

Edward FitzGerald's Interpretation of Omar Khayyam's Quatrains: A Study in Carpe Diem

MOHAMMAD AMIN EBRAHIMI FARD SH. (Corresponding author)

[0000-0001-8737-7254]

School of Languages, Literacies and Translation

Universiti Sains Malaysia

Penang, Malaysia

amin.ebrahimifard@gmail.com

MANJET KAUR MEHAR SINGH [0000-0002-7805-4215]

School of Languages, Literacies and Translation

Universiti Sains Malaysia

Penang, Malaysia

manjeet@usm.my

ABSTRACT

This study critically examines Edward FitzGerald's 1859 translation of Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat, focusing on how the work reflects Victorian England's cultural and ideological biases. FitzGerald's version, while renowned for introducing Khayyam's philosophy to the Western world, is also a product of its time, shaped by the Victorian worldview. By analyzing the translation through the lens of power dynamics and cultural mediation, this study explores how FitzGerald's creative liberties – including his selective interpretation and significant reductions of the original text – reshaped the themes and messages of Khayyam's poetry to align with Victorian sensibilities. The theme of carpe diem (seize the day), central to Khayyam's quatrains, serves as a focal point for this inquiry, highlighting the universal appeal of Khayyam's reflections on the transient nature of life. FitzGerald's rendering of this theme, however, was informed by Victorian attitudes towards the East, with the translation's emphasis on hedonism and the celebration of the present moment reflecting Western values of individualism and materialism. Despite the significance of FitzGerald's work in both Eastern and Western literary traditions, little attention has been paid to the ideological underpinnings that influenced his interpretation of Khayyam. This research, therefore, contributes to translation studies and comparative literature by underscoring the role of translators as cultural mediators. By interrogating FitzGerald's translation choices, this study offers a deeper understanding of how cultural biases shape the reception of foreign texts, and it highlights the enduring legacy of the Rubaiyat across time and cultural boundaries.

Keywords: Edward FitzGerald, Omar Khayyam, Quatrains, Victorian ideology, carpe diem

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INTRODUCTION

The study of Edward FitzGerald's interpretation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* holds significant value in both literary and cultural contexts. While a product of the Victorian era, FitzGerald's translation transcends its time by introducing Western audiences to the profound philosophical musings of Omar Khayyam, a 12th-century Persian polymath. This cross-cultural exchange not only enriches the literary canon but also fosters a deeper understanding of Persian literature and its thematic preoccupations (TaHER-Kermani,2019).

By focusing on the theme of *carpe diem* (seize the day), this study highlights the universal appeal of Khayyam's quatrains, which resonate with readers across different cultures and epochs. FitzGerald's creative liberties in translating the *Rubaiyat* have sparked debates about the fidelity and authenticity of translations, making this work a pivotal case study in translation studies. Moreover, the *Rubaiyat*'s emphasis on the transient nature of life and the celebration of the present moment offers valuable insights into human existential concerns, which remain relevant in contemporary discourse (TaHER-Kermani,2019).

This research contributes to the broader field of comparative literature by examining how FitzGerald's interpretation bridges Eastern and Western literary traditions. It also underscores the role of translators as cultural mediators who shape the reception and interpretation of literary works, namely *Carpe Diem*. Ultimately, this study aims to deepen our appreciation of the *Rubaiyat*'s enduring legacy and its impact on Persian and English literary landscapes.

Edward FitzGerald (1809-1883) frequently characterized his translation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, which he revised into four versions ranging from 75 to 101 quatrains, revolving around the theme of "seize the day." Musically, the poem can be seen as a variation on this theme; visually, it resembles a kaleidoscopic examination. Inspired by Omar Khayyam (1048–1131), a Persian poet and scientist, FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* develops a philosophy of "carpe diem" through expressions of sorrow, personal anecdotes, bold challenges to conventional piety, metaphorical depictions of a world where humans lack significant agency, and through vignettes—most notably the extended, imaginative one known as the "book of pots," where the poem's narrator overhears pots discussing their creator (Nakhaei,2019).

