



A Formal, Stylistic, and Semantic Critical Assessment of Mohammad El-Sebai's Arabic Translation of Rubaiyat Omar Khayyam from Edward Fitzgerald's English Version

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to critically study Mohammad El-Sebai's translation of a number of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam as he translated them from the English version by Edward Fitzgerald, focusing on three analytical levels: formal/structural, stylistic, and semantic. The hypothesis was based on the fact that El-Sebai's translation tends to adapt to Arabic poetic meters and the local cultural environment more than adhering to the quadripartite system and stylistic form adopted by Fitzgerald. To achieve this, the research relied on three translation models: Catford's formal Correspondence model (1965) to assess structure, Katharina Reiss 's functional model (2000) to analyze style, and Newmark's semantic translation model (1981) to study meaning. These models were applied to five selected quatrains from the translated text. Findings showed that El-Sebai frequently transcended the original quadrilateral form, transforming texts into quintets, reflecting his tendency to harmonize with the rhythms of Arabic poetry rather than preserve a foreign structure. His translations also clearly relied on Arabic rhetorical images and stylistic devices, while his semantic treatment ranged from faithfulness to creative expression, giving the text a distinctly Arabic cultural dimension.

تقييم نقدي شكلي واسلوبي ودلالي لترجمة محمد السباعي العربية لرباعيات عمر الخيام عن النسخة الانجليزية لإدوارد فيتزجيرالد

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الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة ترجمة محمد السباعي لعدد من رباعيات عمر الخيام دراسة نقدية، والتي ترجمها عن النسخة الإنجليزية لإدوارد فيتزجيرالد، بالتركيز على ثلاثة مستويات تحليلية: الشكلية/البنوية، والأسلوبي، والدلالي. وقد استندت الفرضية إلى أن ترجمة السباعي تميل إلى التكيف مع الأوزان الشعرية العربية والبيئة الثقافية المحلية أكثر من التزامها بالنظام الرباعي والشكل الأسلوبي الذي تبناه فيتزجيرالد. ولتحقيق ذلك، اعتمد البحث على ثلاثة نماذج للترجمة: نموذج المقابلة الشكلية لكاتفورد (1965) لتقييم البنية، والنموذج الوظيفي لكاترين ريس (2000) لتحليل الأسلوب، ونموذج الترجمة الدلالية لنيومارك (1981) لدراسة المعنى. طُبِّقَت هذه النماذج على خمس رباعيات مختارة من النص المترجم. وأظهرت النتائج أن السباعي تجاوز في كثير من الأحيان الشكل الرباعي الأصلي، محولاً النصوص إلى خماسيات، مما يعكس ميله إلى التناغم مع إيقاعات الشعر العربي بدلاً من الالتزام بالبنية الغربية الأصلية. كما اعتمدت ترجماته بوضوح على الصور البلاغية العربية والأساليب الأسلوبية، بينما تراوحت معالجته الدلالية بين الأمانة والتعبير الإبداعي، مما أضفى على النص بُعداً ثقافياً عربياً مميزاً.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عمر الخيام، السباعي، الرباعيات، فيتزجيرالد، الشكل، الأسلوبية، والدلالية

1.1 Introduction

Arab writers did not pay much attention to ancient Persian literature compared to the great interest in European literature, despite the closeness geographical, cultural, and religious ties between Arabs and Persia. However, after the emergence of Islam, especially in the Abbasid era, and due to the great mixing that occurred in that period, the beginnings of exposure to Persian literature, especially poetry, began. A----- good example of this is the book "Kalila wa Dimna," which was translated by the Persian "Abdullah ibn al-Muqaffa (c.270- c.756) " from Middle Persian into Arabic (Bidpai ,2002).

It is worth noting that modern Arab writers have little exposure to Persian literature written during the post-Islamic period, while their exposure to European literature increased until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, Arab writers followed the example of their Western counterparts, collecting and translating the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam during the nineteenth century. This resulted in a very large number of Arabic translations of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, his biography, philosophy, and literary works, and a significant revival of interaction between Arabic and Persian literature (Coumans,2009, P. 65). It is not an exaggeration to say that the translation of the quatrains has achieved a new moral, intellectual and psychological interest among Arab writers and poets, due to the diversity of the quatrains' topics and the philosophical viewpoints they contain. A new phenomenon has emerged among Arab writers who have translated the quatrains of poets. Among those who translated the quatrains of other Persian poets, such as the poems of "Hafez Shirazi (c. 1315-1390)" and the poet Baba "Taher Aryan (1111-1158) ", after these writers had become acquainted with the quatrains of Khayyam, were also some Arab poets, such as "Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi (1863-1936) " and "Ali Mahmoud Taha (1901-1949) ", who wrote poems of this type. The Rubaiyat have been translated into Arabic in 61 ways, 38 of which were written in classical Arabic poetry, 14 in prose, and 8 in various Arabic dialects. Some translations, especially the prose

ones, were very close to the original text (either Persian or English). Others were not as close. In general, translation requires choosing words, phrases, and terms that create a beautiful picture in the mind that is full of imagination and has beauty, symmetry, and metaphor. When translating poetry, you need to be able to be creative with the meter and rhyme you choose. The order of this work is Persian, English, and Arabic, depending on the type of text being studied and how it was translated. Fitzgerald's English translation of Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat, which was originally written in Persian, was the most important step in its spread to other cultures, including Arabic, where the majority of Arabic translations relied on the English text as an intermediary language. Thus, the purpose of this sequence is to trace the stylistic and semantic changes that have taken place throughout the text's various transmission stages.

