Deviation from Tribal Traditions:
The Other Face of Poetry in Pre-Islamic Arabia

Andri Ilham*

Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

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E-Mail Address

andriilham@unj.ac.id

***Corresponding Author**

Abstract

Poetry in pre-Islamic Arabia is a social document (*dīwān*) and the most authoritative source possessed by the Arab people. This fact does not imply that pre-Islamic poetry is monotonous with a single pattern of tendency. On the contrary, pre-Islamic poetry is a collection of various tendencies that are divided into different aspects and diversities, both in expression (*al- taʿbīr*) and content (*al-muḥtawá*). Therefore, this study aims to describe the facts about pre-Islamic poetry that not only revolves around tribal fanaticism (*ʿaṣabīyah qabalīyah*) but also exhibit deviations from tribal (*qabīlah*) traditions. The research method employed in this study essentially utilizes historical methods, including the heuristic, criticism, and interpretation steps in analyzing the acquired data sources. The results of this study indicate that the other side of the content of pre-Islamic poetry which deviates, is reflected in two tendencies: first, deviations that arise from individual subjective experiences (*al-tajribah al-dhātīyah*), such as the poems of Imruʾ al-Qays and Ṭarafah ibn al-ʿAbd; second, deviations that arise from political and ideological experiences (*al-tajribah al-siyāsīyah al-īdiyūlūjīyah*), as reflected in the poems of the brigand (*Ṣaʿālīk*) group.

Introduction

Arabic poetry in pre-Islamic era (*al-Jāhilīyah*) is indeed a literary work that emphasizes aesthetic aspects. However, on the other hand, we can see that poetry reflects the real life of Arab society in that era. Some of its content offers a testimony to the ideas and mindset of the Arabs during the pre-Islamic era (Ḥusayn, 1998). The perfection of form as a sign of the excellence of pre-Islamic poetry (*al-shiʿr al-Jāhilī*) never made it solely an verbal art (*fann qawlī*) that existed for the sake of art itself, detached from its social function. If we look back at the tradition of poetry during that time, it can be ensured that poetry rarely abandoned its role as a linguistic production (*al-intāj al-lughawī*) that recorded and expressed the social and intellectual tendencies of its time (Amīn, 1969; al-Musawi, 2006).

As the most well-known medium of expression for pre-Islamic Arabs, where oral culture (*al-thaqāfah al-shafawīyah*) dominated them, poetry emerged and developed primarily through hearing, not reading, and through songs rather than writing (Adonis, 1989). Poetry became the first linguistic production (*al-intāj al-lughawī al-awwal*), alongside sermons (*khiṭābah*) as the second linguistic production (*al-intāj al-lughawī al-thānī*). While poetry took the form of verses gathered in stanzas, sermons utilized a prose form that often-had rhyme. Both a poet (*shāʿir*) and an orator (*khaṭīb*) positioned themselves as mediators to counter the cleverness and eloquence of their opponents. Their task was to praise and exalt the greatness of their tribal (*qabīlah*) lineage, as well as the noble deeds they had performed, while disparaging the weaknesses of their opponent's tribe. They had to be able to speak in a good, clear, and fluent language, and, more importantly, they needed to possess rhetorical abilities (*balāghah*). This was the only way for them to surpass their adversaries (ʿAbd al-Karīm, 1997).

One of the social functions of pre-Islamic poetry is that it serves as a source of historical information. It is not surprising that, in addition to its literary value and aesthetic, Arabic poetry holds historical significance as the primary material for studying the social developments that occurred during the composition of those poems. Poetry serves as an explanation and document (*dīwān*) of all phases of pre-Islamic Arab society (Ibn Fāris, 1993). The Arab people also regarded poetry as the most authoritative source of knowledge (*al-ʿilm*). The statement of ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb can be used as evidence to illustrate this: "Poetry is the most authoritative knowledge possessed by the Arab people" (Ibn Rashīq, 1981). According to Ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī (n.d.), pre-Islamic Arab society considered poetry as a source of knowledge and values for their lives. They relied on poetry as their guide and conducted themselves accordingly.

From this perspective, if it is indeed true that poetry is a social document (*dīwān*) and the most authoritative source possessed by the Arab people, it can be said that poetry is the primary source for Arab civilization. According to Adonis (1994), such a portrayal does not imply that pre-Islamic poetry follows a single pattern with all its characteristics and tendencies, or in other words, it is monotonous with all its issues and problems. On the contrary, pre-Islamic poetry is a composition of various tendencies. As a source, pre-Islamic poetry is divided into different aspects, diverse and varied, both in terms of expression (*al-taʿbīr*) and content (*al-muḥtawá*). This diversity is reflected at least in two tendencies: firstly, the preservation of dominant tribal values, and secondly, the deviation and rebellion against those values. Borrowing the terminology of Yūsuf Khulayf (n.d.), the first tendency can be associated with the poetry of tribal poets (*aṣḥāb al-madhhab al-qabalī*) as the dominant image of pre-Islamic poetry, which voices the interests of the tribe and power. Meanwhile, we can associate the second tendency with the poetry of independent poets (*aṣḥāb al-madhhab al-fardī*) that deviates and rebels. This tendency is particularly evident in the poetry of brigand (*Ṣaʿālīk*) poets, and also proven in some poems of Imruʾ al-Qays and Ṭarafah ibn al-ʿAbd.