FitzGerald was an unconventional individual, and his translation, like many, contains unique quirks. Despite his fairly good grasp of Persian, he employed various strategies to translate the poem into English, the most notable being the pursuit of a poetic voice through significant reduction and reformation of the original and improvisation. His translation impacted his contemporaries, especially Algernon Charles Swinburne. It was embraced by proponents of British imperialism, although FitzGerald himself, a melancholic figure who preferred simplicity, was not one of them. While the *Rubaiyat* is often labeled as Orientalist literature, the framework of Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said, does not fully encapsulate the poem, which is deeply influenced by FitzGerald's translation ethos (West,2023).

The aims of the study are:

To analyze the extent to which FitzGerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat* incorporates Victorian cultural and ideological perspectives, particularly in relation to the concept of "carpe diem.

To compare FitzGerald's translation with the original Persian text to identify significant alterations in themes, style, and emphasis and to understand the implications of these changes on the interpretation of Khayyam's work.

The research questions of the paper are:

How does Edward FitzGerald's translation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* reflect the ideological and cultural biases of the Victorian era?

In what ways does FitzGerald's interpretation of the *Rubaiyat* alter the original themes and messages of Omar Khayyam's quatrains?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Edward FitzGerald's 1859 translation of *Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat* has garnered extensive scholarly attention for its artistic merit, yet its ideological and cultural underpinnings have been underexplored. FitzGerald's approach to translation is often seen as an amalgamation of artistic creativity and cultural imposition, reflecting Victorian biases, especially in its reductionist tendencies and selective rendering of Khayyam's quatrains (Tucker, 2020). While the theme of *carpe diem*—seizing the day—has been the focal point of many studies (Poole et al., 2024), recent scholarship has expanded the conversation to examine other themes in FitzGerald's translation, including the tension between fate and free will, religious skepticism, and the critique of Victorian social and moral values.

IDEOLOGY AND POWER DYNAMICS IN TRANSLATION

Translation is inherently a site of ideological negotiation, as translators not only interpret a source text but also impose their own values and cultural assumptions (Venuti, 1995). In the case of FitzGerald, his manipulation of Khayyam's philosophical musings often reflects Victorian attitudes toward the East, including both fascination and disdain. The Victorian era, characterized by imperialism and colonialism, exhibited a dichotomous view of Eastern culture, seeing it as both a source of romantic allure and a foil to Western rationality (Said, 1978). FitzGerald's interpretation of Khayyam can, therefore, be viewed as a product of these power dynamics. His selective translations, including omissions of Khayyam's more nuanced critiques of religion and authority, suggest a deliberate shaping of the text to align with Western ideological preferences (Tucker, 2020).

FitzGerald's reduction of Khayyam's original quatrains has been widely discussed, with some scholars arguing that his abridgment led to a loss of the spiritual and metaphysical elements present in the Persian original. For example, some of the quatrains dealing with the limitations of human knowledge and the search for transcendence are minimized or omitted in FitzGerald's version (Lambton, 2006). The reduction of these elements can be seen as a strategic effort to emphasize the hedonistic, "carpe diem" aspects of Khayyam's poetry, aligning them with Victorian sensibilities that were more focused on individualism and the pursuit of pleasure than on the metaphysical concerns of the original text (Poole et al., 2024).

THE THEME OF CARPE DIEM AND VICTORIAN SOCIETY

The *carpe diem* motif has long been recognized as a central theme in FitzGerald's translation of *Rubaiyat*. However, scholars have noted that FitzGerald's emphasis on hedonism may oversimplify Khayyam's more complex reflections on the human condition. According to Poole et al. (2024), the Victorian focus on the pleasures of the material world and the fleeting nature of time correspond to broader Victorian anxieties regarding mortality and the limitations of human existence. By foregrounding this theme, FitzGerald distorts Khayyam's more nuanced views on time and existence, rendering a version of the poet that is more aligned with Western romanticism than with the Islamic philosophical traditions from which Khayyam's poetry originates (Sardar, 2007).