1.2 Omar Khayyam

Omar Khayyam was born in Nishapur, Iran, on May 18, 1048 A.D. After serving humanity with his scientific contributions for 85 years, he died on December 4, 1131 A.D. During his lifetime, he was a renowned mathematician and astronomer, but his poems and philosophical ideas were unknown for many years (Badreyi, 1995, PP.13–15). When Khaje Nizam al-Mulk was the minister of Malekshah, the King of the Seljuk dynasty, he was renowned for his scientific contributions and helped to fix the Persian calendar.

The social climate of the time was such that any irreligious attitude could result in the death penalty. As a result, Omar Khayyam carefully kept his poems to himself, and only a select group of people knew that they existed. His heirs made his poems available to the world a very long time after his passing (Ibid).

Omar Khayyam's philosophical beliefs disapproved of the excess of hypocritical actions in society, so he used reason and knowledge in his poetry to criticize them. As evidenced by his scientific publications, Khayyam loved aphoristic writing and thought that the Rubai (Quatrain) form was the most

effective manner to express his views. Researchers looked through more than 1200 or perhaps 2200 works credited to Omar Khayyam of Nishapur, but they were unable to locate any manuscript that solely contained his verses.

It is quite difficult to locate the genuine poetry in these many manuscripts because Rubaiyat were duplicated after his passing and numerous writers adopted his ideas and style. In their search for the original ones, academics have yet to arrive at a definitive conclusion. Sadegh Hedayat, Mohammad Ali Foroughi, Ghasem Ghani, Arthur Christensen, and many others are among these researchers (Shayegan, 1992, P.56).

1.3 The Significance of Rubaiyat

Rubaiyat are a poetic form consisting of four short lines, typically associated with rhythmic harmony and a uniform rhyme, the third part is free while the other three are restricted. They are often following the pattern (aaba) or (aaaa). This form gained widespread popularity in Persian poetry, particularly with the contributions of the poet, mathematician, and philosopher Omar Khayyam (1048–1131 CE). This form is known for its condensation of meaning and its ability to contain a profound idea or philosophical insight in a short space, which has made it a favorite of readers throughout the ages (Arberry, 1958). The importance of quatrains can be summarized as follows :

1. In Persian literature : In the Persian context, the Rubaiyat represented a reflection of both the philosophical and poetic spirit. Khayyam's Rubaiyat were characterized by their combination of existential contemplation and intense poetic expression. On the one hand, they discussed issues such as the inevitability of death, the meaning of fate, and the transience of time, reflecting Khayyam's profound philosophical bent (Aminrazavi, 2005).

On the other hand, it was associated with the aesthetic aspect of Persian poetry, which tends towards symbolism, rhetorical imagery, and the invocation of nature and wine as a symbol of freedom and fleeting pleasure. This form has

played a role in making Persian poetry open to the comprehensive human experience, not just local literature, but texts that transcend time and place.

2. Globally :The Rubaiyat's global reach was achieved primarily through translations, particularly by the British orientalist and poet Edward FitzGerald in 1859, which presented the Rubaiyat in an English poetic form that made them more accessible to Western tastes (FitzGerald, 1859). This translation was not literal, but rather creative, reworking many of the images and meanings in a romantic spirit more suited to European readers, contributing to Khayyam's global fame (Youssef, 2013).

The global significance of the Rubaiyat can be summarized as follows:

- A cultural bridge: The Rubaiyat bridged Eastern Persian culture and modern Western literature.
- A universal philosophical text: It addressed existential issues common to all humanity, such as destiny, the meaning of life, and the search for truth.
- A literary influence: It inspired many poets and writers in the West, such as T. S. Eliot, and influenced the course of comparative literature and Oriental studies (Davis, 2013).

3. Humanitarian and Aesthetic Significance : The Rubaiyat, whether in their Persian context or their Western reception, represent universal texts because they are not limited to an aesthetic dimension alone, but also intertwine with philosophy and metaphysics. They are texts that encapsulate the human experience of time and existence in a few words, which has made them a powerful presence in world literature, read, translated, and discussed to this day.

1.4 Edward FitzGerald

Edward FitzGerald was an English poet and author who lived from March 31, 1809, to June 14, 1883. He is most recognized for having written the first English translation of Omar Khayyam's The Rubaiyat. He used a copy from the

Asiatic Society Library by Cowell to try and determine which poems were Omar Khayyam's. Two individuals worked to bring Omar Khayyam to the world: a French interpreter of prose and an English poet named Edward Fitzgerald, His translation is the most well-known of the Rubaiyat (Hadidi, 1994, P.58).

FitzGerald's translation was first published in 1859 with his own funds, but it received no public attention, was a total failure, and sold very few copies. FitzGerald chose 75 quatrains for the first edition. Dante Gabriel Rossetti did not find the translation until 1861, when he shared it with friends and others.

The translation gained popularity over time, but it was not until 1868 that Edward FitzGerald was persuaded to release the second version, which has 110 quatrains and has been extensively altered. FitzGerald discovered a twin poet in Khayyam and translated the softening nihilism in Khayyam thinking after noticing a clear fatalistic spin in the Rubaiyat (Ibid).

