes university – Algeria. This paper discussed Plagiarism in German and British orientalism and approves that there are two main opinions in this field. The first attitude is to consider the majority of Jahiliya poetry plagiarized by narrators in the first century after Hijrah. AlMalki (2019) in her paper about the same issue discussed Margoliouth and Noldeke as orientalists and Taha Hussain and Mustafa AlRafei' in modern Muslims scholars. The paper presents purposes of orientalists in supporting plagiarism of Jahiliya poetry. There is also a paper by AlHassan & Fakur-Udeen (2020) in which they have discussed the orientalists' criticism of Qur'an style because of repetition that they have considered this aspect is a weak point in Qur'an style. This paper approved through studying examples of Jahiliya poetry to approve that this style was there in Arabic language, and it was used widely by those poets. The paper of AlFarooq & Riyadi (2022) entitled with: Taha Husain's Skepticism Of Jahili Poet and Its Position In The Qur'an: Analysis Of Taha Husain's Thought In Fi Al-syir Alhahili discussed in details Taha Husain point of view and approved that it is totally wrong and has many undesirable outcomes on Qur'anic studies. As it is based on orientalists' attitudes.

AlTabbal (2022) studied plagiarism in Jahiliya poetry in orientalism and history of Arabic literature. She discussed this issue and how Arab narrators of Jahiliya poetry discovered this issue and explain it. She points out the case of orientalists' studies in this field.

About Toshihiko Izutsu there was one paper discussed his usage of Jahiliya poetry written by Essa Ali AlAkoub was published with the book issued by Islamic university in Malaysia in 2010 and was issued in 2<sup>nd</sup> edition in 2021. This paper discussed the case of Izutsu's study of "Allah" and the position of Jahiliya poetry in these references. This paper didn't refer to the issue of plagiarism in Izutsu's point of view. The lack of interest from AlAkoub himself may relate to fact lack detail in Izutsu's work in his discussion of this issue. By comparing Izutsu with other orientalists I found Izutsu's methodology in studying issues of Jahiliya poetry so important as he had raised many points adding new ideas to orientalists' attitude which supports the authenticity of Jahiliya poetry in a way that it supports this idea and present the level of involvement of Izutsu in Islamic culture.

### **Importance of Jahiliya Poetry**

#### ***Jahiliya Poetry in Islamic Prospective***

Islam has treated the relation with Jahiliya by dividing customs and values of Jahiliya to good and characteristics. Amongst good characteristics for example: generosity, hospitality, courage, fulfillment of commitments, covenants and protecting of neighborhood... etc. Islam accepted all these aspects and even some rules of marital relations as prohibitions of marriage with mothers and sisters. Bad characteristics were mainly polytheism, social corruption as alcoholism, adultery and warfare, etc. In social life One of the most important values of Jahiliya was the tribal pride which means degrading and belittling other tribal affiliations. On the other hand, Islam reforms all these phenomena by refusing polytheism and building new creed on Monotheism. Refusing inhumane treatment of women and add many rights for them. Rebuilding unity of Arabs around the new faith instead of having tribal affiliation. (Saeed, 2020).

About Poetry, it is obvious that Jahiliya has its own characteristic of expressions through their poetry for their feelings. Jahiliya poetry shed light on Arab intellectual life as they have knowledge about many sciences despite the opinion of some researchers who considered Jahiliya as a time of ignorance and cruelty (AlFarooq & Riaydi, 2022). This poetry was related to intellectual life of Arab despite the ignorance which dominated the life of Arabs. There are qualitative poets who were exceptionally with high level of language (Saeed, 2020).

As Qur'an has used the same language of Jahiliya poetry then the later was used widely to interpret Qur'an as Ibn 'Abbass (May Allah Be pleased with them) has used this poetry to explain words meanings. Due to this practice the majority of scholars have positioned literature and Jahiliya poetry as reference for words meanings and their shifts and developments. According to many researchers Jahiliya poetry has a potential rule in determining the original meaning of words, the words which aren't commonly used (Gharib), Foreign words (AlFarooq & Riaydi, 2022). Moreover, Jahiliya poetry is the evidence of Arabic style at time of revelation of Qur'an as repetition and other rhetoric styles which Qur'an has used them for many purposes. Defending Qur'an in this field of oriental criticism of linguistics can be a great tool (Hasan & Fakar-Udeen, 2020). Qur'an's linguistic superiority is related to the fact of level of Arabic language itself at time of revelation. As there was a great legacy of poetic traditions amongst Arabs at that time (Elimam & Husain, 2018).

