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Khayyam's Quatrains as Fitzgerald's Rubåiyat: Translation as Ideological Misrepresentation

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Abstract

Research studies from around the globe on Omar Khayyåm's Persian *quatrains* and their translation into English by the poet, writer, and translator Edward Fitzgerald, are in abundance. Researchers are, in general, in praise of the translation and give credit to Fitzgerald for making Khayyåm a world-renowned poet. However, the translation has rarely been approached from a socio-political perspective, or a look into Fitzgerald's ideological manipulation of the original. The present research study investigates two issues with Fitzgerald's translation-ideological manipulation and selective translation. The study also looks into Khayyåm's life and his works. It probes into the effects this translation left on the literary scene. The study involves a comparative literary translation analysis to compare and contrast the elements found in Fitzgerald's translation and two Arabic translations. Employing Lefevere's (1992) theory of 'translation as rewriting,' this paper assesses the extent to which a translator's ideology can lead to a misrepresented product of translation (Lefevere, 1992). The study adopts textual analysis as a research method to capture the epicurean elements recurrently emphasized by Fitzgerald in his translation.

Keywords: *Carpe diem* philosophy, Ideological misrepresentation, Rubåiyåt, Omar Khayyåm, Edward Fitzgerald, Quatrain

1.0 Introduction

Historically, translation has played a significant role in bringing the circles of communication between the peoples of earth from different cultures (Altarabin, 2021). Translation also drives people to explore other cultures and gain mutual understanding, especially in delivering written and spoken translations for educational and religious purposes; therefore, translation has the seminal role in transferring the cultural heritage of one nation to another and evolving cultural and intellectual life. Although there is a consensus among scholars on the importance of translation in this respect, yet a close study of the history of translation from Cicero to the present shows that there has been no agreement among scholars on how to translate, so that translators rely on translation ethics and moralities as a stable scale

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to produce faithful translations. Because of this discrepancy among scholars' viewpoints on translation methods, it is noted that in some historical periods one translation method becomes more common, though there are some exceptions too. Chronologically, the viewpoints on translation and the approaches exerted by translators in the nineteenth century differed from the previous and the following centuries. Given the significance of a text's stylistic elements, in addition to its substance, translating poetry puts unique obstacles before translators; it shows who is capable or poor at translating it. In his seminal paper, Jakobson (1959) asserts that poetry, by definition, is untranslatable. This is quite plausible given the many formal and semantic constraints which could be obstacles in the way of producing a good poetry translation. The poem "Lost in Translation," by American poet James Merrill (1974) explores this concept in part. So, an accurate translation of a poem must capture its literal meaning as well as its form and structure, meter, rhythm, alliteration, rhyme scheme, etc.

The present researchers investigate Edward Fitzgerald's general approach to translation before examining his approach to translation in Omar Khayyåm's poetic work, *Rubåiyåt*, and determining the techniques he employed in translating it, all the while keeping in mind the Victorian viewpoints on translation in the nineteenth century (Walker, 1921/2011). But, before we embark upon a full-fledged analysis, we will present a brief overview of Omar Khayyåm's life and works as well as Fitzerald's translation, the *Rubåiyåt*.

1.1 Omar Khayyåm: Life and Works

Omar Khayyåm was a Muslim Persian scientist. He was born in 1048 in Nishapur, Khorasan, in the Seljuk Empire, and died in 1131 in Nishapur, Khorasan. He excelled in several fields of knowledge and sciences, such as mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, and poetry. Thus, he was a polymath who stood out during the time of the Seljuk Empire as an influential member of the intellectual community. His brilliance as a mathematician in illustrating issues in Algebra was Remarkable. Khayyåm invented a method to solve the cubic equation in more than one way (Mardia, 2004: 2). He was invited by the Seljuk sultan, Malik Shah, to come to Esfahan. After his arrival, Khayyåm recruited a talented team of scientists with him to determine the length of a year. He accomplished the task accurately and precisely. Khayyåm calculated 1,029,983 days as 2,820 years. The calculation gives a tropical year to be of 365.2422 days. Today, it is known that the length of a tropical year differs from one year to another by 30 minutes. The average tropical year length today is 365.242189 days. This calendar was in use until the 20th century (Kennedy, 1966: 140-142).

Khayyåm earned fame and popularity in the West for his innovations and brilliant career in science, literature, and other fields of knowledge he dealt with. Among his outstanding works of literature is his well-known *Rubåiyåt*. This poetic work is in the form of quatrains, and it tackles the idea of human being's status, with existential questions on life. It is a fascinating collection of poems that reviews Khayyåm's brilliant image as a person going into an inner conflict with his soul. The present researchers would like to call it the spiritual journey of man in which investigation goes on throughout life. In other words, it is a classic poem that encounters a conflict between human heart and mind, wherein the heart wants to follow [immoral] desires, whereas the mind disagrees by presenting reasons and warning of the consequences of sin. The heart pulls man towards life's temptations, while the mind reminds him of life's core. The age-old conflict reminds the reader of John Donne's sonnet, "Batter My Heart, Three Person'd God":

I, like an usurpt towne, to'another due,
Labour to' admit you, but Oh, to no end,
Reason your viceroy in mee, mee should defend,
But is captiv'd, and proves weake or untrue.