FitzGerald's translation of Rubaiyat was not literal, but it was largely free, as he had always done. He adopted the original AABA form, and the result had a significant impact on Victorian literature. This rhyme structure greatly contributed to the translation's success.

It is important to note that he wished to draw attention to the authors he was translating into English; in other words, he wanted the domestic reader to become aware of the original author. But the translation does not meet the fidelity standards for which he was heavily criticized. Given the liberties he took in translating Khayyam's poems, many call the outcome "The Rubaiyat of FitzOmar" (Ibid, P.68).

1.5 Direct poetic translations from Persian

The first direct Arabic poetic translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam from Persian appeared in 1974 by the Egyptian poet and translator Ahmed Rami. The General Authority of the Egyptian National Library and Archives sent him to Paris to study Persian at the Institute of "Oriental Languages and Civilizations in

Paris "in 1922, during his stay there , he read chapters from Ferdowsi's Shahnameh, Saadi's Golestan, and other classical and medieval literature. He then came across a copy of Khayyam's Rubaiyat, translated from Persian into French by J.P. Nicholas in 1867(Guitton ,Boghanov, & Boghanove , 1993, P.145).

Rami read the text in Persian and thought of translating it into Arabic, given the lack of a direct translation of the quatrains from Persian into Arabic. His brother's death was another motivation that prompted him to translate the quatrains. His brother's death encouraged him to understand Khayyam's suffering, as reflected in his quatrains, and to depict his grief over his brother's loss in his translation of the quatrains (Rami,2000, P.38) . Rami read all the manuscripts available in libraries in Berlin, Paris, and London, and compared them. He translated 168 quatrains using the rajaz meter but following the same rhyme scheme. As example :

سحرکة يکي باند برامد زکوي
که أي عاشقان وقت خواب است شوي
برخيز وبيارباده ناب زود
که اين زندکاني نمه ماند به جوي

Heron-Allen (1898, P. 61)

سمعتُ صوتًا هاتفا في السَّحَر
هَبُوا املأوا كأسَ الطَّلِي قبل أن
نادى من الغيبِ غُفاة البشر
تَنعم كأسَ العمرِ كَفَّ القَدَر

(Rami, 2000)

Among the known direct translations from Persian into Arabic are those by the Iraqi poet Ahmad al-Safī al-Najafi (1897–1977), who came across the quatrains by an interesting coincidence. Al-Najafi read al-Bustani's translation, which was based on European translations. Al-Najafi says:

"The first of Khayyam's quatrains I read was translated by the writer Wadih al-Bustani. Reading it at the time had such an impact on me that it transported me from my tangible world to a wonderful imaginary world. I wished I could have

stayed there, rather than being transported to this material world filled with pain "(Al-Najafi, 1931,P. 28) .

He began learning Persian to enjoy the original text, which he expected to be more beautiful than the translated one. In 1971, he traveled to Iran and stayed there for eight years, studying the Persian language and literature. He mastered Persian to the point where he published in various Iranian newspapers and magazines. Al-Najafi spent three years translating the 151 quatrains, and his translation was first published in Tehran in 1976 (Ibid). Al-Najafi's translation of the same quatrain we are discussing is as follows:

جاء من حانينا النداء سحيراً ... يا خليعاً قد هامَ بالحنانِ
قُمْ لكي نملاً الكؤوس مُداماً ... قبل أن تمتلئ كؤوسُ الحياةِ

1.6 Translation of Rubaiyat from European languages (Indirect Translation)

The original Persian quatrains of Omar Khayyam are among the largest poetry translated. They created a huge reverberation when they were translated, first into English and then into other languages. Numerous translations of Omar Khayyam's quatrains resulted from Western Orientalists' recognition of the depth of his lyrical experience. The English translation, which is regarded as one of the best translations ever and demonstrates its influence on Arab translators' works, was the first medium through which the quatrains made their way into our Arabic literature. Numerous modern authors, accomplished poets, and perceptive critics have enhanced the Khayyamian phenomena in Arabic literature. They responded to Khayyam's quatrains by translating them, criticizing the translators, Langues, médias et sociétés Vol. 11 (3-2) juillet 2024 or opposing them (Khani, 2007, P.98).

The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam entered Arabic literature through translation from a translated text. English was the language from which his Rubaiyat were mostly translated, especially those written by Edward Fitzgerald, who published his translations in London in 1859. The first Arabic translation of

the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam appeared in prose form in 1911, when Ahmad Hafez Awad (1877-1951) translated nine quatrains from English and published them in “Al-Majma Al-Masriya” under the title “Persian Poets (Hadidi, 1994, P. 368).

However, we will focus on the most famous translations that were published in book form and/or that include a large number of quatrains. The Lebanese writer Wadih al-Bustani (1956-1886) is considered the first translator and poet to present Khayyam’s quatrains to a wide audience of Arab readers. His translation was published in 1917. Al-Bustani translated 119 quatrains in the form of sevens. However, there is a fundamental problem with Al-Bustani’s translation, which is that he combined two or three quatrains into one heptad and did not always observe the same order in the English source text (Ibid).

