

**UNVEILING THAHA HUSEIN'S CONTROVERSY  
ON CLASSICAL ARABIC LITERATURE EXISTENCE  
(CRITICAL METHODOLOGY OF THE BOOK 'FI AL-ADAB AL-JAHILI')**

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**Abstract:** Descartes' philosophical thinking influences the method of literary criticism developed by Thaha Husein, namely, *cogito ergo sum* 'I think, therefore I am.' To ensure that something exists, it must be doubted first. Likewise, the existence of jahili Arabic literature, which was conveyed verbally from generation to generation, did not rule out counterfeiting. However, Thaha Husein only saw the existence of jahili Arabic literature autonomously by denying the external factors surrounding it. Though literary works are manifestations and reflections of socio-cultural conditions that establish dialectical relations with the author, therefore, the extrinsic aspects that exist outside the text that characterize the original building of literary works cannot be ignored.

**Keywords:** *Criticism, Method, Sociology of Literature*

## INTRODUCTION

In the study of literature, one of the areas of study that needs to be developed is literary criticism (*naqd al-adab*). Literary criticism considers that the literary work was created to indulge readers through the sharpness of taste, aesthetic sensitivity, and insight into knowledge. However, in reality, the language factor becomes an obstacle because it can distance between the author and the reader. As a result of this time-span, the understanding of literary works does not rule out the possibility of being muted (artifacts). Besides, we often encounter deviations in the use of language, because the use of language in many literary works is connotative, abstract, imaginative, and unconventional that is difficult to understand. Moreover, because an author is considered to have the autonomy, so he has the freedom to use the language style by his favor without having to consider the will from outside himself (Lustyantie, 2012). In the study of literary criticism, perhaps this is said to be the work of poets who often oppose the conventions of language (*licentia poetika*).

Sociologically, literary works can show social phenomena that authors can describe through language (A.Y. Sumartini: 2019). In other words, literary work is a reflection of the cultural environment and is a dialectical text between the author and the social situation that shapes it. In connection with this, concerning the jahili Arabs' poetry, it is often said that poetry is an anthology of the life of Arab society (*Diwan al-Arab*) (Khafaji, 1973: 195). Therefore, one of the prides of Arab society is when a poet appears in his environment. Because at that time, poetry has a strong influence, and with that, they can also maintain and preserve the authority of the tribe (al-Shabuni, 1979: 109).

The poets are not the only communities who care deeply about poet education, but in general, members of the community (the tribe) also have the same concern. For Arabs, the string of words in poetry is not merely a vocal sound that is meaningless (absurd), but it is a powerful (sacred) means to ignite enthusiasm and reduce emotions that flare up in life. So it can be understood that the Arab community, especially pre-Islamic societies,

believe that poets have magical knowledge, or *ahlul ma'rifah*, expressed in their work (Amin, 1975: 55).

Thus, the existence of poetry is of great concern because it is the objective reality of tribal life. It is the reason and is believed by the Arab community when they put the poets in an honorable position (Khafaji, 1973: 195). They became a symbol of the glory of a tribe and a mouthpiece that was able to describe goodness and victory, as they were able to describe the ugliness and defeat of war suffered by other tribes. That is among several reasons so that poetry in the classical period is dominated by *madah* (praise/ode) and *hija'* (ridicule/satire) (al-Iskandari, 1952: 59).

In the context of classical Arabic literature, literary criticism becomes crucial, even a necessity. This happens because of the composition of literary works, especially the poetic genre in the classical period of conditions with metaphorical languages (*majaz*) whose meanings must be returned to the situation of tribal communities, which are still "primitive." So, if the meaning of literary language is based on the parameters of the development of modern theories, it can certainly cause a shift in meaning, even distortion.

Seeing the reality above, an Islamic thinker and a writer, Thaha Husein, with his arguments, built the theoretical ideas related to the existence of classical Arabic literature, especially *Jahili Arabs* literature. The skeptical method (*al-syak*) or *cogito ergo sum* in Descartes' philosophy developed by Thaha Husein should be understood as a form of inquiry into the legacy of literary works that have cultural values. He was determined to prove accurately whether what was believed by most Arabic poets and writers, both among the Arabs themselves and non-Arabs who were fanatical about their culture, was the result of literary works at that time. Departing from the above background, this paper aims to scrutinize the framework of thought or literary criticism developed by Thaha Husein.