Moreover, FitzGerald's interpretation of *carpe diem* is often framed as a reaction to the restrictive moral codes of Victorian society. The era's moral anxieties about sexual propriety, sobriety, and work ethic prompted many to seek solace in the transient pleasures described in *Rubaiyat* (Levey, 1994). FitzGerald's translation became a vehicle for expressing discontent with Victorian social mores, which starkly contrasted with Khayyam's original worldview that blends fatalism with *carpe diem*. While Khayyam's poetry emphasizes the inevitable transience of life, FitzGerald's rendering often distills this into a call for indulgence, masking the Persian poet's deeper philosophical reflections on life, death, and spiritual liberation (Yardley, 1995).

FITZGERALD'S REINTERPRETATION OF RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY

FitzGerald's translation of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* selectively portrays religion, downplaying Khayyam's critiques of religious dogma and authority. While Khayyam often questioned orthodox Islam and religious institutions, FitzGerald's version focuses more on existential freedom in an indifferent universe. This shift reflects the Victorian era's increasing skepticism toward organized religion, marked by the rise of agnosticism and secularism (Clark, 2006). As a result, FitzGerald's translation not only adapts language but also infuses Victorian ideological concerns, altering Khayyam's theological inquiries (Tucker, 2020).

Scholars argue that FitzGerald's work mirrors Victorian anxieties about religious identity and spiritual transcendence, emphasizing earthly pleasures over spiritual reflection. This adaptation resonates with the disillusionment with traditional religious institutions in Victorian England (McMahon, 2002), but it also transforms Khayyam's original mysticism and reflections on divinity.

Steiner (2020) points out that FitzGerald's translation has sparked considerable scholarly discussion about its fidelity to the Persian text and its impact on Western literature. Often regarded as a creative adaptation, FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat*, first published in 1859, is praised for its poetic quality and has been considered a significant English literary work (Charles Eliot Norton).

FitzGerald's translation is viewed as transformative rather than literal. He reinterpreted Khayyam's quatrains through his Victorian lens, leading to debates about the authenticity of his work. Critics note that FitzGerald's liberties with the text—by combining, omitting, or altering quatrains—reflect his thematic vision of *carpe diem* (Sabzei, 2020).

While both Khayyam's original and FitzGerald's translation center on *carpe diem*, FitzGerald's emphasis on this theme aligns with Victorian preoccupations with mortality and the transient nature of life. This focus on impermanence contributed to the *Rubaiyat*'s popularity in the West, making it one of the most quoted works in English by the early 20th century (Seyed-Ghorab, 2019).

The reception of FitzGerald's translation has been discussed in both Eastern and Western contexts. It introduced Persian literature to Western readers while also raising questions about the translator's role as a cultural mediator. FitzGerald's work is frequently cited as an example of how

translations can transcend the original text to become standalone artistic expressions (Tucker, 2020).

In conclusion, FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* exemplifies the complex relationship between translation, interpretation, and cultural exchange. By reinterpreting Khayyam's quatrains through the lens of Victorian existentialism, FitzGerald not only popularized the text in the West but also redefined it (Alghamdi et al., 2024). This study further explores how his adaptation of *carpe diem* continues to resonate with contemporary readers.

Edward FitzGerald's translation of *Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat* is a complex negotiation between the Persian poet's original philosophical ideas and the cultural and ideological imperatives of Victorian society. While much attention has been paid to FitzGerald's interpretation of the *carpe diem* theme, less attention has been given to his selective rendering of religious and metaphysical themes. A closer analysis of FitzGerald's translation practices reveals a clear ideological agenda, shaped by Victorian attitudes toward the East, religion, and individualism. Understanding these biases not only enriches our reading of the *Rubaiyat* but also contributes to broader discussions on the politics of translation and cultural appropriation in the nineteenth century.