Consequently, knowing the equivalent translated paragraph in the Persian text became impossible, or at least difficult. The second example we would like to focus on is the translation by Mohammad El-Sebai (1896–1964). This is the translation I will adopt in this research, Mohammad El-Sebai is considered one of the most prominent Egyptian writers and translators of the first half of the twentieth century(Hassan, 1970, P.73) . Like al-Bustani, El-Sebai did not observe the order of the English translation and did not adhere to the source text, Rather, he translated the entire English version in (111) quatrains which was published in the form of quintets in 1977. Abbas (1980) pointed out that El-Sebai was known for his translations of Western classical works into Arabic, especially his translation of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, which highlighted his tendency towards a conservative literary style and towards adapting the Arabic language to accommodate the symbolic and philosophical dimension of the texts(P. 212) .

As for Badawi (1973), he explained that El-Sebai relied in his translation of the Rubaiyat on Edward Fitzgerald’s English formulation, so the translation came charged with a clear Arabic poetic breath, as he presented a text closer to aesthetic literary interpretation than to literal translation, preserving the musical tone and

general meaning, even if he sometimes moved away from strict textual accuracy (P.115). Thus, it can be said that Mohammad El-Sebai embodied in his translation an early model of Arabic literary translation that seeks to reconcile the fidelity of the original text with the requirements of Arabic poetic taste His work combined a poetic sense with an interest in literary translation, which was reflected in his works, which were characterized by a clear artistic spirit. The example below illustrates the order of translating the quatrains into five lines.

Dreaming when Dawn's left hand was in the sky I heard a voice within the tavern cry

Awake my little ones and fill the cup Before life's liquor in its cup be dry (FitzGerald,2005, P. 39)

صاح بي في النوم طيف هاتها نملا الاكواب من ياقوتها
 قبلما تنضب من كاساتها خمرة الروح وترتد الى
 منبع بالغيب مجهول البقاع

(El-Sebai,2009, P. 30)

Through translation, our Arabic language has been getting acquainted with the quatrains of Khayyam since the turn of the century. This sparked a massive translation movement that involved many well-known authors and poets from all across the Arab world. Dr. Youssef Hussein Bakar chronicled fifty-six translations of Khayyam's Quatrains up to 1987 in his priceless work, "Arabic Translations of Khayyam's Quatrains." The distribution of these translations was as follows:

There are 33 translations of poetry, 16 translations of prose, 7 translations of systems and popular translations (three Iraqi, 3 Egyptian, and 1 Lebanese), and 56 translations in total. There are 4205 translated quatrains in these works, and the 52 translators who have contributed to these translations nearly represent the Arab world (Bakar, 1987, P.98).

Bakar (1987, P.94) provided a detailed table that includes the most prominent classical Arabic translations of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam from different languages.

Classical Poetic Translations :

The Translators	Year of Translation	Number of Quatrains	The Source Text
Iskandar Maalouf	1911	6	Fitzgerald
Abdul Rahman Shukry	1911	3	Fitzgerald & others
Wadih Al-Bustani	1912	80	Fitzgerald & others
Unknown	1912	5	Fitzgerald
Abdul Latif Al-Nashar	1919	27	Fitzgerald
Mohammad El-Sebai	1922	111	Fitzgerald
Mohamed Al-Hashemi	1923	113	Al- Sarraf
Ahmed Rami	1924	186	Persian Text
Ibrahim Al-Mazni	1924	13	Fitzgerald
Amen Nakhlah	1925	12	Fitzgerald
Jamil Al- Zahawi	1928	130	Persian Text
Ahmmmed Al-Najafi	1931	351	Persian Text
Ahmed Abu- Shadi	1931	131	Al -Zahawi
Ibraheem Al- Areedh	1933	152	Fitzgerald
Mustafa Al-Akkad	1942	1	Fitzgerald
Nour Al- Din Mustafa	1929	3	Persian Text
Tawfiq Mafraj	1947	107	Fitzgerald
Mustafa Jawad	1949	18	Al- Sarraf
Talib Al-Haidari	1950	59	Persian Text
Abdulhak Fadhil	1950	350	Persian Text
Mohammad Awadh	1955	6	Al- Sarraf
Jameel Al-Malaika	1957	50	Fitzgerald

The Translators	Year of Translation	Number of Quatrains	The Source Text
Mahdi Jasim	1964	182	Persian Text
Hekmat Al-Badri	1964	110	Persian Text
Jaafar Al-Khalili	1965	1	Persian Text
Mohammad Kubba	1965	1	Persian Text
Mohammad Al- Aqili	1966	79	Fitzgerald
Caesar Al- Maalouf	1968	86	Fitzgerald
Ahmed Al- Sharif	1970	25	Fitzgerald
Amer Bahiri	1978	75	Fitzgerald
Tayser sboul	1980	29	Fitzgerald
Mohammad Taweet	1985	150	Persian Text
Salih Al-Jaafari	2007	400	Persian Text
Mohammad Al-Qaraq	2009	200	Persian Text
Jalal Zinkibadi	2010	74	Persian Text

(Table 1:Selected Arabic Translations of Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat)

2.1 Data Analysis

The practical aspect of the study tackles five selected quatrains from Mohammad El-Sebai's translation of The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam from Edward Fitzgerald's English version. These quatrains were chosen for their formal, stylistic, and semantic features, which enable the clear application of assessment models.