Many researchers considered that we don't have but a few amounts of Jahiliya poetry (Tekin, 2022). It cannot be determined precisely when the Jahiliya Arabs began to make their own poetry but in general it could be thousands of years before Islam emerged in Macca. Soon after emergence of Islam and beginning of Islamic conquests in Persian and Byzantine Empires' territories. These shifts in life of Arabs lead them to degrade Jahiliya as an era and its poetry as well while some researchers consider these changes a great factor in developing Jahiliya poetry. (AlFarooq & Riaydi, 2022).

In social life of Jahiliya, poets have had been positioning as spokesmen and ambassadors of their tribes. The poets were tribal historians as they recorded victories of their tribes. As poetry was the highest level of expression. (Elimam & Husain, 2018).

#### ***Plagiarism in Jahiliya Poetry in Traditional Islamic Literature***

Plagiarism in Jahiliya poetry is an observed phenomena for the first generation after prophetic period. Some poets were attributed to Umiyya Ibn Abu AlSalt while it was for AlNabighah AlJa'di while the later said clearly that it is attributed to Ummiya Ibn Abu AlSalt by fabrication. Some poets were attributed to Abu Bakr AlSeddiq (May Allah be pleased with him) while his

daughter Aishah (May Allah be pleased with her) said clearly that her father didn't say any rhyme in Islam (AlTabaal, 2022). Later on, Ibn Hesham in his work of Prophetic biography which compiled by Ibn Ishaq has recognized many poems and refused its attribution to many companions. AlAsm'iy and many narrators also have been admitting and stating cases of plagiarizing.

Ibn Sallam used literature and linguistics to do his study of this issue. He had referred to grammarians as experts in distinguishing the original poems from fabricated or wrongfully attributed ones. That relates to their need to use the original poets in approval of Arabic Grammar with strong bases (AlMalky, 2019).

Plagiarism as phenomena had its own reason to take place. The tribal and political issues have influenced the cultural atmosphere. Every tribe has been keen to preserve its glory and prove its history and legacy by fabricating long poems and attribute them to their poets. This opinion was supported by many Muslim historian of literature as Ibn Sallam, Ibn Qutaibah and AlJahez (AlTabbal, 2022).

### **Jahiliya Poetry in Orientalists Studies**

According to Tekin (2022) Jahiliya poetry is a fundamental part of Islamic sciences. The orientalist have chosen to study Jahiliya poetry after their failing in proving historical sources of Qur'an and prophetic Hadith. By spreading doubts about Jahiliya poetry they have shed doubts in all Arab history before Islam and their lifestyle and also miraculous nature of Qur'an itself. They have tried to trace Qur'an to older sources as Christianity, Judaism, Far East religion as oral sources and Arabic culture of pre-Islam encompasses Hanifs, Pagan Arabic culture and many other cultures (Tekin, 2022). Orientalists claimed that Qur'an has quoted from Jahiliya poetry especially Ummiya Ibn Abi AlSalt as there are many similarities -as they have seen them- in topics as Hereafter, prophets and call for monotheism. On the other hand, Janiliya poetry is so essential to proof the originality and authenticity of Qur'an in contrast with claims of weakness which were raised by orientalist (Hasan & Fakar-Udeen, 2020). This claim was raised with Tesdal (Mozaffari & Darabi, 2023).

These claims of plagiarism of Jahiliya poetry were raised since the third decade of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The German orientalist: Wilhelm Hengetsenberg who published an article on orientalism magazine about this issue in 1823. Then he was followed by Springer who discussed it in his paper about narrators and narrations in Arab heritage which was published in 1856. In the same year Ahlwardt published his paper about Arabic poetry, Then Nodleke published his own work about Arabic poetry in 1864. Ahlwardt published another paper in 1872 about it.

British orientalism has interested in this issue through works of Reynold Nicholson, Charles Layal and finally Margoliouth who has the most remarkable work with his approach based on skepticism (Bin-Ali, 2016). Margoliouth influenced Taha Hussain. The skepticism as a method has resulted in consideration of all the jahiliya poetry as plagiarized. While some orientalist accepted that there are some but n't all poetry is plagiarized as: Charles James Lyall, Fritz Krenkow and Erich Braunlich (Tekin, 2022).