(John Donne, *Divine Meditations or Holy Sonnets*, Sonnet XIV [Stringer and Parrish, 2005])

The heart is due to/owned by, someone [a beautiful woman, for instance] and is, therefore, like an usurped town, before whom God's viceroy, reason, proves weak!

Khayyảm's *Rubảiyảt* were translated by over forty different translators. While some translators used the original Persian text, others used a proxy translation. *Rubảiyảt* reached the West via the English poet, Edward Fitzgerald (1809-1883), who translated it in the 1860s as the *Rubảiyảt of Omar Khayyảm, the Astronomer-Poet of Persia. Rendered into English verse* (shortened to *Rubảiyảt* in this paper). It was published in five subsequent editions over a period of more than ninety years (i.e. 1895, 1868, 1872, 1879, and 1889). No doubt, Fitzgerald's translation made Khayyảm's poem one of the greatest classic poems in the West. The first Arabic translation of the poem was done by the Lebanese translator, Wadee' Al-Bustani, in 1912. The source text for his translation was Fitzgerald's English version. Later, in 1924, the Egyptian poet Ahmed Rami translated it directly from the Persian. It attracted the Arab audience further when parts of Ahmed Rami's translation was sung by the famous Egyptian Singer Umm Kulthum. Ahmed Rami modified it so it can fit the Arabian norm back then. There is no doubt that this poem became debatable at the centers of relation, and it did bring doubts about atheism and second thoughts to its author.

1.2 The Poetic Style of Khayyảm

Khayyảm can easily fit into the category 'metaphysical' poet since Khayyảm's quatrains display many traits peculiar to the Metaphysical school of poetry. Like the poetry of Metaphysical poet John Donne, Khayyảm's Rubảiyảt are sensuous, intellectualized, complicated in thought, witty, contain rather odd imagery, raise paradoxes, and often pose complex questions on human existence. Those theological questions may oftentimes feel like questions on the existence of God, and what that existence/non-existence means to human individuals in the world, which brought against Khayyảm the charges of atheism and made him look faithless (see Al-Qifti, *The History of Learned Men*). However, Khayyảm uses several poetic devices in his poetry and thoughts, such as paradox, owing to which the surface meaning buries a hidden meaning, a denotative meaning that submits to the literal meaning. All those literary devices and figurative language bring organic unity into his work, resulting in an aesthetic pleasure the writer wishes to deliver to his readers.

1.3 Edward Fitzerald: The *Rubảiyảt*

Fitzgerald's translations of Khayyảm's poetry came in five editions or versions. The first edition was published in 1859 (Martin and Mason, 2011: 5). It consisted of 75 quatrains. The book didn't grab readers' attention, whatsoever, and the copies were left on the shelves with no interest. The second edition was published in 1868. It consisted of 110 quatrains, while the third edition, with 101 quatrains, was published in 1872. It was the first American copy. The fourth edition, with 101 quatrains, was published in 1879, and finally, the fifth and last edition was published in 1889 consisting of 101 quatrains. Only four editions were published under the authorial control of the genuine translator, Fitzgerald. The fifth edition contained only a few changes and was published after his death. It is only through Fitzgerald that the poem of Omar Khayyảm became internationally famous and gained worldwide interest, although before the second edition, "it was lost and almost forgotten between shelves" (Blois, 2004:

312). According to Drury (2008), Fitzgerald adopted a free translation method where he took liberties to serve his own agenda. He was aware of his limitations as a translator and was convinced of the severe limitations of translation as an enterprise. His method of translation is omnipresent in the literary masterpieces he translated, where he opted for a very loose paraphrasing of the source text.

1.4 Research Problem

This study attempts to investigate the effect of translator's ideology in the misrepresentation of the original work. A pilot study and an initial probe into Fitzgerald's translation showed that he had considered the Persian original text inferior. This was very clear in his eclecticism in choosing what to translate of the Quatrains, and his recurrent use of certain elements related to his own epicurean tendency, which at the end marred the original.

2.0 Literature Review

In the following sub-sections is presented a review of the relevant existing literature on the subject at hand. Thus, apart from throwing a brief light on the poetic form called 'Rubåiyåt' in Persian and Arabic, we will discuss the points related to issues emerging from translation of poetry, such as form and meaning, cultural aspects, translator's interpretation, as well as the points concerning Fitzerald's translation of *Rubåiyåt,* such as Epicureanism, and the ideological issues. A brief review of prominent research studies on the *Rubåiyåt* will be presented in the sub-sections to put the present research into proper perspective and wider research context.