The analysis will be conducted at three main levels, based on different theoretical models, as follows:

1. Formal/Structural assessment:

This evaluation is based on the model presented by John Catford (1965) in his book "A Linguistic Theory of Translation". Catford argues that translation can be

studied from a purely linguistic perspective, distinguishing between "formal correspondence," which seeks to preserve the grammatical and formal structure of the source text, and "textual equivalence," which focuses on the functions of the text. This model will be used to measure the extent to which El-Sebai's translation preserves the poetic structure of the quatrains, such as meter, rhyme, and verse organization, compared to Fitzgerald's English text.

2. Stylistic assessment:

Based on Katharina Reiss's (2000) model, which she developed within the framework of "functional translation theory." Reiss focuses on classifying texts according to their functions assessment: (informative, expressive, persuasive), and believes that the success of a translation is measured by its ability to achieve the stylistic function of the source text in the target language. Hence, the analysis will tackle El-Sebai's style in choosing vocabulary, structures, and rhetorical images, and the extent to which he maintains the literary and aesthetic character intended by Fitzgerald.

3. Semantic/Meaning assessment:

Based on Peter Newmark's (1981) model, which he presented in his book "Approaches to Translation". Newmark distinguishes between "semantic translation," which aims to adhere as closely to the original meaning of the text as possible, and "communicative translation," which prioritizes the text's impact on the reader. This model will be used to measure the accuracy of El-Sebai in conveying the meanings of the quatrains, and to detect any semantic shifts, distortions, or abbreviations compared to the English version.

The analysis will be presented in a clear sequence: first, a formal study of all the quatrains, then a stylistic study, and finally, a semantic study. This arrangement allows for a comprehensive, multi-level assessment of El-Sebai's translation, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of his approach to translating the Rubaiyat of Khayyam.

Discussion:

The Form (structural assessment)

(First quatrain)

Now the New Year reviving old Desires
The thoughtful Soul to solitude retires
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES
on the Bough
Puts out , and Jesus from the Ground
suspairs
(Fitzgerald,2005, P.38)

جَدَّدَ النَّيْرُورُ أَدْرَاسَ الْأَمَلِ
فَعَرَّوسُ الرُّوضِ فِي أَبْهَى حُلِّ
تَحَسَّبُ النَّوَارُ - مِزْدَانًا بَطْلَ -
كَفَّ مُوسَى فِيهِ بَيْضَاءَ بِلَا
سَوَاةٍ وَالْأَرْضُ مِغْشَابُ التَّلَاحِ
(El-Sebai,2009, P.32)

In the English text, Fitzgerald preserves the rhyme scheme (a, a, b, a) with linked sentences depicting a meditative scene involving the renewal of the New Year, a contemplative soul taking refuge in solitude, and religious allusion imagery such as "Moses' white hand" and "Jesus breathing from the earth which would allude to the story of Moses in holy Quran جِيْبِكَ تَخْرُجُ بَيْضَاءَ "وَادْخُلْ يَدَكَ فِي" (Surah An-Naml,27:12) and of Jesus resurrection in Bible " ثم قال له الرب : ((ادخل يدك في جيبك)) . "فادخل يده في جيبه ثم اخرجها واذا هي برصاء مثل الثلج" (Exodus 4:6-7 ; Numbers 12:10) ." The sentences are sequential and coherent, giving a sense of chronological and spiritual sequence. The Arabic translation of El-Sebai, follows a rhyming pattern (a, a, a, b, c). We notice that the order of the lines is now five, changing the quatrain to a more open structure with a different rhythm. The rhyme sequence in the third and fourth lines highlights a rhythm different from the English pattern, with repetitions of the rhyme "بلا" and "التلاع" creating a distinct musical effect.

The grammatical structure of Arabic is characterized by the use of a descriptive, poetic style that tends toward verbal embellishment, such as "فعروس" , with complex descriptive structures and the use of nominal clauses, which differs from the sequential verbal style of the English text. The

Arabic tone appears more formal and decorative, with an emphasis on poetic imagery of a natural and religious nature.

(Second quatrain)

Iram indeed is gone with all its Rose,	إِنْ يَكُنْ فِرْدَوْسُ شَدَادٍ "إِرَم"
And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup	بَادٍ أَوْ اِبْرِيْقُ جَمَشِيْدٍ ائْحَطَمَ
where no one Knows;	فَجِنَانُ الْكَرْمِ تَزْهَوُ مِنْ أُمَمٍ
But still the Vine her	يُسْبِلُ الْيَاقُوْتُ فِيْهَا سَلْسَلًا
ancient ruby yields,	كُلَّ مَعْسُوْلٍ الْجَنَى حُلُوْ الدُّمَاغِ
And still a Garden by the Water	(El- Sebai, 2009, P.35)
blows.	

(Fitzgerald,2005 , P.40)

In the English text, Fitzgerald relies on relatively long, sequential sentences, depicting a lost world: "Iram indeed is gone with all its rose" and "Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows." He preserves the same pattern of the previous quatrains with the sound being repeated in the first, second, and fourth lines, creating a flowing rhythm consistent with the historical and symbolic imagery. In the Arabic text of El-Sebai, we notice a change in rhyme form and structure: the Arabic text consists of approximately five lines, with the rhyme repeated in three consecutive lines (a, a, a) and then a variation in the last two lines (b, c), which creates a heavier and more decorative rhythm compared to the English text.