### **Thaha Husein's Academic Career and Thought**

Since he was two years old, Thaha Husein has had ophthalmia. He memorized the Qur'an when he was nine years old. He learned Arabic grammar, Alfiah Ibn Malik,

through his brother, who had studied at al-Azhar. In 1902 his parents sent to al-Azhar to study the religious sciences. However, in al-Azhar, he was disappointed, because the existing teaching system was very dogmatic, and the material was traditional. He admired thinkers such as Muhammad Abduh and al-Marsafy. The thoughts of the two figures significantly colored the rational thought of Thaha Husein. Ironically, he was failed in the state exam because his ideas are against the established al-Azhar (Harahap, 1994: 29).

In 1908, Cairo University was opened to receive prospective new students. The opportunity was utilized as well as possible, where he became acquainted with many Orientalists. On that campus, Thaha Husein found a method of learning that suited his soul. He has an intense obsession with becoming a reformer in al-Azhar, such as Abduh. In 1914, he successfully defended his dissertation with the title, *Dzikra Abi al-Ala'*, then sent it to France. At the Sorbonne, he studied history, and in the fields of sociology and philosophy, he studied at Emile Durkheim. At the Collège de France, he studied the interpretation of Qur'an and psychology. In addition to the hostel where he lives, at the Genevieve library, he spends much time. Academic acquaintance with scholars across disciplines is very influential in his thinking.

Returning to Egypt in 1919, Thaha Husein began his academic life by being a lecturer in ancient Greek and Roman history at Cairo University until 1925. Besides, he also actively wrote in newspapers and magazines, even in 1922 he was appointed as editor of the *al-Siyasat* newspaper. When Cairo University was a State University, he became a lecturer in the history of Arabic literature at the Faculty of Literature, and his monumental work was born, *fi al-Syi'r al-Jahili* (1926). In 1930 he was appointed Dean of the Faculty of Literature, but during his leadership, he was pressured by the government to give Honoris Causa Doctoral degrees to some politicians. His rejection of this request, then in 1932 he was transferred to the Ministry of Teaching. In 1942 until 1944, he was appointed Chancellor of the University of Alexandria, in this period he implemented his ideas and ideals about education. In 1950-1952 he was appointed Minister of Education of Egypt. During his tenure, Thaha Husein has successfully

implemented his ideas about education, including freeing up school fees, providing the broadest educational opportunity for men and women (Harahap, 1994: 32).

In looking at every problem, Thaha Husein uses Cartesian thinking. As he said:

أريد أن أقول إنني سأسألك في هذا النحو من البحث مسلك  
المحدثين من أصحاب العلم والفلسفة فيما يتناولون من العلم  
والفلسفة. أريد أن أصطنع في الأدب هذا المنهج الفلسفي الذي  
استحدثه "ديكارت" للبحث عن حقائق الأشياء في أول هذا  
العصر الحديث.

*I want to know this study of knowledge like how modern people do when they study science and philosophy. I want to apply the philosophical method of Descartes in the study of literature to uncover the reality of something in this modern era* (Husein, n.d.: 69).

Descartes developed four methods for gaining knowledge; First, do not accept as truth, something that is not believed until something is not in doubt. Second, divide the difficulty into several parts until it can be adequately solved. Third, reflecting on the objects faced by observing from the simplest to the most complicated. Fourth, all the problems are mentioned in full and provide a general assessment. From the above framework, it can be concluded that he (1) emphasizes clarity, (2) emphasizes analysis, (3) emphasizes deduction, and (4) thinks holistically (Maqin: 2015).

Thaha Husein shows the intellectuality in upholding objectivity when looking at each problem and looking for a solution. What this does is a consistent scholar's struggle to uphold objectivity. This spirit must be seen from his capacity as a scientist, philosopher, and religionist. Rationale and religion are both needed. The rationale serves as a guide for humans, but the rationale also has limitations on specific problems that are only known by religion (Harahap, 1994: 47). It should be noted, that the criticism of Thaha Husein is not the teachings of *ushuli*, but rather the teachings of religions that are *furu'iyah*. Thus, he never wants to be bound to previous understandings as long as it is an understanding of religion that is *furu'iyah*.