2.1 Rubåiyåt: The Poetic Form

The term rubā'īyāt is a plural form of the Arabic word rubā'īya or rubā'ī, which is a composition in four lines, that is, a quatrain in English. Rubā'īya/rubā'ī is derived from the Arabic *arbaʿa,* meaning four; anything composed of four elements may be termed as *rubā'īyah*. A poetic composition in four lines rhyming aaba (quatrain) is a rubā'ī, while a collection of rubā'ī is called as rubáiyát. Thus, the English poet and Orientalist, Edward Fitzerald, termed Khayyåm's long poem in quatrains (rhyming aaba) as Rubáiyát.

Fitzgerald translated Khayyåm's poem directly from Persian to English. The Egyptian linguist, Ahmed Rami, also translated it directly from Persian to Arabic. Both translations had a considerable literary impact, critically, aesthetically, and stylistically. The beauty of the poem lies in the deep meaning of the quatrains. The brilliance of its author was later focused on by linguists who rendered it into their mother tongues and made it one of the greatest classic works that brought Khayyåm remarkable fame, and gave the poem passport to travel from one language to another under the sky of comparative literature, getting to know Islamic culture and literature like never before, and opened a field for further studies and critiques, contributing to additional knowledge in literature and cultures.

2.2 Epicureanism

Epicureanism is a system of philosophy founded around 307 B.C., relating to the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus. According to Marshall (1891), Epicurus' philosophy is defined "as a process of thought and reasoning tending to the realization of happiness" (p. 210). This philosophical school saw pleasure as the basis of life. Epicurus called others and his followers

to enjoy life until the last minute like there was no tomorrow. They believe that life from childhood until adulthood is the only time to enjoy, and there is nothing called the afterlife. With the balance of it, so they avoid the pain that over-pleasure causes. Their focus was on the pleasure of the mind rather than the physical pleasure. Epicurean physics saw the universe as consisting of two things, matter, and void.

One of the other aims of this philosophy is to find happiness regarding the rules they have set, like finding happiness when it is not in their hands. To be more precise, they aimed to reach the ultimate joy before it was too late. For them, happiness can be achieved through privation from bodily desires, community, friendships, knowledge, and moderate life, "a place of temperate pleasure and wise delights. Personally, we may take it that Epicurus was a man of simple taste and moderate desires" (Marshall, 1891: 214). These are the rules of achieving an Epicurean life. Epicurus illustrated pleasure in two types, static and moving, and described two areas of pain and pleasure, that is, physical and mental. He described the moving joy as active in satisfying a desire, for example, moving to eat food when in hunger. On the other hand, the second type of pleasure, i.e. static, can be demonstrated in words, like the feeling after eating when one is not hungry any more. Briefly put, pleasure is the main aim or goal of life for them, and to use the large part of their life living in pleasure, also limiting pain as much as possible.

To Epicurus, arts and sciences devoid of pleasure as their goal or interest, or unable to "release the soul from the terrors of the unknown" (Marshall, 1891: 211) were unworthy. To him, the goal of philosophy was ethical interest. Senses are the only source of knowledge to Epicureans; man's imagination about knowledge or interpretation of sensory knowledge gives way to falsehood. Broad conceptions or types, like a man or home, which are replicas of experiences, are generated in the mind because of parallels or analogies among senses (Mitra, 2015: 98). The significance of the assertion of Epicurean canon of truth or untruth becomes clear in the light of his theory of physics, which is based on his theory of Atoms. His theory, thus, is primarily materialistic, leaving little space for spiritualism.

The researchers bring forth these concepts in this chapter to evaluate Fitzerald's selected stanzas in support of their argument concerning Fitgerald coloring Khayyåm in Epicureanism. As regards the charge of colonialist-imperialist attitude in Fitzgerald's translation, the researchers agree with Shojai (1967) who says that, "It is shown that he had in mind a symbolic framework as well, whereby he could retain, omit, or elaborate on the imagery in the original" (p. 2). Fitzgerald's colonist mindset is obvious in his freedom to take extreme liberties with Persians, "It is an amusement for me to take what Liberties I like with these Persians, who (as I think) are not Poets enough to frighten one from such excursions, and who really do want a little Art to shape them" (Fitzerald, xvi; Quoted in Lefevere, 1992: 1). The selection of certain quatrains by Fitzgerald is what the researchers will shed light on in this chapter; what Fitzgerald picked in words and other stylistic aspects to emphasize his ideas, and the language Fitzgerald used to deal with the poem is what concerns the researchers. Fitzgerald, in essence, set a language as an Orientalist so that his own Epicurean side stands out in the poem.

2.3 Form and Meaning

Poetry translation is likely the topic in translation that sparks the most vigorous debates.