Arabic grammar tends toward nominal sentences and expanded constructions, such as : "فجنان الكرم تزهو من أمم", with repetition of letters and words to enhance the internal musical rhythm. In contrast, English text maintains sequential verb constructions that convey a sense of temporal and spatial movement.

(Third quatrain)

Come, fill the cup, and in the fire of	أشعلا في الكأس نيراسَ الشراب
spring	وإطرجا في وقْدِهِ ثوبَ المَتَابِ
Your winter garment of repentance	إنَّما اللَّذاتُ خَلَسْنَ وانْتِهَابَ
fling.	وَلِيالي العُمَرُ أَفْرَاسٌ إلى
The bird of time has but a little way	غاية الموتِ حَثِيثَاتٌ سِراغ
To flutter - and the bird is on the	
wing.	

(Fitzgerald,2005, P.41)

(El- Sebai, 2009, P.37)

Fitzgerald opens the quatrain by establishing two imperatives: "Come, fill the cup," in a straightforward, simple construction based on a short command that opens the scene. He then transitions to a conditional/contradictory image: "In spring, winter's clothing is introduced." This contrast is expressed not in a conventional phrase, but rather through a symbolic metaphor, where spring is fire and winter's clothing is a garment of repentance. In terms of poetic structure, it follows the pattern of the English quatrain with a regular internal rhythm and a style characterized by brevity and condensation. El-Sebai transferred this structure to metered and rhymed Arabic poetry. He lengthened the text to five lines instead of four, adding more visual expansion and extended structures. The Arabic structure is rhythmically richer and more subject to the constraints of rhyme and meter.

(Fourth quatrain)

There was a Door to which I found no Key:
There was a Veil through which I could not
see:

Some little Talk awhile of Me and Thee
There seemed -- and then no more of Thee
and Me.

(Fitzgerald,2005, P.41)

In Fitzgerald's source text the meter in this quatrain is based on a uniform rhyme scheme (a,a,a,a) . This differs from his more common pattern of (a,a,b,a) as in the previous quatrains, this uniform rhyme scheme gives a sense of close feeling , which is very appropriate for the meaning (closed door, veil, end of conversation). El-Sebai's: maintains the rhyme pattern(a,a,b,a) or at least a pattern close to the Arabic quadratic rhythm. A quatrain consisting of four interconnected lines, it ranges intellectually from a concrete image “باب لم أجد” to a personal and abstract feeling “أنا أو أنت رهْنٌ بضائع”. There is a transition from the external, material element (الباب ، الحجاب) to the internal, psychological, and emotional dimension, creating a sense of semantic escalation and a transition from the concrete to the abstract. The parallelism between "أنا" and "أنت" in the final lines reflects a clear formal balance that links individual experience with contemplation of human relationships.

English text has Compound sentences often begin with an existential or adverbial clause and then move to the main clause, "There was a door to which I found no key." A complex syntactic composition that reflects chronological sequence and abrupt discontinuity. As for Arabic sentences are more detached and rigid in their presentation, often using the past or present tense with the addition of a recursive pronoun to emphasize the separation, “تُمْ بَابٌ لَمْ اِجِدْ مِفْتَاحَهُ” it's a simple sentence and “وَأَنَا' أَوْ ،أَنْتَ' رَهْنٌ بِضَائِعَ” A poetic nominal phrase, that adds musical rhyme and repetition to emphasize the emotional meaning. This analysis demonstrates how El-Sebai maintains the meaning but transforms the structure and sentences to fit the Arabic rhythm, while Fitzgerald retains the English flexibility of chronology and philosophical contemplation.

(Fifth quatrain)

Ah, Moon of my Delight who know 'st no
wane,
The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again:
How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same Garden after me -- in
vain!

بَذَرَ أَنَسِي مَنْ تَعَالَى فِي الْعُرُزِ
عَنْ مَحْتَقٍ وَسِرَارٍ وَبَهْرٍ
لَهْفَ نَفْسِي، إِنَّ طَوَى شَخْصِي الْقَدَرِ
كَمْ بِهَذَا الرُّوضِ يَبْغِينِي الْقَمَرُ
عَبْتًا مَا بَيْنَ وَرْدٍ وَبَهَارٍ

(El- Sebai, 2009, P.140)

(Fitzgerald, 2005, P.82)

In the source text (Fitzgerald), The structure is in the form of a classic quatrain, with the rhyme(a,a,b,a) The poetic structure relies on long, compound sentences, beginning with a poetic appeal to the moon, then moving to the celestial satellite returning in repeated cycles, and then asking about the future: How many times will the moon appear after the speaker has left? The sentences are balanced in length and build on an ascending line from the present to the future, with a tragic ending in the word “in vain. While in El-Sebai's translation, the structure maintains the spirit of the quatrain (actually five lines due to the poetic length) but with a close Arabic rhyme pattern . In other words, El-Sebai adhered to the rhyme pattern of approximately (a,a,a,a) which is more regular than the source text. In terms of meter, the translation is closer to classical Arabic rhythm, with the vocal balance and repetition of the final letters creating a clear poetic melody. The vocal balance and repetition of the final letters create a clear poetic melody. The Arabic sentences are relatively shorter and more separated from each other, adopting the style of vocative and lamentation (“لهف نفسي”).