The study of deviant content in pre-Islamic poetry is a field of research that has not received sufficient attention. Some of the studies specifically addressing this topic include those by Yūsuf Khulayf (1978), Adonis (1994), and Haylah binti ʿAbd Allāh (2014). Examining the other side of pre-Islamic poetry becomes important to be further developed. Its significance is not only relevant to the discourse of Arabic poetry but also to the Arab civilization as a whole. The importance can be attributed to several reasons:

Firstly, the different tendencies displayed by the poems of Imru' al-Qays, Ṭarafah ibn al-ʿAbd, and the Ṣaʿālīk group, along with the poems representing the tribal poets' tendencies, provide a perspective that can serve as a starting point for various facts and conclusions when examining pre-Islamic poetry and even Arab civilization as a whole. This perspective implies that Arab civilization, in essence, is not singular but diverse. In other words, its origins contain the seeds of dialectics between acceptance and rejection, borrowing the theory proposed by Adonis of "*al-thābit*" (established-static) and "*al-mutaḥawwil*" (changing-dynamic).

Al-Thābit, specifically related to the tribe and its dominant values, while *al-mutaḥawwil* is associated with deviation and rebellion against it. The absence of a system that melts all tribes together, unifying their lives and thoughts, plays a fundamental role in maintaining the degree of freedom and openness in this dialectic. According to Adonis (1994), in some poems of Imru' al-Qays, Ṭarafah ibn al-ʿAbd, and the Ṣaʿālīk group, there are promising seeds that drive the transformation of poetry towards new dimensions and perspectives. Therefore, if it is indeed true that poetry is a social document (*dīwān*) and the most authoritative source of knowledge possessed by the Arab nation, it can be said that poetry is the primary source for the divided Arab civilization, according to its levels and sources. Arabic poetry is not singular with one pattern, but diverse, both in terms of expression (*al-taʿbīr*) and content (*al-muḥtawá*).

Method

Literary historical research emphasizes the development of literary works, figures, characteristics, and movements, all of which have an influence on the development of literature (Atmazaki, 1990). The research method employed in this study essentially utilizes historical methods, including the heuristic, criticism, and interpretation steps (Lorenz, 2015). In the heuristic technique, the author strives to collect various data regarding deviant tendencies in pre-Islamic poetry. The sources used are historical books on pre-Islamic poetry and anthologies of poems that are relevant to the research topic. In addition, there are also books by Yūsuf Khulayf, *Dirāsat fī al-Shiʿr al-Jāhilī* (1978), and Adonis, *al-Thābit wa-al-Mutaḥawwil: Baḥth fī al-Ibdāʿ wa-al-Ittibāʿ al-ʿArab* (1994). In the criticism technique, the author critically evaluates the obtained data by comparing and connecting the available information. During the interpretation, an analysis of the acquired facts is conducted to obtain a specific understanding of the issue that is the focus of the study.

Results and Discussion

Tribal Fanaticism: The Dominant Image of Pre-Islamic Poetry

The dominant image of pre-Islamic poetry, both from its inception and in its development, is organically connected to tribal (*qabīlah*) structures (ʿAṭīyah, 2019). This view is also depicted by critics such as Ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī (n.d.), al-Jāḥiẓ (1998), Muṣṭafá Ṣādiq al-Rāfiʿī (1997), ʿAlī Muṣṭafá ʿAshshā (n.d.), and others. According to Muḥammad Aḥmad Jād al-Mawlá Bek, ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bijāwī, and Muḥammad Abū al-Faḍl Ibrāhīm (n.d.), one concrete evidence of this connection is reflected in the history of conflicts among the Arab people (*ayyām al-ʿArab*) during the pre-Islamic era. *Ayyām al-ʿArab* refers to the inter-tribal wars that generally arose from disputes over livestock, pastures, and water sources. These disputes often led to raids and attacks, resulting in victorious tribes and giving rise to poetic wars full of condemnation among the poets who served as

spokespersons for each warring faction (Hitti, 2013; Shams al-Dīn, 2002). When examining, for example, the history of conflicts between the Qaḥṭān and 'Adnān tribes, the Rabī'ah and Tamīm tribes, or the Qays and Tamīm tribes, the connection becomes apparent. There is a unity between poetry and its tribe on one side, and a unity between what the poets say and what the tribe does or aspires to on the other (Adonis, 1994).