The issues arise from the multiple meanings present in literary [poetic] texts, and from the fusion of form and substance. It is challenging, if not impossible, to translate a poem's all the linguistic elements from one language into another because the structure and style of poetry

are so inventive and intricate. A loss in conveying the form results in a loss in transferring the entire meaning because the form contains a portion of the essence. To transfer or recreate all of these elements in the target text, the translator must be knowledgeable about all these features as well as the integrity of form and meaning.

2.4 Cultural Factors

Poetry translation engages essential cultural factors. It takes more than a thorough understanding of the grammar and vocabulary of a foreign language for the translation to be adequate. Before attempting to create any kind of bridge between two cultures, one should be knowledgeable about their own culture and the culture of the source language. Nida (1964: 55) categorizes cultural references into five groups:

i. Material, which stands for life's everyday objects,
ii. Ecological, related to differences in the places, etc.,
iii. Social, related to societal organization and its artistic manifestation in the arts or literature and history,
iv. Religion, and
v. Linguistic, which is the tool needed to express the previous aspects of reference.

Fitzerald's translation of Khayyåm needs to be examined in view of the cultural factors cited above.

2.5 Interpretive Hurdles

The translated [poetic] output is influenced by the translator's reading of the poetry. In other words, the most crucial aspect of translating poetry might be the translator's familiarity with, and comprehension of, the poem. It might be accurate to claim that some poems require interpretation to make them more comprehensible for the target language readers. So, a literal translation can occasionally produce undesirable outcomes. Nonetheless, the interpretation should not stray too far from the poet's core argument. Translators should not alter the poetry to suit their tastes. Although they must adhere to the original text, they can occasionally provide a valid and trustworthy interpretation.

2.6 Research on the *Rubåiyåt*

Khayyåm's quatrains, particularly Fitzgerald's English translation of the poetry as *Rubåiyåt*, are so well-known in the literary world that there exists a vast secondary literary output on the book – research literature, translations, adaptations and recreations of the Rubåiyåt in other languages (e.g., Bloom and Marson, 2004; Seyed-Gohrab, 2012). Researchers (e.g., Aminrazavi, 2005, 2012; Alsulami, 2012; Drury, 2008; Jaberizadeh, 2013; Kennedy, 1966; Martin and Mason, 2011; Nakhaei, 2019; Seyed-Gohrab, 2012; Shojai, 1967, to name only a few) have mixed reactions to Fitzgerald's translation, such as satisfaction, discontentment, praise, and so on. Aminrazavi (2012), for instance, says that *Rubāiyyāt* have rarely been studied from a socio-political perspective, and the author argues that many of the Rubāiyyāt were written "as a reaction to the rise of Islamic orthodoxy and the demise of the intellectual freedom which was so prevalent in the first four centuries of the Islamic history" (39). Alsulami (2012), on the other hand, laments that despite the geographical, cultural and religious relationship between Arabs and Iranians, the modern Arab intellectuals have little access to the post-Islamic Persian literature, and lean more towards European literature. However, the translation of the Rubayyat of Khayyåm during the nineteenth century has

rekindled the Arab intellectuals' interest in Persian literature. Shafiei (2012) applies the tenets of Post-colonialism (see Said, 1978) in his study of Fitzgerald's English translation of Khayyảm's *Rubảiyảt* to investigate whether Fitzgerald's translation does justice to the true philosophical / ideological image of Khayyảm and his poems. The researcher finds the translator has ideologically manipulated the original text. Saderi and Saderi (2019) applaud Fitzgerald for the job he did to develop the literature in his time and made an otherwise obscure Iranian poet world-famous. The researchers also surveyed the changes done in the same context and clarify the Iranian theosophy point of view expressed by Khayyảm. Behtash (2019) discusses the reception of Rubảiyảt in Victorian England in a favourable light. The researcher cites the example of Robert Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra" being influenced by Khayyảm as a persona of a Middle Eastern historical scientist, which was selected by Browning in response to Khayyảm, an astronomer-mathematician poet of Persia.

However, researchers have rarely looked into the ideological manipulations Fitzgerald has carried out in the translation of Khayyảm's quatrains, particularly highlighting only that part of the poetry which depicts the apparently hedonistic and epicurean standpoint towards life but disregarding that part where Khayyảm presents a totally different perspective towards life. Therefore, there exists a research gap which the present research study is a modest attempt to fill. The present research looks into that part of Khayyảm's poem which is neglected by Fitzgerald, and at the same time the researchers argue that the Arabic translation of the quatrains by Ahmed Rami are much holistic in approach taking into consideration all the cultural aspects of the creation of the poem.