### ***Rientalists Who Supported Plagiarism of Jahiliyyah Poetry***

Theodore Noldeke has stated that most poems are plagiarized while some are original. He relates this issue to the time factor in documenting this poetry. There was in his point of view on century between Jahiliya and late Umayyad era when it was documented by writing from oral narrations through both scholars and Bedouin as well (Tekin, 2022). Noldeke stated the

impossibility of accepting the efficiency of people's memory to preserve this heritage of literature without writing it down for long time.

He noticed some differences in ascribing poems to their poets and some signs of intentional and wrongful distortion happened. Some narrators were motivated to add deliberately some rhymes to the poems to add flavors to their stories about the past. The religious influence on narrating the Jahiliya poetry was one of Noldeke points. Ahlordt and Noldeke accused Muslims with changing the poems which include pagan gods by omitting these names and add Allah or omitting the total rhymes due to this purpose. On the other hand, he added many other reasons to accept the idea of plagiarism as styles between poets which approve mistakes in attribution. There were personal reasons motivated to create poems and attribute them to Jahiliya poets to proof their deep knowledge of Arab heritage. He criticized Hammad AlRawiyya and Khalaf AlA'Hmar highly and with hard language. Actually, Noldeke himself admitted that he cannot judge the authenticity of Jahiliya poetry as he has lack of efficiency in Arabic language (Bin-Ali, 2016). Ahlwrdt considered that writing down of Jahiliya poetry began in the second century after Hijrah and due to oral narration poems were mixed with errors, mistakes and distortions (Tekin, 2022).

Brokelman himself shared the same language against Hammad AlRaiyya (Bin-Ali, 2016). Margoliouth has emphasized on what he considered as Islamic styles and values added to Jahiliya poetry as it doesn't reflect the Jahiliya lifestyle with Judeo-Christian or Pagan life. The used language is Qur'anic one and not a representative of all dialects as Northern and southern ones. He said that there were no evidence from ruins in Yemen for any poetry activities in Southern Arab Peninsula (AlTabaal, 2022). Documenting of Jahiliya poetry has studied by him and he stated that Jahiliya poetry has reached us verbally and sometime written. This type of poetry has lost its importance as Arabs involve in Islamic conquest so many narrators have been killed or with natural dead. Later on, in first century. Jahiliya poetry has been made up in Islamic era in accordance to Qur'an spirit Tekin (2022) He stated that Arabs influenced by Qur'an and made their own poetry later on. The poets were scattered in Arab peninsula, but the level wasn't so strong enough at all. On the other hand, the poetry was made after Islam, attributed and plagiarized to Jahiliyya poets (AlMalki, 2019). Taha Hussain agreed with this opinion (Tekin, 2022). Later on, Taha Hussain revised his ideas in this issue and declared to Mahmoud Shaker that he turned away from this idea (AlMalky, 2019).

### ***Orientalists supported authenticity of Jahiliya poetry***

There are many orientalist who refused plagiarism of Jahiliya poetry. One of them was Charl Lyall who founded his opinion based on the fact of writing Jahiliya poetry in the first half of first century after Hijrah. The documentation and narration have been practiced by generations with full care because of the social importance of Arabic literature. Linguistically he has found that poets of the first and second century as Jarer and Thu Ramma have considered Jahiliya poetry as an example to be followed either in terms or in content (Tekin, 2022). Lyal considered also that the tribal pride was a great motivation in memorizing and transmitting the poems related to tribal pride or insulting its enemies, the cultural atmosphere supported transmitting poems amongst all people in the tribe and then it was so common. He stated that ancient Indian poems and its memorization for centuries before spreading of writing and literacy. Layal stated that we cannot give ultimate trust to people's memory and there are some distortions that should happen. In addition to that, he had depended on scholars' acceptance of this poet in the first Century after Hijrah (Tekin, 2022). Layal considered that narrators cannot fabricate poems from their own without examples to

be followed by them. He added also that there were many words which aren't common any more in times of narrators of first century After Hijrah (AlTabaal, 2022).

Reynold Nickson has stated his trust in narrators. He built his opinion on the position of poet in the tribe which join in addition to poetry metaphysical meaning and function. He stated that there were many religious expressions reflecting the Jahiliya and its traditions. However, he also claimed Islamic influence on the narrations by omitting name of gods, Quraish dialect supremacy and other cultural factors.