Considering that pre-Islamic Arab society was bound by tribal affiliations, the traditions and culture that emerged were inseparable from the spirit of tribalism ('aṣabīyah). Regarding this matter, Mohammed A. Bamyeh (1999) states that the social construction of pre-Islamic Arab society was influenced by two factors: first, tribal politics (qabīlah), and second, poetry as a social institution. If the tribe was a system of unity in pre-Islamic Arab society, where they enjoyed its benefits, endured its hardships, and defended one another, it can be said that an individual within a tribe, their life and identity, was organically connected to their tribe. Therefore, the poetry that emerged was closely tied to the pride of one's tribe. Poetry became a power used by tribes to establish and preserve their existence. Hence, it is not surprising that tribalism was a dominant theme commonly employed by poets of that time.

Poetry can play a role in elevating and tarnishing the reputation of tribes. According to al-Jāḥiẓ (1998), in addition to its role in manipulating words, poetry also has an impact on the reputation of tribes. A poet is considered the voice and weapon of their community, capable of safeguarding the honor of the tribe and expressing its glories, while also describing the vices of other tribes. In this regard, Ibn Rashīq (1981) quotes 'Amr ibn al-'Alā' who said: "A poet is given priority over an orator (khaṭīb) because their need is more focused on poetry, which can record and document the history of their lives, elevate their status, and intimidate and attack their enemies".

From this perspective, the significance of pre-Islamic poetry can be understood in relation to the tribal way of life. Borrowing the terminology used by Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood (1972) to examine the relationship between literature and politics through patronage, in this case, poetry is clearly influenced by the close relationship between the poets and their tribe as their patron. This relationship is evidenced by the significant attention given by tribes to their poets. It is not surprising that the emergence of a poet within a tribe was considered an important event, often celebrated in their honor (Ibn Rashīq, 1981).

The important point from this factual depiction is that the poet in the pre-Islamic era was considered a symbol of tribal glory and served as a public relations figure for their tribe. Thus, the poet played a crucial role in fostering group spirit (esprit de corps), upholding the tribe's reputation, and preserving their collective memory for future generations (Kennedy, 2010). Through their poetry, they acted as motivators and were responsible for what is now termed psychological warfare against rival tribes (Loya, 1974). While warriors in the tribe engaged in battle using weapons, poets employed poetry (qaṣīdah) as a medium to attack their enemies. Therefore, the poems they expressed were as effective as the strength of their community. A poet, through poetic propaganda, could pose a public threat and undermine the security of a tribe, much like a political campaign strategist who employs political maneuvers. Additionally, they could function as journalists, documenting and shaping public opinion through their poems (Hitti, 2013).

When a poet represents his tribe, it is no wonder that pre-Islamic poetry is dominated by themes of praise (madḥ) and mockery/satire (hijā'). According to Adonis (1994), it could even be said that if a poem is not praise, then it is satire. Other themes are merely variations or derivatives of these two,

such as *ghazl*, which is praise for the qualities possessed by a woman (beloved), *rithā'* (elegy), which is praise for the virtues of the deceased, *waṣf*, which is a portrayal of something good or bad, and so on. Therefore, praise and satire have significant social and moral meanings. If mockery or satire attacks the flaws and shortcomings of an individual as its target, praise directs attention to their strengths. Satire represents another form of warfare where there are winners and losers. Similarly, praise serves as a type of weapon. By highlighting the strengths of an individual and his tribe, a poet attacks enemies, or through these strengths, he defends himself and his tribe. Thus, praise and satire are interconnected, and both serve as social weapons. A poet who is not skilled in praising and satirizing within a tribe is considered an unarmed man, meaning he has no role or value.

It is also interesting to note that as long as the relationship between the poets and their tribe remains socially bound, the poems they express are not merely individual expressions, but rather on behalf of the collective identity of their tribe, capable of igniting their members' spirits and dampening their emotions (Būba'yū, 2001; Roters, 2009). An example is the poem by 'Amr ibn Kulthūm, which glorifies his tribe when threatening 'Amr ibn Abī Ḥujr of the Ghassanid kingdom (Ya'qūb, 1996).