3.0 Research Methodology

Qualitative research methodology has been adopted to conduct the present study. The study adopts textual analysis approach for qualitative interpretation of the data. As regards theoretical framework, elements from André Lefevere's (1992) theory have been employed to make sense of the theoretical points involved in the study. Lefevere examines factors affecting translation, particularly 'rewriting,' which play a major role in the reception, acceptance or rejection of literary works that involve issues, such as "power, ideology, institution and manipulation" (p. 2). According to Lefevere (1992), the people involved in these factors influence the 'rewriting' of works and the reception of it by the target readers. The decisions could be ideological (i.e. conform to or reject the dominant ideology), or poetological (i.e. conform to or reject dominant poetics). Fitzgerald's translation will be assessed against two Arabic translations, one by Wadee' Al-Bustani in (1912) and the other by Ahmed Rami (1924).

4.0 Analysis

In this section the researchers will present an analysis of selected verses from Fitzerald's *Rubảiyảt* in view of the concept 'partial selection,' and show how the concept works in this case, as well as how Fitzerald's translation involves wordy imperialism as discussed previously.

Khayyảm used in his poem the language that depicts his quest for pleasure, holding forth his ideas as a straightforward person looking for more than mere pleasure, and displaying the

other side of his personality. In contrast, Fitzgerald's translation of the poem is all about pursuit of pleasure, which is a temporal joy on earth and nothing else.

Spending time [at leisure and pleasure] is evident in every translated quatrain, as are the irreligious manners. In reading the *Rubåiyåt* in the original or in Arabic translation, one notices there is an insistence on several other things, besides pleasure and drinking. For instance, Khayyåm has paid attention to secular issues, but Fitzerald has connected that to Epicureanism. It is clear that such a selective adoption of certain philosophical thoughts by Fitzgerald in translating the poem was done on purpose, to give it a particular color by emphasizing the idea of [leisure] time and liquor. That is just materialistic and hedonistic pleasure connected to Epicureanism, and Fitzgerald used that all in one poem:

> And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
> The Tavern shouted— "Open then the Door"!
> You know how little while we have to stay,
> And, once departed, may return no more. (Fitzgerald, *Rubåiyåt*, 9-12.)

It is easy to see how, in the third line of this quatrain, emphasis has been put on the Epicurean way of life, indicating shortness of life, and therefore, not enough time for pleasure; it roars loudly, "Seize the day." Prior to that, the translator picks the word "tavern," a place that serves alcohol, and depicts the people shouting and screaming, "open now, now is the time for us to dig into this life," which might indicate wild living. The last line of this stanza goes as follows: 'when we die, there is no way back to this life or another life; it ends, and this is the only life we have got.' It portrays Epicurean philosophy and way of life. This stanza, and several other stanzas, will stick next to each other, highlighting the partial selection of the translator; rather, there must be another complementary part to it to make meaning as a whole so that it can be intact, not stand apart, as is done by Fitzgerald. The third line in the stanza presents an absolute epicurean meaning of life. It can stand alone as a summary of what the present researcher has argued from the very beginning, that is, it is enough to show how a follower of Epicurus visualizes life, and deals with life around him; it announces pleasure and joy, using different words.

Man, thinking about human life, learns that time is truly his/her most ruthless and toughest enemy. If only those, who haven't yet entered life, realized the struggles and tribulations man faces, they might decide against sending their souls to earth:

> Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
> The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
> The Bird of Time has but a little way
> To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing. (Fitzgerald, *Rubåiyåt*, 25-28.)

In the above stanza, the poem goes from the first line, "fill the cup," which could mean alcohol from what is mentioned in the third quatrain, i.e., the word "tavern," or it could mean filling the cup with pleasure of life, and the cup here is an image of life. In the second line, there is a sort of religious failure. In other words, the general meaning here is to stop seeking forgiveness, to get rid of that clothing of forgiveness on you, and mount with pleasure-seekers into this life, seeking only joy and pleasure, not to tire your mind by thinking too much. Moving to the third line of this stanza, there is another image, the bird and time, saying that time flies just like a bird does, an indication of the shortness of time given in this life; time is narrowed. It urges people to hasten towards life's joys and pleasures and fly to seize the present time, our own and the only time.

The last line in the stanza continues to glorify life and time, saying that we are now here and alive, the time hasn't come to an end yet, the bird is still on the wing, the time is still running and flying, the end is not here yet. What is worth noting is, throughout the poem Fitzgerald is emphasizing the shortness of time to support the Epicurean philosophy and the idea of "carpe diem." If this stanza can be taken to stand as a complete poem in itself representing some other poet, some readers, or maybe the majority of readers, will call the poet an atheist, and the poem as an Epicurean poem, a straight invitation to pleasure and inciting avoidance of religious manners and life's core values.

One of the themes discussed in the poem is death, which summarizes the idea of shortness of time. Everything man does in life has an end, just like ours, and the journey of life must be concluded with death. But reckon, they think loudly about death for themselves, and they cannot stop thinking about it as it is like a reminder to them that death is inseparable from life:

> And look—a thousand Blossoms with the Day
> Woke—and a thousand scatter'd into Clay:
> And this first Summer Month that brings the Rose
> Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobad away. (Fitzgerald, *Rubåiyåt*, 33-36.)