### Thaha Husein's Literary Critical Method

The critical method developed by Thaha Husein in his book, "*fi al-Adab al-Jahili*," is a method that Descartes once popularized, namely doubts/skepticism (*al-syak*) (Husein, n.d.: 62). In Latin, the Descartes' phrase reads, *cogito ergo sum* 'I think, therefore I am' (Rapar, 1996: 112). Descartes is known as a philosopher who accepts the truth of something that is believed so that there is no doubt. The thinking framework is a paradigm to ensure that something that exists really exists and not just a fantasy or dream. Truth is something that is certain and becomes the first philosophical truth (Ibid.).

After doubting everything, Descartes found that there was one thing that could not be doubted, namely, I was doubting everything, was thinking, and if I thought that meant there was no doubt that I certainly existed. There is no way that 'the non-existence' can think and doubt something. Therefore, Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am." For him, humans must be the starting point of rational thinking in order to achieve certain truths. To achieve the truth, the ratio must play its role as closely as possible.

In essence, Descartes' method is very rationalistic. This method pushes uncertainty to the very end by making information or facts that support the beliefs that have been accepted as long as it is the target of the most uncompromising criticism and suspend any opinion even though it is very reasonable, but more or less contains something that is rationally doubtful. It must be stressed that Descartes is not a skeptic who doubts everything and says that there is no such thing as knowledge. Descartes' doubts are only methodical doubts (Rapar, 1996: 112).

Starting from his desire, Thaha Husein applies the above method of criticism by setting out one rule that a researcher must empty his mind of everything that was known beforehand. He wishes that Muslims will not be trapped in ignorance, which is only imitating (*taqlid*). Civilization will advance and develop because its thinking is relevant to the dynamics and development of the times. At this point, the utilization of reason optimally will be able to realize critical, creative, and constructive thought (Maftukhin, 2014: 2). From the results of his study, Thaha Husein objected to saying that some of the

*jahili Arabs* literary works were the product of the jahili Arabs community. He suspects the authenticity of what is considered to be the work of jahili poets because it does not reflect the linguistic differences found in the Arabian Peninsula, as illustrated by the Qur'an.

After conducting an investigation, he concluded that in the poetry of *jahili*, there is an inconsistency between language style and ideas with the condition of the Arabian Peninsula, which at that time was still united. This logic is the same as the theory developed by Rahardi (2009: 6), that language can be a sign of the state of development of culture and society. A dignified society is sure to have a dignified language and culture as well. Likewise, a culture and a noble society usually cannot be separated from the extraordinary dignity of the language.

Perhaps, Thaha Husein's sharp criticism above is aimed to inspire Muslims not to justify *jahili Arabic* literature and the interpretation of the scholars as sacred (may not be challenged). When Muslims return to the actual teachings, namely the Qur'an and Hadith, there will be an endless dialogical relationship. Thus, in the body of Muslims, there will always be dynamics, creativity, and productivity that can bring progress. Harahap (1994: 138) asserted that, if examined philosophically, what Thaha Husein wants is not just to practice the methods of historical and semantic criticism he obtained from the West. However, he was encouraged that Muslims do not look at Arabic language and literature and the interpretation of the scholars in various Islamic studies as sacred, including pre-Islamic life. He invited Muslims to return to the basic teachings of Islam (al-Qur'an and Hadith), and subsequently conduct *ijtihad*.

### **The Socio-Cultural Context of the Jahili Arabs Society**

Wandering habits make Arabs happy to live freely, without rules that can tie their will. Therefore they uphold the values of freedom. In the famine and summer season, they are accustomed to plunder as a means of life. Warfare between tribes to seize the source of the spring has become a rooted tradition, continuing from generation to generation. Therefore they need a lot of offspring, especially sons, to maintain the honor of their

tribes. While the daughter, in their view, did not make many meaningful contributions, she was forced to be buried alive. Ibn Khaldun said:

