



Birjand University  
Faculty of Literature and Humanities  
English Department

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Translation studies

**Domestication and Foreignization in FitzGerald's Translation from  
Persian into English**

By:  
Sajedeh Hosseinnia

Supervisor:  
Dr. Hassan Emami

Advisor:  
Dr. Jalilallah Faroughi

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**In the Name of  
God,  
the Compassionate,  
the Merciful**

## Dedication

To my parents... to my parents...to my parents...  
and to one of my dear friends

## **Acknowledgement**

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**Abstract:**

The complete integration between content and form in poetry makes some considerable difficulties in the process of poetry translation and made it one of the hottest issues in the annals of translation. This problem reaches its peak when the rendering is the translation of poetry. On the other hand, literary translation, especially poetry is not simply a communicative act, but, in addition to communication, it transfers culture and ideology of the source text. So, it is a cultural activity. From the content and style of the texts point of view, the translator adopts specific approaches and strategies such as domestication and foreignization, in order to conform the literary text of the source language to the culture and aesthetic values of the target language. Edward FitzGerald's translations, the English poet and translator, from Persian into English, *Rubaiyat Khayyam*, *Jami's Salaman and Absal* and *Attar's Bird Parliament*, are well known examples. By applying domestication in his translations, FitzGerald minimized the strangeness of the foreign text for target language readers and adopted them with the Victorian mood; and through applying foreignization, took the readers to the foreign culture by retaining something of the foreignness of the original. The present thesis is an attempt to represent the cultural strategies and approaches, domestication and foreignization, applied in FitzGerald's translations from Persian into English. Then, it tries to explore what factors made FitzGerald's translations as the best renderings and after over one century have also proved valuable in different countries and even been part of English literature.

**Key words:** Domestication, Foreignization, Edward FitzGerald, *Rubaiyat Khayyam*, *Salaman and absal*, *Mantiq ut Tair*.

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# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

## 1.1 Introduction

“I see translation as the attempt to produce a text so transparent that it does not seem to be translated. A good translation is like a pane of glass. You only notice that it’s there when there are little imperfections- scratches, bubbles. Ideally, there shouldn’t be any. It should never call attention to itself.” “Norman Shapiro” (Venuti, 1995:1)

Edward Fitzgerald is the British translator of Jami’s *Salaman and Absal* and Attar’s *Mantiq ut Tair*, as well as *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. The latter is by far the most famous translation ever made from Persian verse into English. It had a considerable influence on the development of late Victorian and Edwardian British poetry as well as the awakening of a much wider interest, in English speaking countries and Europe. The above- mentioned works have been translated into different languages and by several translators; but among these translations, Edward FitzGerald’s translations are the high point of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and have been greatly influential. There are various factors in FitzGerald’s translations which made him a celebrated translator throughout the world. The aim of this thesis is to analyze FitzGerald’s translations by considering domestication and foreignization strategies in his renderings.

## 1.2 The Necessity of Research

The growth of translation studies as a separate discipline is a success story of the 1980 (Venuti, 1995: viii). One of the key issues in the recent translation theories has been on whether the translators should remain invisible or not, namely applying domesticating or foreignizing method through the translating act has taken an important place in recent studies.

The term “invisibility” originated in the works of Lawrence Venuti (1995) to describe the translator’s situation and activity in contemporary Anglo-American culture. Invisibility is apparent when translations yield fluent readability and feel like originals rather than translations. Invisibility requires a great deal of manipulation on the part of translator because “the more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator and, presumably, the more visible the writer or meaning of the foreign text” (Venuti, 1995:2).

According to Hochel (1991:41), a translation from one literary language into another one normally involves three transfers: 1. from one natural language into another one; 2. from one time into another one; 3. from one cultural milieu into another one. Those transfers can result in a domesticating translation where the target text is perceived as if it was originally written in the target language within the target culture and adopted to minimize the strangeness of the original foreign text for the convenience of the target-text readers. It means making the text recognizable and familiar and thus bringing the foreign culture closer to that of the readers’. They can also result in a foreignizing translation, which makes it obvious to the reader that the original literary work belonged to a different language, age and culture, and deliberately breaks the target conventions by retaining something of the foreignness of the original (Shuttle Worth & Cowie, 1997:59). It means to take the reader to the foreign culture and to make him or her feel the linguistic and cultural differences.