<div dir="rtl">

على عمـد سنـأتي ما نريد   ألا فاعلم، أبيت اللعن، أنّا

وأن زنـاد كتبنـا شـديد   تعـلم أن مـحـملنا ثقــيـل

يوازينـا إذا لبس الحـديد   وأنّـا ليس حـي مـن معـد

</div>

Know this, O 'Amr ibn Ḥujr, may you not be cursed,
indeed, we will deliberately come whenever we please
You know that our saddles are heavy,
and our army's weapons are also strong
We are not part of the Ma'ad tribe,
what sets us apart is the wearing of armor

According to Yūsuf Khulayf (n.d.), when looking at the poems of tribal poets, the use of the pronoun "we" (*naḥnu*) is quite dominant compared to the personal pronoun "I" (*anā*). This indicates that a poetic bond (*al-'aqd al-fannī*) has been formed between the poet and their tribe, where the poet speaks as the representation of their tribe's voice (*al-shakhṣīyah al-qabalīyah*), rather than as an individual (*al-shakhṣīyah al-fardīyah*). However, it cannot be denied that in their poems, the use of the personal pronoun "I" is also found as an expression of the poet's personality. Regardless of that, it is clear that the use of the pronoun "we" is more dominant. This signifies that everything related to the tribe is considered important as a form of their loyalty, sometimes disregarding other aspects, including their own individuality. As an illustration, in the *mu'allaqat* of 'Amr ibn Kulthūm, the use of the pronoun "we" (*naḥnu*) is prominently employed. Here is an example of such a poem.

<div dir="rtl">

ألا لا يجهلن أحد علينا   فنجهـل فوق جهل الجاهلينا

</div>

Know this! No one can consider us fools
instead, it is us who will retaliate against the foolishness of those who underestimate us

On the other hand, the use of the personal pronoun "I" (*anā*)–to the extent of the writer's research–is found in at least four verses. One of them is as follows:

ورثتُ مهلهـلا والخــير منه   زهيرا نعم ذخر الذاخرينا

I inherit [the glory] of Muhalhil, and someone better than him,
that is Zuhayr, who is the best asset [that we can boast about]

'Amr ibn Kulthūm, in his *mu'allaqat* poem, praises and extols the excellence of his tribe and their renowned battles.

According to Adonis (1994), the tendency of tribal poets' poems to voice the interests of their tribe or power represents an epigonic (*ittibā'*) attitude, symbolizing an effort to defend and preserve existing traditions. This imitative stance is reflected in their adherence to everything as it is, following the dominant understanding. Poets take old ideas and rearrange them, or they take an old *qaṣīdah* and create a new one that aligns with the previous works. Thus, it can be concluded that what dominates in Arab civilization is not creativity (*ibdā'*), but fabrication (*ṣinā'ah*). It is not considered poetry when a poet creates new forms and approaches. Poetry, according to Adonis, is when a poet repeats what already exists or creates a form that resembles the original. In line with Adonis' perspective, Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi (2004) also states that in pre-Islamic Arab poetic tradition, a poet's composition imitates the rhyme and meter of other poets' works, simultaneously diverting from the original form. Imitation of other poets' poetry is also seen as a form of respect.

Thus, this conservative cultural tendency is dominant in pre-Islamic Arab society. It represents the image of a prevailing and established cultural system. However, it is also true to say that such a portrayal is not the sole image of pre-Islamic Arab society. In fact, pre-Islamic poetry itself demonstrates otherwise. Pre-Islamic poetry reflects another transformative tendency with new creative seeds, deviating and rebelling against tribalism and its dominant values.

Deviation and Rebellion Against Tribe: The Other Image of of Pre-Islamic Poetry

Pre-Islamic poetry, apart from the poems that express tribal or power interests, exhibits another tendency that reflects deviation and rebellion. The tendency to deviate and rebel (in the sense of bringing about change) in pre-Islamic poetry is primarily manifested in two experiences. Firstly, the subjective experience (*al-tajribah al-dhātīyah*) which prioritizes the internal world (emotions and desires) over the external world (moral and social realm). Secondly, the ideological political experience (*al-tajribah al-siyāsīyah al-īdiyūlūjīyah*) that combines poetry with political action, particularly serving as a propaganda tool. These poems contain elements that contradict tribal traditions and challenge values unrecognized by the tribe. If classified, the first experience can be associated with the experiences of Imru' al-Qays and Ṭarafah ibn al-'Abd. On the other hand, the second experience can be linked to the poetry of the brigand (Ṣa'ālīk) group and their way of life (Adonis, 1994; Khulayf, n.d.).

1. Subjective Experiences: Imru' al-Qays and Ṭarafah ibn al-'Abd

The signs of deviation and rebellion, particularly emerging from subjective experiences (*al-tajribah al-dhātīyah*), were first demonstrated by Imru' al-Qays in some of his poems (Ibn Qutaybah, 1982; al-Iṣfahānī, 1992). Imru' al-Qays, as depicted in his *mu'allaqat* poetry, embodies the personality of an aristocratic youth (*shābb aristuqrāṭī*) who indulges in a life of luxury, glamour, and the pursuit of pleasure, particularly in women, love (*ḥubb*), and hunting (*ṣayd*). However, he continues his life as

an outcast from his family and dies as an exile. One of the reasons for his expulsion is his immorality expressed through his poetry (al-Khushrūm, 1982).