*The Bedouin tribe is uncivilized, usually carrying out immoral acts. This outrage has become their character and nature. They enjoy it because this means being free from the power and lack of submission to leadership. This nature is a denial and anti-thesis of civilization. All their daily activities are wandering and moving around. It is the anti-thesis of sedentary life, which produces civilization. They do not have permanent buildings, which form the foundation of civilization.*

*More than that, it is their nature to take what others have. They get their food by throwing spears at the enemy. They assume there is no limit in taking the property of others. Whenever they see a view of the property, equipment, or other valuable materials, they take it (Engineer, 1999: 21).*

At night, they spend it with lively evening entertainment. While drinking liquor, the singers sang songs with the music that beat stomping from the leather drums. In a state of intoxication, they hover full of delusions of pleasure and beauty. By getting drunk, they can forget the hardships and violence of life in the desert (Yatim, 1995: 42).

Behind the character and hard behavior, they have a very subtle artistic soul in the literature (poetry). Skill in composing poetry is pride because every tribe will position it in a prominent place. There are unique places to listen to poets express their poetry, known as the '*Ukkazh*' market located between Ta'if and Nakhlak.

The pattern of Arabic cultural life much influences the idea or content of poetry. Some told of the greatness of the ancestors, the heroes, and their tribes. The function of this kind of poetry is to arouse a sense of pride and a sense of unity among members of the tribe. Moreover, some poems contain the romance world, relationships between men and women, beauty, and enjoyment of wine (getting drunk) (Yatim, 1995: 43). Like Umru'

al-Qais' poem below tells the story of the alcoholic drink when he defended his father:

حلت لي الخمر وكنت امرأ # من قبلها في شغل شاغل

*Alcohol is lawful for me even though I was swamped* (Khafaji, 1973: 381).

Before Islam came, the education tradition of the jahili Arabs was limited to oral traditions. Knowledge, values, and traditions were passed orally from generation to generation. Educational material covers basic knowledge and skills under the current local living conditions. With most of the population still nomadic and animal husbandry as the primary resources, the educational material includes basic techniques of natural breeding, knowing the location of the land where lush grass, riding horses, and basic knowledge of directions to avoid straying in the middle of the desert. Aside from these necessary skills, the Arabs are famous for their traditions based on the traditions of their ancestors. Various customary laws relating to honoring, war, and peace are inherited naturally from generation to generation. In a nomadic life like this, we do not know whether this attempt at inheritance took place systematically and well-planned, or took place as part of life itself. To be sure, what we call education at that time was different from what we understood in the modern era.

Another interesting side of Arab education activities is the dominance of poetry as a medium of expression and maintenance of ideas and their traditions. For Arabs, expressing something in the form of poetry has more value than free verse (prose). So it is not surprising that poetry is an essential part of their cultural and intellectual activities from the past until now (Asari, 1994: 16).

*Ayyam al-'Arab*, essential events that befell the Arab community and al-ansab (genealogy), which contains genealogical descent, is, in general, a symbol of pride for Arab society. Two types of knowledge are recorded in many literary works, both in the form of poetry genre and prose genre. In the view of the jahili Arab community, both of this knowledge are considered historical events, and they are indirectly required to memorize them. It can be used as authentic evidence, even though they cannot read and write.

Khafaji (1973: 136) in his work, *al-Syi'ir al-Jahili*, said that there are many types of jahili prose because there was no attempt to codify. As they could not write, therefore, many of the literary works were lost. In contrast to poetry, this type of literary works is easily memorized because they are bound by the boundaries of *wazan* (musicality) and *qafiah* (poetry).

## METHOD

This study is a qualitative library research. The qualitative design is more flexible to be used in socio-cultural research, including on language and literary issues. The data were collected by using the documentation technique, which is collecting data or information from various reading sources (Arikunto, 1998: 236). Then, the data were analyzed by qualitative-descriptive analysis. Such a model of analysis fits this study which is aimed to find out Thaha Husein's method into *jahili* Arab literature. In addition to using qualitative-descriptive analysis, especially in drawing a conclusion, the author used an inductive analysis. This framework of thinking is intended to see and analyze concrete events before drawing a general understanding.