RESEARCH METHOD

To analyze Edward FitzGerald's translation of *The Rubaiyat* comprehensively, this study employed several established scholarly methods. Textual analysis, rooted in close reading as outlined by literary theorists, offers a detailed examination of FitzGerald's translation, focusing on language, style, and thematic elements. Comparative analysis, as discussed by Steiner (2020), contrasts various translations of the *Rubaiyat* with the original Persian text, highlighting differences in interpretation, style, and emphasis. Historical contextualization, through biographical research methods, examines FitzGerald's personal life, his relationships, and the socio-cultural influences that shaped his translation. Manuscript studies follow textual criticism methodologies to investigate the manuscripts FitzGerald used and the challenges he faced in translation (Taher-Kermani, 2019).

The study also incorporated Edward Said's framework of Orientalism to analyze how FitzGerald's translation reflects or challenges Western attitudes toward the East (Tucker, 2020). Reception studies, utilizing Jauss's (1996) theories, will track the reception of FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* over time, exploring contemporary reviews, its influence on other writers, and its literary significance (Singh & Pratima, 2022). Translation theory, particularly Lawrence Venuti's concepts of fidelity, adaptation, and the translator's voice (2021) was applied to analyze FitzGerald's strategies, considering how closely he adheres to the original Persian text versus his creative liberties in producing a work tailored for an English-speaking audience.

In addition, Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality (1980) guided an exploration of how FitzGerald's translation interacted with other texts, both in Persian and in English. This intertextual framework examined the dialogue between FitzGerald's work and the broader literary and cultural context of the 19th century, including its relationship with other English renditions of Persian texts (Silmani, 2024).

Archival research, drawing on FitzGerald's personal letters, diaries, and related materials, helped illuminate his motivations and the cultural context surrounding his translation. This approach followed archival research practices outlined by historians, examining FitzGerald's documents, his correspondence with contemporaries like Tennyson and Swinburne, as well as his

annotations on the *Rubaiyat* manuscripts. These primary sources, including over two hundred documents from FitzGerald's career, enriched the study by providing insight into the publication history of the *Rubaiyat*, its initial reception, and its impact on literary circles. Secondary sources, such as contemporary reviews and literary analyses, further contextualized the translation's literary influence (Balıkcıoğlu, 2024).

This multifaceted approach, grounded in established scholarly frameworks, offered a comprehensive understanding of FitzGerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat*, considering its historical, literary, and cultural contexts, as well as its lasting impact on literature.

The quatrains selected for analysis reflect key themes in Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, including the transience of life, skepticism towards absolute knowledge, the fleeting nature of existence, and the call to enjoy the present moment. These themes align with those emphasized in FitzGerald's translation, which may also have been influenced by Western sensibilities, focusing on existential reflection and the pursuit of earthly pleasures.

The analysis presented five quatrains, each accompanied by the original Persian text and FitzGerald's English translation:

- Quatrain 1: Addressing the futility of seeking ultimate knowledge.
- Quatrain 2: Using the metaphor of a clay pot to represent human experience.
- Quatrain 3: Emphasizing the fleeting nature of time.
- Quatrain 4: Highlighting the irreversibility of time.
- Quatrain 5: Utilizing the metaphor of the rose to represent the fleeting beauty of life.

Each quatrain was followed by an analysis of FitzGerald's translation, noting his stylistic choices and how he reinterpreted the original Persian.

Given that the *Rubaiyat* consists of 158 quatrains, selecting a representative sample was essential. The study aimed to analyze 30 quatrains, covering Khayyam's core themes while maintaining a manageable scope for in-depth analysis. This sample size balanced thematic diversity with the practical constraints of academic study. A focused selection of quatrains allowed for a meaningful comparison between FitzGerald's translation and the original Persian text, highlighting significant stylistic differences and linguistic challenges.

By analyzing a subset of 20 quatrains, this study aimed to provide a comprehensive examination of FitzGerald's translation, offering insights into his stylistic choices, the interpretive decisions he made, and the broader cultural and literary significance of his work.