Among the different translations of *Jami’s Salaman and Absal*, *the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* and Attar’s *Mantiq ut Tair (Bird Parliament)*, Edward FitzGerald’s imaginative renditions are the bestselling works of poetry in the English speaking world. Since FitzGerald’s translations of Persian into English belong to the 1845 - 1880, and most of translation theories introduced after these decades, FitzGerald’s methods of translating have been the subject of many criticisms in recent years. The

debates are on FitzGerald's reputation as a celebrated translator. There are various factors in Edward FitzGerald's translations from Persian into English. He adopted both domesticating and foreignizing methods through his works which is one of the important factors in his translations. No doubt, pervasive researches have been done on FitzGerald's translations, but none of them has done their researches from Venuti's theoretical points of view.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

There are enough evidences that Omar owes the very nature of his reputation as a poet in both the West and East to FitzGerald's rendering. In other words, without FitzGerald's so-called *Rubaiyat* there would only have been Omar Khayyam, an astronomer and mathematician. FitzGerald found in Persian poems- *Jami's Salaman and Absal, the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* and Attar's *Mantiq ut Tair (Bird Parliament)*- a new voice for his age, the Victorian period. For expressing this new voice, he formed a pattern and adopted domestication and foreignization strategies in his works. For instance, he manipulated the original, omitted some parts and transliterated some names. Now this thesis tries to find out what made FitzGerald apply both domesticating and foreignizing strategies to his works from Persian into English; and to what extent FitzGerald applied these methods on his translations. This needs more discussion which will be explored in the present study.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

Due to the above mentioned problems which relate to the domesticating and foreignizing methods on FitzGerald's translations from Persian into English-*Jami's Salaman and Absal, the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* and Attar's *Mantiq ut Tair (Bird*

*Parliament*)-, and according to the aim of the study, after examining the theoretical basis and reviewing the related literature and collecting and analyzing some empirical data on domestication and foreignization strategies, the present study will raise the following research questions:

1. Which factors led FitzGerald to translate *Rubaiyat of Khayyam*, Jami's *Salaman and Absal* and Attar's *Mantiq ut Tair* by a special method namely domesticating and foreignizing?
2. Which factors in FitzGerald's above mentioned renderings made him as a celebrated translator?
3. To what extent did FitzGerald adopt domesticating and foreignizing methods in his translations?

## **1.5 The hypothesis**

What is important is that FitzGerald's Persian translations are "Victorian" products even if the raw materials of the poems belong to the eleventh (Khayyam), twelfth (Attar) and fifteenth (Jami) -century Persia. The first factor that caused FitzGerald to translate Jami's *Salaman and Absal*, *Rubaiyat of Khayyam* and Attar's *Mantiq ut Tair* by a special method is that he properly realized his own time and perceived the moods and interests of his age, so according to their need he knew where to apply domesticating and where to apply foreignizing method. In addition, he himself was a great poet and writer. Thus, by using his poetic talent, he knew how to translate the text in order to recreate the same effect for the target readers.

FitzGerald applied some tactics in his translation from Persian into English which made him a successful literary translator throughout the world. FitzGerald realized his people's needs and manipulated the original in order to make it readable for his own age. For example, he changed or transliterated the proper names, omitted some

stories which were not acceptable by the Victorian people. He reduced some parts of original which had repetitive theme and made it compatible with the moods and interests of his age. Also, he was a great English poet so he could translate verse to verse and even recreated the “Ravi” in his translation of *Rubaiyat of Khayyam*. Also, for the first time, FitzGerald introduced a traditional Middle Eastern rhyme scheme to English which was very unusual in Western poetry.

FitzGerald used both strategies: domesticating and foreignizing, but his application of domesticating method is more than foreignizing one. By adopting domestication strategies, he created very free translations, especially in rendering *Rubaiyat of Khayyam* and *Bird Parliament*. He manipulated the original, omitted or paraphrased some parts and changed some of the proper names. FitzGerald attempted to give general characteristics of Victorian poetry to his works and to show his works as the Victorian products. His works perfectly adapted to the new conditions of time, place, custom, and habit of mind of the West.