## CRITICISM AGAINST THAHA HUSEIN'S SKEPTICAL METHOD

With several arguments and theories of doubt he developed, in the end, Thaha Husein concluded to reject some of the existence of Arabic jahili literature. The emergence of the book "*fi al-Adab al-Jahili*" had caused an uproar of conservative Egyptian scholars and academics; eventually, he was expelled from the academic environment of al-Azhar University, even he was accused of being infidels. Criticism has arisen both in the form of books and public opinions to criticize the thoughts and theories proposed by Thaha Husein.

The first assumption, is that most of the so-called *jahili's* poems were not born during the period of jahili Arabs, but were created during the Islamic era, as narrated below:

ذلك أن الكثرة المطلقة مما نسميه أدبا جاهليا ليست من الجاهلية  
في شيء، وإنما هي منحولة بعد ظهور الإسلام، فهي إسلامية  
تمثل حياة المسلمين وميولهم وأهوائهم أكثر مما تمثل حياة  
ولا أكاد أشك في أن ما بقي من الأدب الجاهلي الجاهليين.

الصحيح قليل جدا..... وانما هو نحل الرواة أو اختلاق الأعراب أو صنعة النحاة أو تكلف القصاص أو اختراع المفسرين والمحدثين والمتكلمين

Most of the literary works that are touted as jahili literature (poetry), not at all from the Arabs jahili era, but appeared after the Islamic era, the work is more describing the lives and desires of Muslims than the life of jahiliyah. I can hardly doubt that only a small portion of the literary literature is truly authentic ..... These works are only rawi manipulation, bedouin Arab engineering, linguist products, storytelling, and the arguments of mufassir, muhaddits, and theologians (Husein, n.d.: 65)

The second assumption is the gap between the intellectual styles that exist in the poetry of jahili with the intellectual condition of the jahili Arabs community, as narrated below:

الى أن هذا الشعر الذى ينسب الى امرىء القيس أو الى الأعرابي أو الى غيرهما من الشعراء الجاهلين لا يمكن من الوجهة ولا أن يكون قد قيل اللغوية والفنية أن يكون لهؤلاء الشعراء، وأذيع قيل أن يظهر القرآن

Seen from the aspect of language and art that poetry resting upon Umru` al-Qais, al-A'sya or other writers is not possible that they belonged and were created before the revelation of the Qur'an (Husein, n.d.: 67)

The third assumption is the emergence of poetry earlier than prose because prose requires a rational language that requires writing skills. Understandably, at that time, the jahili Arabs society was *ummi* (illiterate), who could not read and write. It was narrated as follows:

النثر هو لغة العقل ومظهر من مظاهر التفكير، تأثير الإرادة فيه أعظم من تأثيرها في الشعر، وتأثير الروية فيه أعظم من تأثيرها في الشعر أيضا

The prose is rational language, intellectual phenomena, the influence of will on prose is more significant than on poetry. Likewise, the influence of the way of thinking.

فإذا نحن التمسنا تاريخ النثر عند العرب الجاهلين على ضوء هذه النظرية، فقد يكون من العسير جدا - أن لم يكن من المستحيل - أن نهتدي الآن الى شئ قيم. ذلك لأننا مضطرون الى أن نقف من النثر الجاهلي نفس الموقف الذى وقفناه من الشعر الجاهلي

If we look for the history of jahili Arabss prose based on this theory, it is tough --if not

impossible-- to obtain valuable facts because we are forced to behave towards the existence of jahili's prose, as our attitude responding to the existence of jahili's poetry.

ونحن نجهل أو نكاد نجهل تاريخ انتشار الكتابة عندهم ..... فنحن اذن مضطرون الى أن نفرض هذا النثر الكثير الذى يضاف الى المضربين قبل الاسلام

We (almost) do not know the history of writing among the Muhdhar people. We are forced to assume most of the genre of jahili's prose that was based on the Muhdhar people before Islam. (Husein, n.d.: 326-329)

The objection of Thaha Husein in making the jahili poetry as a reference to find out the life of the jahili Arabss community is in addition to the unfair and unrealistic description, is historically very reasonable, because in the course of its long history and has experienced some critical events in Arab, the poem may be falsified. One of the sciences that the pre-Islamic Arabs are proud of is poetry. However, after Islam came, their attention was reduced because they were preoccupied with jihad in warfare, especially with the Persians and Romans.