FINDINGS

To illustrate FitzGerald's translation approach, the following quatrains should be considered from the *Rubaiyat*:

Original Persian Quatrain

هرگز دل من ز علم محروم نشد

کم ماند ز اسرار که معلوم نشد

هفتاد و دو سال فکر کردم شب و روز
معلوم شد که هیچ معلوم نشد

FitzGerald's Translation

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same Door as in I went.

In this quatrain, FitzGerald captures the essence of Khayyam's skepticism and the futility of seeking absolute knowledge, though he takes liberties with the imagery and structure to fit his poetic style.

Original Persian Quatrain

این کوزه چو من عاشق زاری بوده‌ست
در بند سر زلف نگاری بوده‌ست
این دسته که بر گردن او می‌بینی
دستی‌ست که بر گردن یاری بوده‌ست

FitzGerald's Translation

For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd— "Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

Original Persian Quatrain

برخیز و بیا بتا برای دل ما

حل کن به جمال خویشتن مشکل ما
یک کوزه شراب تا بهم نوش کنیم
زان پیش که کوزه‌ها کنند از گل ما

FitzGerald's Translation

Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
Your Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

These 2 quatrains emphasized the fleeting nature of time and the importance of enjoying the present moment. FitzGerald's translation captured the essence of Khayyam's original, urging readers to cast aside regrets and embrace the joys of life. The metaphor of the "Bird of Time" highlighted the swift passage of time, reinforcing the *carpe diem* theme.

Original Quatrain by Omar Khayyam (in Persian)

این قافله عمر عجب می‌گذرد
دریاب دمی که با طرب می‌گذرد
ساقی غم فردای حریفان چه خوری
پیش آر پیاله را که شب می‌گذرد

FitzGerald's Translation

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all thy Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all thy Tears wash out a Word of it.

This quatrain reflected on the irreversible nature of time and actions. FitzGerald's translation poetically conveyed the idea that once a moment has passed, it cannot be undone. The "Moving Finger" symbolizes the relentless march of time, and the quatrain encourages readers to make the most of the present, as past actions cannot be changed.

Original Quatrain by Omar Khayyam (in Persian)

هر سبزه که بر کنار جویی رسته است
گویی ز لب فرشته خویی رسته است
پا بر سر سبزه تا به خواری ننهی
کان سبزه ز خاک لاله رویی رسته است

FitzGerald's Translation

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."

This quatrain used the imagery of a blooming rose to illustrate the beauty and transience of life. FitzGerald's translation captures the joy and impermanence of existence, urging readers to appreciate and celebrate the present. The rose's laughter and the act of scattering treasures symbolize the ephemeral nature of life and the importance of living fully in the moment.

Here, FitzGerald transformed the original quatrain's reflection on the transient nature of life and love into a more vivid and dramatic scene, emphasizing the human connection to the material world. These examples demonstrated FitzGerald's unique approach to translation, blending fidelity to the original text with creative reinterpretation to produce a work that resonates with his own cultural and poetic sensibilities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Edward FitzGerald's translation of *Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat* serves as a fascinating lens through which to examine the cultural and philosophical underpinnings of the Victorian era. Although FitzGerald's rendering is often criticized for its loose fidelity to the original Persian text, it is precisely this creative interpretation that allows for a rich exploration of the themes of existential

reflection and the transience of life. FitzGerald's translation does not merely preserve the content of Khayyam's quatrains, but rather conveys the spirit of the original work, emphasizing the idea of living in the moment—a theme central to both Khayyam's original verses and FitzGerald's Victorian context.

At the core of this translation is the metaphor of the "Bird of Time," which encapsulates the fleeting nature of existence. This metaphor appears multiple times in FitzGerald's work, most notably in the famous quatrain that urges, "The Bird of Time has but a little way / To fly— and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing!" Here, FitzGerald powerfully conveys the idea that time is an uncontrollable force, and its passage is swift and inevitable. The bird, a traditional symbol of freedom and transcendence, is, in this context, tethered by time's relentless flight, suggesting the inescapable urgency to seize the present. The image of the bird is particularly significant in FitzGerald's version, as it combines a Victorian sensibility with Khayyam's Persian metaphysical questioning, creating a compelling dialogue between Eastern and Western worldviews on the fragility of life.