His expulsion signifies that, according to his father, morality was deemed more important than poetry. In fact, his father's staunch adherence to morality reached such an extreme level that it drove him to order the killing of Imru' al-Qays. In the narrative, it is told that his father assigned one of his slaves (said to be named Rabī'ah) to kill Imru' al-Qays, saying, "Kill Imru' al-Qays and bring me his two eyes!" Such was his father's command to Rabī'ah. However, Rabī'ah only killed a deer and brought its two eyes to his master. When Imru' al-Qays heard that his father intended to kill him, he said:

ضيّعني صغيرا وحملني دمه كبيرا. لا صحو اليوم ولا سكر غدا. اليوم خمر وغدا أمر

He wasted me when I was young, and now as an adult, I must bear the consequences of his death.
There is no consciousness today, and there is no drunkenness tomorrow. Today is the time for wine,
and tomorrow is the time for retaliation

These words serve as an expression of the pain accompanying Imru' al-Qays' relationship with his father (Ibn Qutaybah, 1982).

According to Ibn Rashīq (1981), Imru' al-Qays was expelled by his father not because of his passion for poetry. His expulsion was primarily due to his disrespectful behavior and seduction of his father's wives. He engaged in actions that led to great wrongdoing, indulging in wine and promiscuity, thus forgetting about his kingdom and power. Therefore, he was expelled by his father not due to poetry but because of his crimes and misconduct. This is a reason that has been forgotten by many. In contrast, Adonis (1994) believes that Imru' al-Qays was expelled not only because of those great wrongdoings but also because he expressed those great wrongdoings in his poetry. Thus, the source of criticism and his wrongdoing was largely attributed to his poetry expressing those great wrongdoings.

Imru' al-Qays, as recognized by Ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī (n.d.), is considered the pioneer of Arab poets, the most skilled poet, and a significant influence on subsequent poets in expressing various aspects. However, his poetry is regarded as representing the first model in the tradition of pre-Islamic poetry that deviates and rebels. The deviations in Imru' al-Qays' poems, as classified by Adonis (1994), can be explained in three aspects: firstly, deviating from the model of morality (*al-khurūj 'alá al-numūdhaj al-akhlāqī*); secondly, deviating from the model of meaning (*al-khurūj 'alá al-numūdhaj al-ma'ānī*); and thirdly, deviating from the model of expression (*al-khurūj 'alá al-numūdhaj al-ta'bir*).

Firstly, Imru' al-Qays' poetry is considered deviant and rebellious from the model of morality (*al-khurūj 'alá al-numūdhaj al-akhlāqī*). The messages in his poetry regarding women are seen as obscene. In his poems, Imru' al-Qays describes his encounters with pregnant and nursing women, rather than with virgins.

فمثلكِ حبـلى قد طرقت ومرضع   فألهيتهـا عن ذي تمـائم محول
إذا ما بكى من خلفـها انصرفت له   بشـق وتحتي شقــها لم يحول
(al-Zawzānī, 2004).

Pregnant and nursing women like you, I would visit at night,
I divert the attention of a one-year-old wearing an amulet
When the child cries from behind, she turns part of her upper body towards the child,
while the other part below me remains unchanged

Regarding his poem, Imru' al-Qays is criticized for deviating from the model of morality. Quoting the views of some critics, al-Marzubānī (1995) states, "How could he desire pregnant and nursing women instead of virgins, especially considering that he is a prince? Doesn't that indicate his low dignity?".

In the tradition of pre-Islamic Arab society, marrying a virgin woman was considered as a sign of noble aspiration (*'ulūw al-himmah*). Since Imru' al-Qays violated this value, he was accused of lacking noble aspirations and was regarded as a person of low dignity (Adonis, 1994; Zahrrah, 2012). His promiscuous behavior also drew criticism. According to Ibn Qutaybah (1982), Imru' al-Qays was condemned for openly discussing adultery in his poetry and gradually undermining the honor of others. Therefore, other poets distanced themselves from such matters in their own poetry.

Secondly, Imru' al-Qays's poetry is considered to deviate from the model of meaning (*al-khurūj 'alá al-numūdhaj al-ma'ānī*). His contradictory stance towards the model of meaning is seen as deviant and contrary. This point is illustrated by a narrative that recounts the judgment and comparison between Imru' al-Qays and 'Alqamah al-Faḥl by his wife, Umm Jundab. Umm Jundab deemed 'Alqamah to be superior to Imru' al-Qays. This judgment was based on their respective *waṣf* (description) poems, each having a common rhyme of the letter *bā'* (*qāfiyah bā'*) in describing the ideal Arabian horse model. In describing a good horse, Imru' al-Qays was considered to deviate from the model as he made his horse tired from the excessive use of the whip and spurs to agitate and lash it.