After the Islamic expansion and conquest, the desire to narrate poetry grew back. However, in this new spirit, they were confronted with a new problem: the absence of sources, both in book form and recorded book collection. While many poets have died, is not this the cause of the tendency of a group of people to claim poetry created in Islamic times as *jahili* poetry.

The objections of Thaha Husein in making literary works, especially poetry as a reference to investigate the life of the jahili Arabss community, several books such as *al-Ru'yah al-Hadhariyah Wa al-Naqdiyah Fi Adab Thaha Husein*, by Dr. Yusuf Nur Iwadh (n.d.), and *al-Syi'r al-Jahili*, by Muhammad Abd al-Mun'im Khafaji (1973) were published to criticize Thaha Husein's thoughts. They answered at length and were accompanied by rational arguments. The author, therefore, conclude as follows:

First, there is no doubt that literature is always related to social life. Nevertheless, it is very wrong to say that literary works cover all aspects of social life, let alone discuss them in detail.

Secondly, there is an opinion that *Fusha* Arabic (standard Arabic) officially became the language of the Arabs after Islam came, not before its arrival. If this statement is accepted, then how was the Qur'an revealed in the language of its people. What is the significance of the Qur'an's challenge to the Arabs if it is not revealed in Arabic? How can the Qur'an occur as a book of *da'wah* and a book of laws for people who do not speak a *fusha* language (standard) (Iwadh, n.d.: 104).

Third, if the nations, such as Persia, India, and Ancient Egypt, had literary works (prose) several centuries before Christ, why did the Arabs not have a prose genre after five centuries AD? If the problem is the jahili Arabs are of the ummi community (illiterate), please note that writing skills are needed at the time of codification, not at the beginning of its development (Khafaji, 1986: 129).

In the history of Arabic literature, it is claimed that the emergence of prose is earlier than poetry because the rules do not bound the prose as in poetry. The prose is a work of literature that is free, not bound (*muthlak*), while poetry is a work of literature that is bound by rules (*muqayyad*). With this logic, then the existence of the *muthlak* before the *muqayyad*. Ibn Rasyiq emphasized that, initially, language or expressions were in the form of prose, then the Arabs needed songs to talk about character, remembering memories of life, revealing events that occurred, and so forth, then there arose *wazan* which later came to be called poetry (Hasan, 1990: 25).

Many scholars have explained the origin of Arabic poetry, including, the first opinion, that the pattern is taken from the rhythm heard from the camel's sound when stomping its feet on the ground. Also, the sound while being followed by an oral voice, which finally rises *wazan* of the poetry. The second opinion, says that the patterns of Arabic poetry are *saj'un* (rhymes), then develop into *rajaz* (one of the names of *bahar* types), and then became *bahar* (rhythm or song in the sound of poetry). The third opinion is that the patterns of Arabic poetry refer to songs that are often sung in the desert. Then the pieces of the song develop into patterned poems (Aziz, 1405: 53).

Ibn Rasyiq (2001) said that at first, the expression was in the form of prose (free expression), then the Arabs needed songs or songs to describe the glory of their minds, the

fragrance of their sweat, the remembering of beautiful days, their homeland which was beautiful far away, his brave horse, and his generosity. To express their inner feelings, they use the *wazan* to be sweet and pleasant to hear. When the *wazan* is perfect, then they call it poetry.

Taking into account the history of jahili Arabic literature, which was verbally transformed and only codified in the second century of Hijrah, Thaha Husein should not have seen the existence of the literature autonomously but was sustained by extrinsic factors. In literary sociology, literary work is seen as a social document reflecting the situation at the time the literature was created. Alternatively, literary works are manifestations of socio-cultural conditions and historical events. As Wellek and Warren once did, they tried to formulate a relationship between literature and society that could be investigated by; (a) factors outside the text, and (b) the relationship between literary texts and society (Saraswati, 2003: 10).