## **1.6 The Novelty of Research**

Jami’s *Salaman and Absal*, Khayyam’s *Rubaiyat* and Attar’s *Mantiq ut Tair (Bird Parliament)*, the famous poems in Iran, have been translated into different languages and by several translators, among these translations, Edward FitzGerald’s translations are the high point of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and have been greatly influential. It should be noted that, most of scholars are just familiar with FitzGerald’s translation of *Rubaiyat of Khayyam*. It seems that Jami’s *Salaman and Absal* and Attar’s *Mantiq ut Tair* remained anonymous for a great number of East and West literary scholars. For instance, attempting to find some sources relating to the present thesis resulted in finding only scholarly books about FitzGerald and his translations of *Rubaiyat of Khayyam*. Unfortunately, there is just one book on Attar’s *Mantiq ut Tair* and Jami’s *Salaman and Absal* and the available translations of their books. Even the single book

does not talk specifically about the successes of FitzGerald's translations or the applied methods in his renderings.

The novelty of the present thesis is that, although various books, theses and papers have been written about FitzGerald and his translations from Persian into English, their subjects are almost the same, i.e. they address: 1. FitzGerald's life and his personality; 2. FitzGerald's familiarity with Persian literature, Khayyam and his teacher Edward Cowell; 3. FitzGerald's rendering of Rubaiyat. (Hassanli, Hesanpour, 2009:114). They just discussed his free or literal translation; but relating his renderings to literal or free translation is a great mistake. Because literary translation is much more than the language transfer between two nations, it is a cultural activity too. None of the books, theses and papers considered FitzGerald's above mentioned works simultaneously from the Venuti's theoretical point of view neither in Iran or in the world. Namely, they did not analyze the application of domestication and foreignization strategies on FitzGerald's translations from Persian into English.

## **1.7 Goals and Objectives of the Research**

Edward FitzGerald's translation of *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* which is supposed to be the most famous translation ever made of an oriental work has been part of English literature like Shakespeare's (Emami, 1996:126). FitzGerald applied some tactics in his translations from Persian into English which made him a successful literary translator throughout the world. The objective of this research is to make clear scientifically and theoretically what the reasons of his success are and how those factors were applied through translations by FitzGerald. As a result, we can present his applied tactics and strategies as a method to improve the translation of literary text especially poems from Persian into English. Also, this study can be used



to guide future researches toward introducing FitzGerald's translations from Venuti's theoretical point of view.

Giving some information about FitzGerald's life and his career as a literary translator might be subtle, because some applied strategies in his translations related to his characteristics and personal life.

## **2.2 FitzGerald's Biography**

Edward FitzGerald was an English poet, a prolific letter writer and the renowned translator of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. He was the seventh of eight children (being the third son of John Purcell) of very wealthy parents, born in the year 1809, at Bredfield House, near Woodbridge, Suffolk, England. In 1818, his father assumed the name and arms of his wife's family, "the FitzGerald". In 1816, the family moved to France, and lived in St Germain as well as Paris, but, after the death of his maternal grandfather, the family had to return to England. In 1821, Edward was sent to school at Bury St Edmunds. In 1826, he went to Trinity College, Cambridge. During most of this time; FitzGerald was preoccupied with flowers, music, and literature.

One of FitzGerald's chief characteristics was what might almost be called a genius for friendship. He was extremely close to many of his friends; amongst them was William Browne. Browne's tragically early death due to a horse riding accident was a major catastrophe for FitzGerald. Amongst the languages, Spanish seems to have been his earlier love. He, later, turned his attention to Persian literature at the University of Oxford with Professor Edward Byles Cowell. He married Lucy, the daughter of the Quaker poet Bernard Barton on 4 November 1856, the marriage appears to have been an unhappy one and they separated in August 1857. As he was

reading the lyrics of Hafez, FitzGerald also became familiar with Jami's poetry; and by the assistance of Cowell began to study *Salaman and Absal*. The transcript used was Falconer translation.