Mueir and Velhowzen were one of supporters of writing Jahiliyya poetry in early era (Bin-Ali, 2016). Krenkw considered oral texts were preserved because of strong memories of Arabs but distortions happened because of writing texts in very early era when the similar letters have no dots on (Tekin, 2022). Krenkove appreciate highly the rule of grammarians as AlAs'Miy and Abu 'Amr Ibn Al'Alaa and Abu 'Ubaidah and others. (Bin-Ali, 2016). Braunlich refused to generalize certain judgement against or with praising narrators as there are levels of authenticity and evaluation. He stated that competition and sense of envy lead also to purify the amount of Jahiliya poetry which reached us as all probabilities were discussed and we can approach them and clarify (Bin-Ali, 2016). Moreover Erich Braunlich build his opinion on differences between tribal dialects and differences between Qur'an and Jahiliya poetry was so essential in topics not in wards or terms. He stated that there is plagiarism in some of Jahiliya poems but this poetry in general is real and original (Tekin, 2022).

### **Izutsu in Plagiarism of Jahiliya Poetry**

#### ***Izutsu and Jahiliya Poetry***

In contradiction to all above mentioned opinions. Toshihiko Izutsu has his own methodology of discussing this issue. In a paradox, using "Allah" as a name of God in Jahiliya poetry was one of Margaliluoth evidence to support plagiarism of of his support of Jahiliya Poetry the using of ward Allah. While there were many verses and Rhymes of poets include the name of Allah and other pagan gods all together (Bin-Ali, 2016). The same evidence was used by Izutsu to constitute his conception about world view of Jahiliya and Qur'an and approach the shift. Izutus considered Jahiliya poetry as a popular and social phenomenon which encompasses whole society. The poetry was transmitted beyond limits of distances and obsticals of communication. Also, He praised Jahiliya poetry and poets as they have reached highest level of language and metaphoric expression. Izutsu has connected poetry with pagan traditions of fortunetelling and predictors, but he also considered that Jahiliya poetry has developed well through its great poets. He delt with Jahiliya poetry as data to be analyzed and understood as part of research about the concept of Allah in Jahiliya. He has made the model to cover cultural contexts of this conception. According to Jahiliya poem there were the pagan concept, the Judeo-Christian concept. On the other hand, Jahiliya poetry stand as a good example of religious status of Arabs who had begun to create a spiritual religion in a way as it is found in Ummiyya Ibn Abu AlSalt.

This poetry reflects the pagan understanding of divinity and position of Allah which later on become not the supreme God over other gods but the ultimate and only God worthy to be worshiped. There is a case in which the conception of Allah is become shared in its Judeo-Christan concept but used by pagan Arabs. The most obvious example of this issue is the poems of ANabeghah AlThubiany before the Christian king of AlHira. This change wasn't a temporary in AnNbeghah mind it was so deep that he had used this conception in his poetry in a fact refer to the idea of using this concept in his poetry for Arabs. There is another example of inter-cultural relations in Jahiliya in shymes said By Ady Ibn Zaid the poet from

AlHira who used on his oath in that rhyme Allah the lord of Holy house of worship in Macca and the Jesus christ.

In case of Ummyia Ibn Abu AlSalt we found ourselves in front of Hanif conception about Allah which is similar to Qur'anic conception. Izutsu discussed Issue of This poet especially that Ummyia have had refused the prophecy of Prophet Mohammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon Him). However, Izutsu present Ummyia as an important example of Hanif attitude expressed in poems. The rich culture of Ummyia Ibn Abu AlSalt was including many sources reflected in his poems as Syrian language sources (Thoha, 2021).

Jahiliya poets represent many religious and spiritual concepts and only for the concept of Allah but for many other issues as intellectual abilities in rhyme of AlShanfara, or even the ward Ghayeb which it means unseen or things beyond abilities of human observation through a rhyme of 'Antarah. In case of this concept, Izutsu analyzed the word to proof that it was related to worldly life not to religious meaning. In other cases, this world or Duniya is something discussed in Jahiliya poetry in different dimensions with 'Ubaid Ibn AlAbrass it was little bet related to Hereafter. While Helfire is mentioned in a rhyme of Antara as Jahnam but also related to worldly affairs of protecting dignity. The book, which encompasses every detail of this life, was a concept mentioned in Mu'llaqah of Zuhair Ibn Abu Sulma also (Izutsu, 2019 a).