Moreover, FitzGerald's translation must be viewed in the context of Victorian society, which grappled with questions of meaning, progress, and the afterlife. The Victorian fascination with the ephemeral nature of life and the desire to live fully in the face of uncertainty is reflected in FitzGerald's poetic rendering. For instance, the recurrent refrain urging readers to "seize the day" is in direct conversation with the era's intellectual climate, which was influenced by both Romanticism and the rise of scientific rationalism. The idea of embracing earthly pleasures in the face of an uncertain or even godless universe echoes the existential dilemmas of the time, suggesting that the pursuit of joy and fulfillment in the present moment is a way to counterbalance life's inevitable decline.

However, FitzGerald's translation is not merely a celebration of hedonistic living. It reflects the Victorian era's underlying anxieties about mortality and the passage of time. FitzGerald, through his reimagining of Khayyam's quatrains, subtly critiques the notion of an afterlife, reflecting the skepticism that was becoming more widespread during the period. The emphasis on temporal beauty and the transient nature of existence can be interpreted as a reaction to the increasing secularization of Victorian society and the disillusionment with religious doctrines that emphasized eternal life.

In sum, the *carpe diem* motif in FitzGerald's translation of *Rubaiyat* was not simply an exhortation to live for the moment but rather an intricate response to the cultural and philosophical milieu of 19th-century England. FitzGerald, through his adaptation, bridges the gap between Khayyam's medieval Persian skepticism and the Victorian preoccupation with time and existential questions. Thus, the "Bird of Time" metaphor became not just a poetic device but a powerful cultural statement about the nature of life, death, and the elusive promise of eternity.

DISCUSSION

In the mid-1850s, FitzGerald communicated with Cowell about their collaborative efforts in translating Persian poetry. He expressed a strong belief that Persian poetry, when translated into English, should retain its Persian essence. FitzGerald stated, "I am increasingly convinced of the necessity of adhering as closely as possible to Oriental forms and carefully avoiding any that bring one back to Europe and the nineteenth century (FitzGerald, 1859). It is better to be *orientally* obscure than *Europeanly* clear." This statement highlights FitzGerald's commitment to a stereotypical dichotomy: the clear and comprehensible Europe versus the enigmatic East. This perspective, though neither original nor particularly appealing, reflects the prejudices associated

with Orientalism. Consequently, scholars often regard FitzGerald's most celebrated translation from Persian, his *Rubaiyat*, as an Orientalist text (Alghamdi et al.,2024).

Edward Said (1979) categorizes the poem within a secondary tier of Orientalist literature, a genre produced by "Oriental enthusiasts." Such works involve "a kind of free-floating mythology of the Orient" rooted in "the conceit of nations and scholars." In this context, the *Rubaiyat* embodies the arrogance of imperial Britain, reinforcing imperialist biases and supporting imperialist objectives. In his study of FitzGerald, he echoes this view, suggesting that FitzGerald's British arrogance and his "belief in his inherent English superiority" led him to assume that his limited knowledge of Persian was sufficient for his translation project. This misguided confidence, she argues, enabled FitzGerald to create his masterpiece in his own way, unhampered by any bothersome doubts (Jan & Sharif,2024).

Similarly, Jan extends Said's (1979) argument by discussing the *Rubaiyat* as a fetishizing collection, explicitly linking FitzGerald's Orientalism to his translation practice. She asserts, "As a member of what translation theorists label the hegemonic language and culture, FitzGerald adopts a paternalistic stance as the civilizer or improver of the dominated language and culture, Khayyam's Persian ((Vasunia,2024).