Stylistic assessment

(First quatrain)

He starts off with, "Now the New Year reviving old Desires." Why does the New Year revive old desires? The new year is a rebirth of the seasons, signaling a new cycle in our lives. If we don't apply conscious willpower, however, we

instinctively follow the patterns we set in the previous year. So, with the new year, we are reborn, but so too are our old habits and old desires.

In the English text, there is a clear use of personification in "the New Year reviving old desires," where the new year is given the power of revival. There are religious metaphors in "White Hand of Moses" and "Jesus from the Ground Suspires," adding a profound religious symbolic dimension. Furthermore, the use of "thoughtful soul" gives a psychological and contemplative dimension. In the Arabic translation, the use of poetic metaphor appears in "فعرّوس الروض", which likens nature to an adorned bride, and "كف موسى فيه بيضاء بلا سواة", as a symbolic metaphor related to the purity of the hand. There is also an implicit simile in the description of adorned nature, but most tend to depict images in a more formal and poetic descriptive form than direct embodiment.

(Second quatrain)

In the English text, personification appears in the third line where the phrase "the Vine her ancient ruby yields" is used; here the vine is given the ability to give, bringing nature to life and making the scene more dynamic and alive. Historical and cultural metaphors are evident at the beginning of the text through "Iram indeed is gone with all its Rose" and "Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows", symbolizing luxury and loss, While retaining the deep symbolic dimension associated with mythology and history. Cultural and religious allusions can be discerned within the context of these symbols, which implicitly refer to well-known Eastern civilizations and references without the need for direct explanation. In El-Seba'i's Arabic text, rhetorical images are transformed into natural and decorative poetic metaphors. For example, the poetic depiction of nature appears in "فجنان الكرم تزهر من أمم", where nature is personified as gardens brimming with life and growth, a clear figurative metaphor that reflects the richness and vitality of nature. We also find an implicit simile in "يسبل الياقوت فيها", where the fruits are likened to rubies without using an explicit simile,

creating a decorative and aesthetic dimension and highlighting the uniqueness of the Arabic text, but it departs from the symbolic historical significance of the English origin.

(Third quatrain)

Fitzgerald uses two main metaphors: the first, depicting spring as “نبراسًا” and winter as the garment cast into it, and the second, personifying time as a winged bird flying away. Here, we find metaphor and personification, with an allusion to the idea of Christian repentance and the symbolism of sin and forgiveness. The English text relies not on similes but on direct metaphor. El-Sebai, for his part, intensified the rhetorical devices even more. He first made the drink a beacon, a metaphor that gives it a luminous and mystical dimension not found in the original. He then used the image of repentance as a garment thrown into a fire, a similar image to Fitzgerald's but more sensual. Then came his declaration : "إنما اللذات خلسٌ وانتهاب". This is a metaphorical statement that makes pleasures themselves something to be stolen or abducted, that is, a personification of pleasure as booty.

Finally, he added an entirely new image: "Life is like horses galloping swiftly toward death." This is both a metaphor and an implicit simile, as it makes time into powerful animals, but driven toward an inevitable end. This makes the rhetorical devices of the Sebai more dense and complex: metaphor (النبراس،)، personification (الذات التي تُختلس)، and a fatalistic allusion to the inevitability of demise .

(Fourth quatrain)

A quatrain that employs powerful metaphors and imagery, The metaphor of the door and the veil represents boundaries and gaps in understanding and communication. They are metaphorical devices to depict the inability to reach complete knowledge or complete communication. The repetition in “أنا أو أنت”

reinforces the internal division and tension between self and other and creates an emotional rhythm. The use of "يَهْذِي جَدلاً" and "ورهن بضياع" in the Arabic translation lends a poetic quality, employing Arabic metaphor and rhetoric to bring the text closer to the philosophical feel of the English text. As for source text there is a contrast between the attempt at a short dialogue "Some little talk" and the feeling of final separation "And then nothing after that" which highlights the contradiction between hope and despair. El- Sebai's choice of Arabic words with a Sufi and philosophical character makes the text acquire additional interpretive dimensions, as it transforms from a mere depiction of the absence of communication and knowledge in Fitzgerald to a broader existential vision in the Arabic translation, in which the dimensions of self and other overlap with the dimensions of fate and nothingness.

(Fifth quatrain)

In English source text Fitzgerald uses the moon as a symbol of love or pleasure ("Moon of my Delight"). The moon itself is a symbol of the contrast between the moon's eternity and the mortality of man. He also uses the conditional/temporal device ("How oft hereafter") to emphasize the continuity of time. He then ends the quatrain with the word "in vain," which adds a sad and definitive tone. While El-Sebai preserves the image of the moon, he reworks it into the form of "بدر انسي" (a full moon) to give it an emotional and mystical feature. He also adds images not originally featured, "مَحْتَق وسرار وبهر" and "مابين ورد وبهار". These are environmental and floral images that expand the sensory meaning. The use of the vocative and lamentation ("لهف نفسي") strengthens the emotional character and brings the text closer to the Arabic poetic language. The repetition of the unified rhyme enhances the lyrical and chanting character.