In 1856, he anonymously published a version of the *Salaman and Absal* of Jami in Miltonic verse. In March 1857, In the Bodleian Library, Cowell found a manuscript of *Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat*, of which he sent FitzGerald a transcript. During the troubled years after his mother's death in 1855 and his marriage, FitzGerald worked on the quatrains, not so much translating them as taking images for poems of his own. On 15 January 1859, a little anonymous pamphlet was published as *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. In the world at large, and in the circle of FitzGerald's particular friends, the poem seems at first to have attracted no attention. But in 1861, Rossetti discovered it, and Swinburne and Lord Houghton quickly followed. The *Rubaiyat* slowly became famous, but it was not until 1868 that FitzGerald was encouraged to print a second and greatly revised edition. Publication of third version of *The Rubaiyat* was in 1872. And seven years later, i.e. in 1879 the fourth version of *The Rubaiyat*, together with his reduced translation of the *Salaman and Absal* story by Jami was published, like the others revised by FitzGerald, though his name appears on none of them. And finally his fifth version of *The Rubaiyat* in collection of Letters (these letters indicate FitzGerald's relationship with his friends who played important role in his success) and *Literary Remains* published in 1889, after his death. As FitzGerald grew older, he grew more and more disenchanted with Christianity, and finally gave up attending church entirely (FitzGerald, 2012:2).

To the end he loved the sea, his books and his friends, and that end came to him, when on a visit with his friend Crabbe, with all the kindness of sudden death, on the 14th June, 1883 (Emerson, 2007:2-4). In 1893, two Persian rose bushes were planted at his grave by FitzGerald's admirers.

## 2.3 FitzGerald's Literary Works

Before translating Oriental poems, FitzGerald had other translations and works. From the late 1820s FitzGerald had in mind a notion that he might pursue a literary career; but the precise nature of that career was obviously not yet fully formed in his mind. FitzGerald's first published book, *Poems and letters of Bernard Barton* appeared in 1849. He applied adaptation method in his translation, because reduced the nine volumes of Barton's works to 200 pages. In his letters to Danne (15 March, 1849), he said:

"I have selected what will fill about 200 pages of print – as I suppose – really all the best part of nine volumes! Some of the poems I take entire – some half – some only a few stanzas, and these dovetailed together – with a change of a word, or even of a line here and there, to give them logic and fluency. I am sure I have distilled many pretty little out of long dull ones which the world has discarded. I do not pretend to be a poet: but I have faculty enough to mend some of B. B.'s dropped stitches, though I really could not make any whole poem as good as many of his. As a matter of Arts, I have no doubt whatsoever I am right" (Terhune, II, 1980:633).

In 1851, FitzGerald published a very important work: *Eupheranor, A Dialogue on Youth*. *Eupheranor*, in which he contrasted the two types of manhood he admired (the athlete and the intellectual) and he concluded that the ideal, produced by an ideal education, would be an individual who combined the most attractive traits of both. Then, his next work by the name of *Polonius: A Collection of Wise Saws and Modern Instances* was published in 1852. Then, in 1853, FitzGerald issued *six Dramas of Calderon*, freely translated.

FitzGerald then turned to the Oriental studies and began his reading of the Persian poems with Sa'di, the writer of *Golestan* ("The Rose-Garden") and *Bustan* ("The Scented Garden"), who was called the "Oriental Catullus" by Byron. According to

his letters, FitzGerald studied Sa'di's Golestan with the help of two English translations: one by James Ross (1823) and another by E. B. Eastwick (1852). FitzGerald wrote to Mrs. Cowell: "Persian is really a great Amusement to me." (Terhune, II, 1980:118). The following translation is FitzGerald's translation of Sa'di's Bustan:

رسید از دست محبوبی به دستم	گلی خوش بوی در حمام روزی
که از بوی دلاویز تو مستم	بدو گفتم که مشکی یا عبیری
ولیکن مدتی با گل نشستم	بگفتا من گلی ناچیز بودم
و گر نه من همان خاکم که هست. (Sa'di:1971:3)	کمال همنشین در من اثر کرد

A diver springing darkly to the brim  
 Of the full sapphire river as it rolled  
 Under palm shadows over sands of gold  
 Along the balmy vale of Almahim:  
 Brought up what seem'd a piece of common mould,  
 But of so rare a fragrance that he cried-  
 "Mine eyes are dim with diving-thou'rt no piece  
 Of common earth, but musk or ambergrease."  
 "I am but common earth, the clod replied-  
 "But once within my dusky bosom grew  
 The Rose, and so insinuated through  
 Her aromatic fibres day by day,  
 That time her virtue never will subdue,  
 Nor all the rambling water wash away-" (Terhune, II, 1980:401).