This quatrain indicates death - a thousand roses alive today, while a thousand will go to dust tomorrow. As for today, we are alive, let us do whatever we want; you cannot put your trust in tomorrow, once we die, the life we are in shall vanish, and so shall we. The need to make use of this life till the last drop, is what they are struggling for. And then he speaks of the summer, and how it will come and take away the dead figures of Jamshyd and Kaikobad like they were never alive. And this summer will also bring new roses like it dragged and took away the dead roses. A rhetorical description of death- comparing death to the wilting of roses and the "clay," which is the burial of the dead like the dead roses. Also, the wind is a life-taker and gives birth to new ones.

The stanza suggests people are ignorant of the meaning of life; they should enjoy themselves fully in life. The portrayal of specific figures, and stating their death, is like saying, 'where are they now? Their time came to an end; so, enjoy yourself before you follow them. To the Epicureans, there is no hereafter; death is annihilation, the dissolution of the atomic bonds that constitute who we are, as in, "we have an aversion not only to the fires of hell but to annihilation itself" (Olson, 2013: 65-78). The poem is meant to say that the life we are living is like a short path with only one station before death, and that station is pleasure!

The poem glorifies certain acts on earth as attaining heaven. A bite of bread, a swig of wine, and a "Book of Verse," are more than enough to make paradise, and men will have enough pleasure by singing and will achieve their goal satisfying themselves:

> Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
> A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou
> Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
> And Wilderness is Paradise enow. (Fitzgerald, *Rubåiyåt*, 45-48.)

Starting from the first line, food, one of many pleasures in the Epicurean philosophy, brings joy, and it is a temporal joy together with wine because food, together with wine, is joy for them, since wine can bring loss of reason. Food and wine, in this case, are used to portray a

different [pleasant] life with the companions (Hollander, 1999: 203). The Epicurean followers portray their life as their own *Utopia*. They see it as heaven, and there is no afterlife: this is the world and the life, and they seek to live their day as if it is their last day. Also, Fitzgerald keeps selecting frequent words regarding food, for example, wine, he is floating in the imaginary world only to be absent-minded because the mind is connected to conscience and both are connected to reason. But Epicureans want to focus only on pleasure and joy, to be always absent-minded. The last line in the stanza supports the utopian world that a loaf of bread with a book of verses and wine are enough to achieve paradise and the continual illusion of euphoria. The researchers argue that 'sentimentality,' that is, excessive or overly exaggerated literary work in which a writer insists on something and keeps exaggerating about it, is the dominant issue in seeking materialism, beauty, and pleasure in this translated work.

Another idea, discussed in the following stanza, is reality as 'owning the present' thing. When a man has everything in his hands, take or use what exists. In other words, consume what you see and do not be busy with what is away, that is, 'the unknown':

> How sweet is mortal Sovranty!"—think some:
> Others— "How blest the Paradise to come!"
> Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest;
> Oh, the brave Music of a distant Drum! (Fitzgerald, *Rubåiyåt*, 49-52.)

The first line glories life by saying that mortal life is sweet, that is, the life of a master of his time, living without desiring the afterlife. And it does praise the men as well. The lines say, take what is in your hand, what is here, what you can touch, feel, live, and leave the rest. The rest is all an illusion; forget what is not here and seize what you can see. Then he says, do not worry about the drum. The drum symbolizes the other voices in the mind of man calling him into something else. And then he speaks, enjoy what you have today, tomorrow is not guaranteed, and do not be distracted, do not pay any attention to the drum; it is an illusion of a wasted dream. The urge for security and the sense of sovereignty that comes with accumulating money and notoriety motivates those who have a materialistic mindset. They are similar to those who follow tomorrow's aspirations for paradise as eternity, but these people yearn for wealth instead that goes along with it. Unfortunately, they put their trust in a phony kind of wealth because real riches lie buried inside the depths of the self, the happiness that comes from having complete consciousness of one's inner self, and the enormous grandeur of timelessness it brings. So, one should accept this wealth in their possession and wave the remainder goodbye. To act differently would be to brave the faraway dream's drum-pounding.

Calling nature and using it to picture the images in our minds is another way to depict the ideas one wants to deliver. Because nature has beauty and beauty is the captive of the untold words and yet to be told. Nature is such a magical tool in poetry when used in such ways, as follows:

> Look to the Rose that blows about us— "Lo,
> Laughing," she says, "into the World I blow:
> At once the silken Tassel of my Purse
> Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw". (Fitzgerald, *Rubåiyåt*, 57-60.)