Semantic assessment

(First quatrain)

The Arabic text omits the direct reference to “the thoughtful soul to solitude retires,” as the mental and contemplative aspect is absent and replaced by the image of nature (الروض، النوار) a matter which deprive the original text from the sense of mysticism which covers almost the whole poem. El-Seba’i adds an extended description of nature, "الأرض معشاب التلاع" and "فعروس الروض في أبهى حلل". This is a deepening of the description of the natural landscape with a focus on external beauty, which was not present in the original text.

The translator’s paraphrase reformulates the scene by moving from the temporal and spiritual dimension in the English text to a natural and symbolic dimension in the Arabic text, replacing the religious figures with poetic natural images that carry implicit symbols. Loss of some direct religious meanings and allusions.

(second quatrain)

The deletion is most evident here, as direct historical symbols such as "Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows" and "Iram" as specific physical entities disappear, while the focus shifts to general natural and symbolic images, giving the Arabic text a more general and poetic character. Then the aspect of addition appears, as al-Sibā’ī adds new mystical and poetic images such as "فجنان" and "يسبل الياقوت فيها سلسلا" and "الكرم تزهر من أمم". This reinforces the traditional Arabic dimension and imbues the text with a distinct internal musicality and aesthetic.

Next comes the paraphrase, where the translator completely reconstructs the scene from a specific, symbolic historical narrative to a naturalistic, decorative poetic depiction, preserving the sense of richness and beauty, but changing the text's function from a symbolic narrative to a poetic, musical depiction. Thus, the semantic deviation in this quatrain is comprehensive, as it creates independence for the Arabic text while preserving its aesthetic and emotional character, but losing the symbolic precision specified in the English original.

(Third quatrain)

Fitzgerald conveys a simple message: Enjoy life, for time is short, and time is a bird that quickly flies away. The meaning is philosophical, but it carries a light tone closer to folk wisdom or quiet contemplation. As for El-Sebai, he imbues the text with a deeper existential connotation: pleasure is not easy, but stolen; drink is no longer just a cup of pleasure, but rather a light; and life is no longer a fragile bird, but a strong horse rushing swiftly toward its end. This shift renders the Arabic text more melancholic and fatalistic, imbued with a tragic sense of mortality, in contrast to the lightness of the English text.

(Fourth quatrain)

The source text focuses on the inability to access knowledge or fully communicate with others, with a sense of limitations and a sudden absence of communication. In El-Sebai's translation, there is a slight semantic deviation, the use of " كِتَابٌ لَا أَعِي أَصْحَاحَهُ " transforms the mysterious veil into a more abstract and cognitive image, while " رَهْنٌ بِضِيَاعٍ " conveys a sense of psychological confinement rather than purely philosophical ambiguity. However, despite the existing shifts, El-Sebai maintains the essence: the feeling of helplessness, loss of communication, and psychological isolation, while adding rhythm and Arabic poetic language that makes the text more in line with Arab taste.

(Fifth quatrain)

The source text revolves around a central idea: Man is mortal, and the moon is immortal, continuing to rise even after man's death, but its search for the speaker will be in vain. In El-Sebai's Arabic translation, there is a semantic addition the floral imagery "ورد وبهار" does not exist in the original, but it reflects the Arab aesthetic environment. The tone of the text has been paraphrased from philosophical sadness to a kind of emotional lamentation "لهف نفسي". The duality (the moon's immortality/human mortality) remained, but it was not sealed with the strictness of "in vain," but rather transformed into a poetic image of "عَبَثًا مَا" which adds a more romantic and less harsh character. El-Sebai's

choice to translate the word "garden" as " بهار " is not limited to a semantic shift, as it transfers the meaning from a specific meaning, namely garden, to a broader meaning related to the spring season and its symbolism of renewal, fertility, and freshness. This semantic shift goes beyond the dictionary equivalent to simultaneously reveal a stylistic tendency on the part of the translator. It represents a tendency toward rhetorical expansion and poetic expression that is in harmony with the atmosphere of the quatrains. This example thus combines semantic and stylistic analysis simultaneously, demonstrating how semantic modification serves the stylistic structure of the translated text.

Conclusion

Based on the above, it can be said that this research has achieved its objectives by studying Mohammad El-Sibai's translation of a number of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam from the English version by Edward Fitzgerald, relying on three main critical models: Catford's structural model (1965), Katharina Reiss' functional model (2000), and Newmark's semantic model (1981). The study demonstrated, through its practical aspect, that El-Sebā'i did not adhere to the original quatrine form adopted by Fitzgerald, but rather composed the verses in a quintet form, which reflects his tendency to adapt to Arabic poetic meters more than adhering to the original system. On the stylistic level, it was found that El-Sebai relied on vocabulary and rhetorical images with a prominent Arab-Islamic character, which gave the translation a local cultural identity, while the English text retained multiple religious references between the Qur'an and the Bible. On the semantic level, it became clear that the translation generally preserved the general meaning of the quatrains, but in some instances included modifications and abbreviations consistent with the translator's diligence and desire to make the text more accessible to the Arab audience. Accordingly, the study concludes that El-Sebai's translation of the Rubaiyat represents an attempt to reconcile fidelity to the source text with its reproduction within an Arab cultural and literary context,

which highlights literary translation as a creative process that is not limited to transmission but also includes interpretation and reformulation. This research paves the way for future studies that could compare different Arabic translations of the quatrains, or human and machine translations, to reveal the diversity and differences in translation strategies across the ages.

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