Ratna (2002: 206), in this connection, asserted that literary works are considered as cultural facts and collectivity representations, which primarily operate to fight for the appreciation and tendency of the community concerned. As social beings, writers are influenced by their sociological background in the form of social structures and social processes, including social changes. What is meant by social processes is the mutual influence between religious life, tradition, culture, and others (Siswanto, 2013: 2) with the writers themselves. Quoting Langland's statement, it is said that literary work is a reflection of the cultural environment and is a dialectical text between the author and the social situation that shapes it, or is an explanation of dialectical history developed in literary works (Fananie, 2001: 132). Therefore, efforts to understand, comprehend, and evaluate literary texts depend not only on literary theory but also on problems outside the text, such as political, social, religious, cultural, and so on, often form the basis of the building of literary works created.

Initially, literary sociology is better known as the mimetic or mimesis approach, which in Ancient Greek means imitation. This mimetic theory was born in the hands of the leading philosopher, Plato, that literary works

are imitations of real nature. In contrast to the opinion of his student, Aristotle, he said that literary works are not mere imitations of reality, but instead, they were created as a product of creative imagination (Zulhelmi, 2016: 4). In Arabic literary theory, the existence of the *muhakah* theory (imitating) and *tashni'* (creating both in the form of aggravating or exacerbating) shows the strong influence of Aristotle's theory. In the 18th century, Plato's and Aristotle's mimesis theories were developed by Hippolyte Taine (1766-1817), a critic of French naturalists as the foundation of the sociology of modern literature. In Arabic literature, a literary critic whose views are almost or even influenced by Hippolyte Taine is Ahmad ash-Shayib. According to him, the factors that influence literature are the place of residence, the era in which he lived, ethnicity, contact with other nations, religion, politics, and others (Kamil, 2009: 113).

For the jahili Arabs community, poetry is the anthology of life, which holds many critical and historical events. Although they are known as people who cannot read and write (*ummi*), they have the potential that can be relied upon when receiving information, namely the power of memorization. This power is highly motivated by external factors that are dominant; namely, they are motivated to memorize *ayyam al-Arab* (essential and historical events experienced by the Arab community) and *al-ansab* (genealogy/lineage) which is the pride. These two types of knowledge are widely stored in literary works, both poetry, and prose (Yatim, 1997: 29-39). Language is essentially a symbol system that is not only an empirical sound sequence but has a non-empirical meaning. Thus, language is a means of human communication, the pouring of emotions and means of manifesting the human mind in daily life, especially in searching for the true nature of life (Kaelan, 2017: 6).

In the sociology of language, it is said, that language is the whole part of the culture because it also records various other cultural activities. Various aspects of cultural relics from the past, especially those in the form of local wisdom, were recorded and passed on to the next generation whose language is wrong. Language reflects the cultural behavior of the user community. In essence, if someone learns

a culture, one of the most effective media is through language (Nurgiyantoro, 2014: 20).

Language is an experience, which is an experience that is lived, and this is the existential meaning of language. Language is the home where the 'exists,' It would be more valid if it is said that language is a home for meaningful experiences. The experience in question is crystallized, becoming a certain kind of substance. That is, our experience becomes meaningless if we do not find its home in language. Conversely, a language without real experience is like an empty shell without life (Kaelan, 2017: 309). Therefore, it is reasonable if a literary work becomes a socio-cultural document (Wahyudi, 2013), then it is very natural that during the jahili literary works to be *diwan al-'Arab* being socialized through the means of verbal tradition. In the end, this kind of delivery process knows the term *riwayah*, which is also related to *sanad* (transmission), *matan* (material/content), and *al-'ardh wa al-ada'* (delivery).

Dhaif (n.d.: 7) emphasized several requirements in the delivery (*al-'ardh wa al-ada'*) of a literary work: first, *al-tamatstsul*, which provides examples of expressions of literary works with good language structure. Second, *al-diqqah* (depth), namely the nature of accuracy in the delivery of literary works. Third, *al-ada' al-sadid*, namely the correct delivery by giving explanations of some foreign words and the use of language styles in literary works.

While the state of *sanad* in literature consists of people who are *tsiqah* (trustworthy intellectual capacities), and people who are during their time (*shahadah al-zaman*). It allows the informant and those who receive the news to meet in person (*liqa'*) and must be delivered verbally / orally (*musyafahah*), followed by the expression of *haddatsana* or *akhbarana*. Even more than that, hearing sensitivity and sharpness of sight are absolute requirements for a narrator (Hasan, 1990: 175).