<div dir="rtl">

فللساق لهـوب وللسوط   درة وللزجر منه وقع أهوج منعب

</div>

(al-Muṣṭāwī, 2004)

Because its [the horse's] calf is aflame, and the whip
makes it bleed, while the shouts make its run faster

Meanwhile, 'Alqamah adhered to the model of an Arabian horse that moves swiftly without being provoked, not striking it, and not exhausting it.

<div dir="rtl">

فأدركهـن ثانيا من عـنانه   يمر كمر الرائح المتحلب

</div>

(al-Ḥattī, 1993)

The horse chases after the camels, deviating from its reins,
it gallops like a scattering gust of wind

For the Arab people, horses symbolize speed, strength, prosperity, glory, happiness, eternity, fertility, and vital power. The term for a horse in Arabic is "*khayl*", which connotes pride, arrogance, and haughtiness (Ibn Manẓūr, 1990). Quoting al-Jāḥiẓ, Akiko Motoyoshi Sumi (2004) states that this is the inherent nature of horses, manifesting as "*zahw*" (magnificence, pride, prosperity, arrogance, and haughtiness) on the streets. The uniqueness of horses in Arab society lies in their swiftness without the need for provocation and their resistance to fatigue (Pourianpour, 2014).

In this regard, 'Alqamah is considered superior (*faḥl*) to Imru' al-Qays. The criterion is the conformity with the model, which is deemed superior. Therefore, a poet who adheres to the model is considered better than a poet who vaguely describes it or deviates from it, making it obscure (Adonis, 1994).

The third deviation is found in Imru' al-Qays' expression (*al-khurūj 'alá al-numūdhaj al-ta'bīr*). In his poetry, he uses words that deviate from their original meanings, failing to align the intended meaning with the typological meaning and the word with its original meaning. Additionally, he does not adhere to the system of expression. As exemplified in one of his poems, Imru' al-Qays describes the horse he rides as having a forelock that covers its face.

<div dir="rtl">

وأركب في الروع خيفانة   كسا وجهها سعف منتشر

</div>

(al-Muṣṭāwī, 2004)

I ride [the horse] in battle, like a locust,
its flowing mane covers its face

Regarding this matter, al-Aṣma'ī provided criticism. A horse with its forelock covering its face is not considered a good horse. A good horse is one whose hair is not excessively long (al-Marzubānī, 1995). This criticism emphasizes the literal understanding of words. It is based on the notion of direct correspondence between the word as a signifier and the meaning as a signified, or between the name (symbol) and the named (referent) (Adonis, 1994).

Thus, Imru' al-Qays deviated from the norms and went against the established conventions. According to Adonis (1994), it can be said that Imru' al-Qays was not a tribal poet in the traditional sense of literary criticism in Arab culture. Consequently, his poetry was also not tribal poetry. Imru' al-Qays behaved and thought outside the tribal system and its dominant values. Some of his poetry and actions contradicted these values, especially concerning women and love. Love, as he saw and practiced it, was a destructive act. It not only undermined the structure of family and unity but also demolished the foundations of values and unity.

The tendency to deviate and rebel against subjective experiences is also demonstrated by Ṭarafah ibn al-'Abd in his poetry. Ṭarafah, as reflected in his *mu'allaqat* poems, embodies the personality of a frustrated young man (*shābb qalaq*). This frustration drives him to indulge in life before his demise, particularly in wine and women (Khulayf, n.d.; al-Zawzānī, 2004). Among his poems considered deviant is his praise for a people who are intoxicated and then donate their wealth (al-Marzubānī, 1995). In one of his poems, it is mentioned that those people donate when the intoxication (*khamr*) enters their minds, meaning when their minds are altered.

<div dir="rtl">

أسد غيل فإذا ما شـــربوا   وهبوا كل أمون وطمر

</div>

(al-Muṣṭāwī, 2003)

Those brave people, when they drink [*khamr*]
they donate all their best camels and horses

Regarding his poetry, Ṭarafah received criticism. al-Marzubānī (1995), quoting the opinions of the critics, states that Ṭarafah's poetry is considered unethical. It is deemed more commendable, as

stated by 'Antarah ibn Shaddād, for a poet to exercise restraint and refrain from giving anything while intoxicated, but rather to give when they are sober.