Also, Izutsu considered Jahliya poetry as the ethical constitution of Arabs of that era. Then, all ethical issues were mentioned and discussed clearly in this poetry in a way presents the reality in which Arab has lived and behaved (Izutsu, 2019 b).

The status of Jahilliya poetry in case of Izutsu studies of Qur'an can be observed trough opinion of AlAkoub (2021) who considered that Izutsu point the Jahilliya poetry as second source of information about the conception of Allah in that era. The first source was Qur'an without any doubt (AlAkoub, 2021).

### ***Izutsu response to Plagiarism in Jahiliya poetry***

Izutsu discussed clearly the opinion of Orientalists about plagiarism in Jahiliya poetry when he mentioned Heavenly book which encompasses destinies are predestinated in. He supported Charles Layal point of view in this issue. He added more evidence in this field. He stated that Many orientalists considered these concepts attributed to Jahiliya poetry by later Muslims. They have used these concepts as examples and proof of this hypothesis. He said that we should be more careful about this issue. He has supported the authenticity of Jahiliya poetry by these proves:

- The monotheism ideas were scattered in Arab peninsula in late Jahiliya times. In the case of Zuhair Ibn Abu Sulma and the idea of book of predestination. It is related to the idea of audience who are under influence of Judeo-Christian culture.
- There were general ideas or belief in resurrection in some way. There is some evidences about certain habits related to symmetries presenting this idea. Even the idea of predestination was mentioned in many rhymes where there are clear references to written predestination in a book.
- Qur'an itself discussed issues as resurrection and many other religious ideas with wards from Arabic languages in a way as if those Arabs of Jahiliya have these ideas in their minds. May be there were not presented or spread amongst majority of them but no way to denial of existence of these ideas. There are many poetry rhymes referring to these ideas (Izutsu, 2019 a).

Based on all these ideas and proofs, we can say that Izutsu dealt with Jahiliya poetry in general as authentic body of literature. He discussed this issue in an analytical way to observe carefully the shift in world view from pre-Islamic Arabic one to Islamic world view. Izutsu's analytical approach supported the authenticity of this poetry not only as a literature but also as a cultural and social influential phenomenon.

### **Conclusion**

Jahiliya poetry is a genre of literature produced within last 150 years before Islam while it has deep lost roots. This poetry is so important as it represents the intellectual, cultural life of Arabs before Islam. This life was not full of ignorance, but it was full of both good and bad characteristics. Islam approved many good aspects of Jahiliya but refused main aspects as paganism and inhumane treatment of women and weak people.

For Qur'anic studies, Jahiliya poetry was important in interpretation Qur'an and understanding the atmosphere in which Qur'an revealed and responded to. Miraculous nature of Qur'an was actually related to richness and high level of Arab in poetry in general.

As orientalist have been searching for historical sources to trace Qur'an back to earthly sources not heavenly ones. They considered Jahiliya culture as one of these sources. Some claimed that Umiya Ibn Abu AlSalt's poems as one of these sources. However, many of them tried to Izutsu has dealt with Jahiliya poetry to observe carefully the change and shift in world view to Islamic one. So that he analyzed Jahiliya poetry and discussed it. His point of view about plagiarism was to refuse this idea and consider that it has no proof to support it. He praised highly the language and metaphoric style of this poetry especially the famous names as Amru' AlQays and who are in his level.

On the other hand, there are many evidences supported the authenticity of Jahiliya poetry in general. There were many ideas and concepts known to Arabs in that time. Also, there are many monotheistic ideas scattered here and there. The audience themselves understood the poetry and these ideas. Qur'an wasn't discussing conception such as resurrection with people doesn't know this concept before, but the discussion was with those people who knows meaning of resurrection and judgment.

The involvement of Izutsu in Islamic culture and his deep understanding of it allowed him to have this approach. The uniqueness of his approach is essentially traced back to this focal point. As his project and methodology aimed to reach to understand Qur'an and Islamic culture as well. His analytical work in Jahiliya poetry allowed him to add more evidence to support authenticity of this great legacy remained through centuries to inspire many generations and shed light on Qur'an meanings and interpretations.



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