If there is a dispute between two *riwayat* (narration), for example, the solution is *tarjih*, which is to choose between the stronger and the trusted. It is not surprising that Abu al-Farj did the same thing as *muhadditsin*, namely *al-ta'dil wa al-tarjih* (criticizing narrators who were considered

honest and liar) (al-Rafi'i, 1974: 287). Thus the information received becomes valid and can be accounted for.

The transmission of literary works has two main objectives. First, literary works are the basis or reference for the transmission of knowledge. So the existence of literary history serves to 1) Avoid history swelling, for example in the field of reading the Qur'an, Hadith, news, language, and so on which will ultimately result in the emergence of false information; and 2) Know the explanation and purpose of the fields above. Second, literary works can be used as evidence (*syahid*) and examples (al-Rafi'i, 1974: 401).

According to Dhaif (n.d.: 7), Hammad al-Rawiyah was the first person (pioneer) to codify Arabic poetry. Because of the vastness of his knowledge, he got the title or designation with the term *bi al-rawiyah* (a professional person in narration). He lived in Basrah during the caliphate of Marwan bin al-Hakam, the Khilafah Umayyah. The *al-sima`* (listening) method he developed was also socialized by his student named Khalf al-Ahmar in Kufa (Ibid.). Although both of them were exceptionally meritorious in the codification of literary works, lately, many criticized and accused him of being a person who manipulated the literary style of language.

Responding to the criticism above, Dhaif (n.d.: 7) stated emphatically that both were including *Tsiqah* people and those who had the potential to uncover the real phenomenon of jahili Arabs life. In contrast to *al-A'sya*, *al-Mufaddhal al-Dhabi*, and *al-Ashma'i*, which can be classified as public narrators (fake/lie). Even though some deny it, even though they are included narrators who are *tsiqah*, there is no unique history connected to the jahili poet. However, it needs to be known, according to al-Rafiy` (1974: 288), that they are the first generation to know the history of transmission. They narrated more about the situation of jahili life than those who lived in that period.

The writers, literary critics, and historians in providing an assessment of the validity of the *sanad* and *matan* of the literary works, in principle, employ the method developed by hadith experts, both related to *sanad* and *matan*. Some of them collect in one collection, which is then called *diwan*

(anthology). *Diwan* is usually written through several methods, including the dictation method, the writing method, and the *tahwil* method (moving from several existing books). In general, *diwan* that contains literary works of the jahiliyyah period and the Islamic period is mostly attributed to Basrah and Kufa's narrators because they are very concerned about the criteria of a narrator's readiness. For example, *al-Ashma'i* wrote six *diwans*; 1) the *Umrū` al-Qais diwan*, 2) the *al-Nabighah diwan*, 3) the *Zuhair diwan*, 4) the *Tharafah diwan*, 5) the *'Antarah diwan*, and 6) the *'Alqamah bin` Abadah diwan*.

## CONCLUSION

In the book 'fi al-Adab al-Jahili,' Thaha Husein developed the method of literary criticism that Descartes once popularized, namely doubts/skeptics (al-syak), or in Latin reads, *cogito ergo sum* 'I think, therefore I am.' To ensure that something that exists, everything must be doubted first. Likewise, the existence of jahili Arabic literature, which was conveyed from generation to generation orally and was only codified in the second century, did not rule out the possibility of counterfeiting. Through the method of literary criticism that was developed, Thaha Husein found three things that need to be re-examined, namely: first, most of what is referred to as jahili poetry was not born during the jahili period, but was created during the Islamic era. Secondly, there is a gap between the intellectual style in jahili poetry and the intellectual condition of the jahili Arabs community. Third, the emergence of poetry earlier than prose, because prose requires rational language that requires the writing skills.

Thaha Husein should not see the existence of autonomous Arabic literature in a freeway, but it is also linked to the surrounding factors. As said in the literature of sociology, that literary work is a manifestation of socio-cultural conditions and historical events. Literary work is a reflection of the cultural environment and is a text that establishes a dialectical relationship between the author and the social situation, or is a historical explanation as outlined in the literary work. Therefore, to understand and analyze literary works not only depends on the text alone but also the problems outside

the text that often colors the basic framework of literary works.

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