<div dir="rtl">

فــإذا شــربت فــإني مســتـهـلك   مالي، وغرضي وافر لم يكلم

وإذا صحوت فما أقصـر عن ندى   وكما علمت شمـائلي وتكـرمي

</div>

(al-Tabrīzī, 1992)

> When I drink [*khamr*], I will spend my wealth
> but it will not tarnish my honor
> And when I am sober, I scatter my riches for charity
> as you know of my behavior and generosity

However, among the most commendable statements is that which was said by Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmá, stating that he does not desire to spend his wealth on drinking wine, but rather to utilize it for the greater good.

<div dir="rtl">

أخي ثقة لا تهلك الخمر ماله   ولكنه قد يهلك المال نائله

</div>

(Fā'ūr, 1988)

> My brother, *khamr* will not deplete his wealth,
> but sometimes his wealth runs out when he gives it away

According to Adonis (1994), this judgment arises from the assumption that drinking wine is an inherently negative value. However, for Ṭarafah, drinking wine is considered a positive value because it is not about intoxication or endangering oneself, but rather it can enhance human awareness and reasoning about oneself and the surrounding world. Thus, through his poetry, Ṭarafah brings about change and deviates from the prevailing and established values.

2. Political Ideological Experience: The Ṣa'ālīk Group

The tendency towards deviation and rebellion in pre-Islamic poetry, particularly stemming from political and ideological experiences (*al-tajribah al-siyāsīyah al-īdiyūlūjīyah*), is reflected in the poems of the brigand (Ṣa'ālīk) as a marginalized group living independently outside the tribal structure for various reasons. The emergence of the Ṣa'ālīk phenomenon in pre-Islamic era was a natural outcome of the fragmented positive laws within Arab society at that time. Additionally, it was driven by the concentration of wealth in the hands of certain classes within the tribe, where they were the wealthy individuals while the majority of their people were trapped in poverty. Among them were figures such as Qays ibn al-Ḥidādīyah, Abū al-Ṭamaḥān al-Qaynī, Ḥājiz al-Azdī, al-Sulayk ibn al-Sulakah, al-Shanfará, Ta'abbaṭa Sharran, 'Urwah ibn al-Ward, and others.

The poems presented by the Ṣa'ālīk group are the voice of their souls, filled with the pain of life due to the encompassing poverty that defines their existence. However, on the other hand, these poems serve as expressions of their liberated spirits. Their poetry cannot merely be classified as a lamentation and disappointment about their difficult living conditions. It goes beyond that and can be seen as peripheral political poetry (*al-shi'r al-siyāsī ṭarīf*) that expresses rebellion and protest against the social conditions of tribal life that have condemned them to poverty ('Abd al-Karīm, 1997).

What deserves attention in the poems of the Ṣaʿālīk is that they emerge from their thoughts and life experiences. The emergence of the Ṣaʿālīk group with their particular worldview has led to significant changes in the poems they create. In other words, their poems deviate from the common tendencies of pre-Islamic poetry. This deviation is evident not only in the structural forms but also in the content they convey.

One of the changes is evident in the formal structure of the poems, which differs from the typical pre-Islamic poetry. There is a more dominant use of the *qiṭʿah* form (short verses) rather than the long *qaṣīdah* form, with a lighter and fragmented musical or prosodic aspect (*ẓawāhir ʿarūḍīyah*). On the other hand, their poems do not discuss various themes as commonly seen in pre-Islamic poetry, which typically begins with an introduction (*muqaddimah*) lamenting ruins (*bukāʾ al-aṭlāl*) or expressing love (*ghazl*), then transitioning to praise (*madḥ*), and other themes or objectives. Instead, their poems have the characteristic of thematic unity (*al-waḥdah al-mawḍūʿīyah*) that tends to focus on a single idea. Even if their poems touch on two or three ideas, they are interconnected, forming a cohesive overall thought. Furthermore, in terms of content, their poems do not reflect individual fanaticism towards the tribe (*al-taḥallul min al-shakhṣīyah al-qabalīyah*). On the contrary, they reflect individual independence (*al-shakhṣīyah al-fardīyah*) that is detached from their tribe. Additionally, their poems exhibit epic (*shiʿr qiṣaṣī*) and realistic (*al-wāqiʿīyah*) characteristics, with linguistic features (*al-khaṣāʾiṣ al-lughawīyah*) that introduce new and foreign words, among other elements (Khulayf, 1978).

It is certain that the connection between poetry and a particular worldview of life is one of the factors that give it a distinct meaning and value. The Ṣaʿālīk poets, in this experience, do not provide a partial depiction of daily life but present it as a complete attitude. In terms of content, for example, unlike the poems of tribal poets that voice tribal interests or power, the Ṣaʿālīk poems reflect deviation and rebellion against the tribe, particularly caused by the emergence of social disparities within the tribe. As stated by Roger Allen (2003), Ṣaʿālīk poetry is presented as an anti-tribal reflection. Their poems mirror thoughts and behaviors that contradict tribal traditions. Therefore, it is not surprising that Ṣaʿālīk poets generally express, in their poems, their rejection of class differences, portrayals of their poor economic situation, and other issues resulting from these conditions.