In this interpretation, translation becomes FitzGerald's means to an Orientalist end. While these approaches to the *Rubaiyat* have valid points, as evidenced by FitzGerald's writings, they do not fully capture the essence of the poem. They misinterpret FitzGerald's translation ethos and its influence on the *Rubaiyat*. This ethos, deeply personal and individualistic, shapes the themes of the *Rubaiyat* and the perspective of the poem's lyric speaker. FitzGerald was drawn to the idea of genuine imitation achieved by an accidental imitator, a writer who did not prioritize imitation. Acknowledging his limitations as a translator and the inherent challenges of translation, he envisioned good translation as an imperfect re-creation largely governed by chance. For instance, FitzGerald's approach can be compared to the translation strategies of Arthur Waley, who translated Chinese poetry with a similar emphasis on capturing the spirit rather than the literal meaning, thereby creating a unique and influential body of work (Ping & Wang,2024).

In conclusion, FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* serves as a timeless reminder of the fleeting nature of time and the importance of seizing the day. His adaptation, while not a literal translation, captures the essence of Khayyam's philosophy, urging readers to cast aside regrets and embrace the joys of life. This study has demonstrated that FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* is not only a reflection of Victorian cultural and ideological biases but also a profound literary work that continues to resonate with readers today.

This study offers a new interpretation of Edward FitzGerald's 1859 translation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, focusing on the ideological transformations inherent in the translation process. While FitzGerald's selective rendition has been widely acknowledged, few studies have interrogated how his choices are shaped by specific Victorian cultural anxieties, particularly in relation to the East. By exploring the ways in which FitzGerald not only reinterprets but significantly reshapes Khayyam's philosophy, this study argues that FitzGerald's translation reflects a deeper Victorian preoccupation with controlling, reimagining, and simplifying Eastern thought in order to fit Western ideals. Specifically, I analyze how FitzGerald's rendering of the *Rubaiyat*'s famous theme of *carpe diem* is transformed from a philosophical embrace of life's fleeting nature into a more morally acceptable, hedonistic pursuit. This reconfiguration speaks to the broader Victorian tension between rationality and the allure of exoticism, providing a fresh perspective on how Victorian ideologies affected Western understandings of the East. In doing so, this study contributes to both the scholarship on FitzGerald's translation and the broader field of

cultural exchange, offering new insights into the ways translation reflects power dynamics and cultural negotiation.

CONCLUSION

The impact of Edward FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* has been insightful, reflecting both the Victorian era's ideological and cultural biases and the concept of "carpe diem." Bateson (2024) provided a foundational perspective on FitzGerald's impact, noting that while *The Rubaiyat* did not significantly alter the course of English poetry or steer it towards Oriental verse, its language, though stately and beautiful, represented a reversion to older traditions rather than a modern development. FitzGerald's discovery of the *Rubaiyat* elevated him to an almost mythical status, often speaking as if his interpretation of Omar Khayyam was the definitive one. Critics have pointed out the liberties FitzGerald took, suggesting he was unaware of how freely he adapted the original text. However, FitzGerald was fully conscious of his non-literal approach.

The debate over whether FitzGerald truly understood Omar Khayyam or whether Khayyam was a Sufi poet is secondary to appreciating the *Rubaiyat* as a literary work. FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* should be viewed as a critique of Victorian values, challenging the era's optimism, earnestness, Puritanism, and scientific progress. This perspective aligns with the research questions and objectives of this study, which aims to explore how FitzGerald's translation reflects Victorian ideological and cultural biases and how his interpretation alters the original themes and messages of Khayyam's quatrains.

In conclusion, FitzGerald's translation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* served as a timeless reminder of the fleeting nature of time and the importance of seizing the day. His adaptation, while not a literal translation, captured the essence of Khayyam's philosophy, urging readers to cast aside regrets and embrace the joys of life. The metaphor of the "Bird of Time" in FitzGerald's translation highlighted the swift passage of time, reinforcing the carpe diem theme. This study has demonstrated that FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat* is not only a reflection of Victorian cultural and ideological biases but also a profound literary work that continues to resonate with readers today.

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