Once again, in the lines above Fitzgerald highlights his idea of shortness of time. He uses the rose as a symbol, and he links it with the beauty of life and how it blows toward us with

its attractions. Rose is personified in the second line, who laughs and says, I'm beautiful, and this beauty in this life will never last. It is only once that I live. The overall idea is that the quatrain has a significant sense of the time being short; the rose spreads its beauty and lets people enjoy it, but it must reach an end. Also, the first line ensures the idea of enjoyment in life; when the rose blows towards people, it represents life and calls others to enjoy it before it vanishes. In other editions, Fitzgerald brought in slight lexical changes in this quatrain. He changed one word in the second edition, i.e., instead of "blows," he uses "blowing."

The frequent repetition of death is like a warning for the end of life before one enjoys it, and it is related to the idea of 'sentimentality' described previously (Kieran, 2015; Woodberry, 1907). Rose, for instance, is connected to the shortage of time. It is said in the eighth quatrain, many roses come and go, which means this rose that blows before us, blew its pollen so it can bring other roses to this life after it dies, that is the last line.

Time clocks, and the clock is like an hourglass- when it stops, life vanishes. Human life is like a cloud passing by, or wind in the wilderness blowing a little, or like snow on the stone that melts so quickly. This idea is stressed upon in many ways:

> The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
> Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,
> Like Snow upon the Desert's Dusty Face
> Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone. (Fitzgerald, *Rubåiyåt*, 61-65.)

That hope can be seen as the hope men carry in their hearts as the desire to own everything, that foolish men look to the earth for a sense of completion and perfection, and when their expectations are not met, they die heartbroken. The enlightened man, on the other hand, does not hold any worldly hopes and instead seeks the enduring reality, entering the realm of eternal fulfillment. The reference to potential success or failure of men's hopes in the second line is a reference to their social effects. Both are meaningless in the end since, like snow on sand, they vanish at the quickest. In my view, it is an internal image that supports my idea of wordy imperialism predominant in the Victorian age and in Fitzgerald's overall translation of Khayyåm's poem. This particular quatrain symbolizes my idea of Fitzgerald and what he wants to deliver to the reader. The bottom line here is that ignorant men seek much [spiritual] joy and perfection in this world, and if it does not happen, or their ambitions are shattered, they go to the grave sad, unfulfilled, and heartbroken.

Another recurrent theme in *The Rubåiyåt* is, in fact, the ephemerality of human life.

The world of reality itself is defiantly transient. All that it contains must fade away one day or the other:

> Ah! my Beloved, fill the Cup that clears
> TO-DAY of past Regrets and future Fears-
> To-morrow?—Why, To-morrow I may be
> Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand Years. (Fitzgerald, *Rubåiyåt*, 85-88.)

This stanza is an excellent example of "carpe diem." It tackles the idea of wine or alcohol. This idea calls its followers to drink and to have maximum joy and pleasure in life before it comes to an end. It also urges them to drink, forget, and stop thinking logically in order to disengage themselves from the miserable reality, to live in their illusory life, never think of the future, and live only for the present moment. Wine is pictured throughout the translation

as a treatment or panacea for their present miseries. They drink to forget about the past and the future and to get rid of the useless and hindering ideas that stop their way of living. By doing so, they achieve what life offers, what is real and what they have in their hands at present. The last two lines of this stanza say, tomorrow I will be myself as today, even after a thousand years, and this is only a part of history. Like every day, life passes, and we are the same day after day; even after many years, nothing will change. This life is a gift, and a short time to seize. Their practice seems like meditation, and to be mentally absent from reality by drinking wine and floating away by their imagination into the life they have drawn away from reality, logic, and reason.

The plight of humanity on earth is one of the recurring topics in the poem's that has received little attention. According to the author, there is a lot of pain and misery in this world. The period of comfort and relief is very short. People should use this brief opportunity wisely:

> Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
> Before we too into the Dust Descend;
> Dust into Dust, and under Dust, to lie,
> Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer and—sans End! (Fitzgerald, *Rubåiyåt*, 97-100.)

It is noticeable how clear the idea of "seize the day" is, to fill this time left in drinking. The concept of "sentimentality" is evident throughout the translation, to exaggerate about drinking and what their life-philosophy tells them to do. The second line sets the tone for Fitzgerald's philosophy of life. He sees death as the absolute end, because death is neither good nor bad to him; death stands to be ambiguous to them; they do not think about it (Rosenbaum, 1986: 119-120). Once they are dead, all their senses, emotions, and feelings die with them; they have no connections anymore, whatsoever. In other words, once life is here, death is not here yet; when death is present, it is the ultimate end for them. The third line keeps reassuring this idea continuously. The last line is a brief illustration of their life cycle or the pleasure they adopt in this life as the core value, that is, delight in food, wine, songs as an excessive amusement, and more joy until death; it is only death when they stop, and to the dust they would go where life exists no more.

6.0 Conclusion: Research Findings

Thus, a critical investigation of Omar Khayyåm's poetry translated by Fitzgerald as the *Rubåiyåt*, shows that the translation is centered around the concept of joy held and given. A close analysis of word choice and purported meaning shows the dominant ideas in the original have been passed on into the translation and Fitzgerald's philosophy of life and feelings secured them, giving the poem a fragrance of luxurious conviction and European touch that light the whole lyrics. The major findings of the study are discussed in the sub-sections below.