As an illustration, take the poem of ʿUrwah ibn al-Ward, who rebels against kinship based on lineage and tribe. ʿUrwah lives as someone with a distorted lineage (*hajīn*) because his mother comes from the descendants of Banī Nahd, which is considered foreign among the Banī ʿAbs, his father's lineage. In his poem, ʿUrwah expresses that his condition of having a distorted lineage is a source of shame for him. Based on this, it becomes the underlying reason for his choice to live as a Ṣaʿālīk, rebelling against his tribe.

سوى أن أخوالي إذا نسبوا نهد   ما بي من عـار إخـال عـلمتـه

فأعـيا عليّ أن يقاربني مجد   إذا ما أردتُ المجـد قصّر مجدهم

(al-Malūḥī, 1966)

I have no disgrace, as far as I know,
except that my maternal uncles belong to the Banī Nahd tribe
When I desire honor, their honor is limited,
it's tiresome for me to try to bring that honor closer to myself

On the other hand, due to the profound influence of economic conditions on the lives of the Ṣaʿālīk group, they produced poems that illustrated their impoverished state, particularly caused by the emergence of economic disparities within the tribal community. In fact, through their poetry, they encouraged the poor to abolish discriminatory and intolerant laws. For instance, ʿUrwah ibn al-Ward portrayed in his poem that the poorest individuals are looked down upon by the wealthy. Material possessions served as the measure for evaluating someoneʹs worth in the tribal society. Hence, the acts of robbery they committed were a form of rebellion against the stingy wealthy individuals who had deprived the poor of their social rights.

<div dir="rtl">

رأيت الناس شرهـم الفقـير   دعيني للغنـى أسـعى فإنـي

وإن أمسـى له حسب وخيـر   وأبعدهـم وأهونهـم عليهـم

</div>

(al-Malūḥī, 1966)

> Let me go and meet the wealthy, For what I have
> observed is that the worst among humans are the poor
> They are marginalized and considered the most despicable,
> even if they are noble and honorable

From this context, the depiction of change as seen in the Ṣaʿālīk poetry, including the poems of Imruʾ al-Qays and Ṭarafah ibn al-ʿAbd, undoubtedly reflects another tendency that can provide a new meaning from a different dimension in pre-Islamic Arabia, such as love and women, freedom, and various aspects related to public life. In Adonisʾ (1994) view, this represents another face of pre-Islamic poetry, aside from the poems presented by tribal poets who are all organically bound to their tribes. Therefore, according to him, tribal poets can be considered conservative poets who support the system (status quo), while Imruʾ al-Qays, Ṭarafah ibn al-ʿAbd, and the Ṣaʿālīk group can be seen as poets who deviate from and rebel against the system. The former attitude is an old trend, while the latter attitude can be regarded as a new trend in the reality of pre-Islamic Arab society. From these tendencies, it can also be said that these poems do not reflect an epigonic attitude (*ittibāʿ*) as deeply rooted in pre-Islamic tradition. Instead, they give birth to innovations (*ibdāʿ*) that may not have existed before. Therefore, while the poems of tribal poets express existing thoughts, preserving and defending them, the poems exemplified by Imruʾ al-Qays, Ṭarafah ibn al-ʿAbd, and the Ṣaʿālīk group represent a new phenomenon that drives the transformation of poetry towards new dimensions and perspectives.

Conclusion

Pre-Islamic poetry (*al-shiʿr al-Jāhilī*) is not merely a verbal art form created for the sake of art itself. It goes beyond that and serves as a historical information source that presents a vivid portrayal of all phases of pre-Islamic Arab society with its various dynamics. However, this perspective certainly does not imply that pre-Islamic poetry follows a single pattern with all its characteristics and tendencies. On the contrary, it is a tapestry of diverse tendencies, both in terms of expression (*al-taʿbīr*) and content (*al-muḥtawá*). As mentioned earlier, these tendencies, according to Adonis's view, are reflected in two aspects: the *al-thābit* (the established-static) and the *al-mutaḥawwil* (the changing-dynamic). In the poems of Imruʾ al-Qays, Ṭarafah ibn al-ʿAbd, and the Ṣaʿālīk group during the pre-Islamic era reflect other tendencies that provide new meanings from different dimensions of pre-

Islamic Arabia life, such as love and women, freedom, and various aspects related to public life. This fact represents another aspect of pre-Islamic poetry, apart from the poems presented by tribal poets where they are organically tied to their tribes.

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