6.1 Fitzgerald's *Rubåiyåt*: The Issues

In the researchers' view, Fitzgerald's translation primarily depended on recreating Khayyåm's poem in a way that suited the English sense and social norms to attract readers' attention. He did of course transfer the text into English using a 15th century manuscript, and rewrote the poem in Mid-Victorian style, a style that was loosely formed on the original Persian text. Fitzgerald studied the Persian language for four years before he translated Khayyåm's poem, with the help of a Persian-English dictionary. His translation depended

more on his intuition than on interpretation of the poem with all its cultural meanings. In the researcher's opinion, Fitzgerald's translation cannot go more muddled than it is if it is reshaped and some quatrains are omitted. In his translation, Fitzgerald paints Khayyảm as a hedonist and atheist. In addition, he emphasizes the parts that imply consumption of liquor which brought a misunderstanding between the two cultures. In sum, the researchers' emphasis has been on pointing out that Fitzgerald should have adopted a holistic approach in his translation rather than changing the poem as he wished, adding and omitting certain complementary elements essential to get the right sense of the poem.

6.2 Ideological Insertion

Fitzgerald's Epicurean belief is apparent in his translation of Omar Khayyảm's *Quatrains*. When Fitzgerald translated the poem, he brought the sense of epicureanism into the translated text. Rather than conveying the poem holistically, he selected several quatrains that would serve his agenda as what he himself seeks to deliver to the reader. The *Rubảiyảt* follows the metaphysical school of thought, including corresponding poetic devices, figurative language, paradoxes, metaphors, and foregrounding rules that are described as deviations (Leech and Short, 2007; Mansoor and Salman, 2020; Reeves, 1986; Van Peer, 1986; Wales, 2001). It is obvious that Fitzgerald selected the part particularly reflecting deviations or poetic devices, and totally neglected the other part which is supposed to be a supplement to the first part of the *Quatrains,* and led Khayyảm to be charged of atheism and additional religious accusations that made him appear epicurean. Fitzgerald did not translate the part of the poem which depicts Khayyảm's faithfulness to God, and the forgiveness he seeks from God. Several other poets and translators adopted Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubảiyảt* in English to render it into other languages, transferring Fitzgerald's overall concepts, values, and ideology, which have significantly impacted the poem's outlook. While the others, who translated it from the original Persian text, translated it without making ideological selection of certain quatrains.

Fitzgerald's eclecticism in choosing parts of the poem for translation could only lead to false representation of the original text. He managed to make an epicurean of Khayyảm despite the fact that omitted parts of the original poem would only prove otherwise. It is found that Fitzgerald was better at rearranging the literary works of others than he was at creating his own because he replicated a translated poem that appears to be original in terms of style, rhyme, alliteration, and other aspects of figurative language. To Fitzgerald, translating well meant recreating. Considering this, and that poetry is his primary career, he excels at the recreation of stylistic elements. After this, English readers respect him and refer to his translation of the poetry as Omar-Fitz poems. However, his translation has a fundamental flaw because *Khayyảm's Rubảiyảt* was initially structured using alphabetical rhyme, a Persian custom for grouping sonnets (Elwell-Sutton, 1957: 93-94). Yet Fitzgerald organized them in a way that is thematic.

Fitzgerald was drawn to the notion that true imitation could be accomplished by an unintentional imitator, a writer who has not prioritized imitation. He nurtured a vision of good translation as an imperfect recreation in his translations, and the liberties he took in translation served this ideal. He was aware of his limitations as a translator and was convinced of the severe limitations of translation as an enterprise. He translated several literary masterpieces, mainly using the same method in Eastern and Western translations, favoring loose, or rather very loose, paraphrasing over literal authenticity. The technique is clear in his *Six Dramas of Calderon* (1903) published six years before the first *Rubảiyảt.*

6.3 Bridging the Gap: Ahmed Rami

There is no doubt that Ahmed Rami's translation of Khayyåm's Rubåiyåt from Persian to Arabic was a neat work, in which the translation of the poem was in whole. Unlike Fitzgerald, he didn't prefer certain quatrains that fit his ideas and agenda. Both Khayyåm and Ahmed Rami are Muslims, so, they share almost the same Islamic culture. And this is one of the reasons why Ahmed Rami's translation was characterized by honesty and integrity. The researchers view is, to translate is to convey the exact meaning, not change, omit, add, and reshape the poem, making it different from the authentic one. The translation of Omar Khayyåm's poem into Arabic by Ahmed Rami helped in understanding the Persian culture even more and approaching Persian literature in Arabic, in which both kinds of literature are mostly similar and familiar.

The researchers hope their contribution to research on Khayyåm will initiate literary criticism and further discussions on the topic in comparative literature studies.

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