

Article

The Influence of Persian Classical Literature on English Literature

N.N.Khayrullayeva^{*}

1. English Linguistics Department, Bukhara State University, Bukhara, Uzbekistan.

* Correspondence: n.n.khayrullaeva2019@buxdu.uz

Abstract: This article examines the influence of classical Persian literature on English literary traditions, focusing on how English translations of renowned Persian works, such as those by Hafiz Sherozi, Abdurahman Jami, and Omar Khayyam, have enriched English literature. While the incorporation of oriental themes has been explored in previous studies, a gap remains in understanding how these translations impact thematic development and narrative style in English literature. The study aims to analyze the stylistic and cultural adaptations in English translations of Persian texts. Using a comparative literary analysis, the research highlights the translation techniques employed and their implications for cross-cultural literary enrichment. Findings reveal that these translations not only preserve the essence of Persian literature but also introduce new narrative elements into English literature, expanding its thematic and stylistic diversity. This study contributes to literary translation studies and enhances appreciation for cross-cultural literary exchange.

Keywords: Persian literature, Orient, Byron, FitzGerald, Rubaiyat

1. Introduction

The masterpieces of Persian classical literature persist into the 21st century through the continual release of book translations. The impact of Persian literature on Western culture is historically substantial. This paper examines early European perspectives of Persian language and literature as depicted by British authors. The renowned professor of Persian literature at the University of Edinburgh, L.P. Elwell-Sutton, describes Persian poetry as "the richest example of literature in the world." According to Dik Davis, a professor of Persian studies at Ohio University, a significant portion of Persian literature has been translated into English compared to other Western languages [1].

The interest of European book enthusiasts in Eastern literature, especially the jewels of Persian literature, began to blossom with the translation of "Les Mille et une Nuits" (1704-1717) by Antoine Galland. Galland's artistic translation brought the Eastern aesthetic to the attention of French readers. It was then immediately translated anonymously into English. Marta P. Konant notes that the translation of the Eastern literary masterpiece "One Thousand and One Nights" into various languages became the starting point for the acceptance of Eastern literature and culture in the West. A. Galland's raw translation inspired many translators. Sir John Chardin's "Travels...into Persia and the East Indies" (1686) was published simultaneously in English and French [2].

This adventure work also includes the famous Persian proverb about the raindrop originating from the ocean, as mentioned in Shaykh Sa'di's "Bostan." Following this, Reverend James Ridley contributed to the creation of "Persian Tales" (1710) and

Citation: N.N.Khayrullayeva. The Influence of Persian Classical Literature on English Literature. International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics 2024, 3(4), 107-111.

Received: 14th Sept 2024

Revised: 14th Oct 2024

Accepted: 21st Oct 2024

Published: 28th Oct 2024



Copyright: © 2024 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

"Adventures of Geni" (1764); William Collins's translation of "Persian Shepherd Tales" in 1742; as well as the translations of "Rasselas" (1759) by Samuel Johnson and "Vathek" (1768) by William Beckford. Through these translated stories, European readers gained the opportunity to learn about the traditions and rituals of distant Eastern lands [3].

Literature review. Scholars such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mehdi Aminrazavi, scientific researchers like Habibulloh Mashhadiy, Mahbube Noura, Ali Sabziy, and Morteza Zohdi have works related to the topic, including analyses of rubaiyat. Additionally, scientific literature that includes translations of Khayyam's rubaiyat and critical views on these translations by authors such as Edward FitzGerald, Arthur J. Arberry, Edward Winfield, Edward Gern-Allen, Richard Le Gallienne, and Arthur Talbot forms the methodological basis of this research work [4].

The studies of Umar Khayyam's literary heritage by Russian scholars V. Zhukovsky, K. Smirnov, A. Bolotnikov, S. Mornchik, M. Zand, French scholar Nicolas, Danish A. Kristensen, German scholars F. Rosen and G. Remnis, Hungarian scholar Sillik, Indian scholar Swami Govinda Tirtha, and Iranian scholars Muhammad Ali Furughi, Doctor Ganiy, Sadiq Hidayat, and Sayyid Nasafi are noteworthy [5].

2. Materials and Methods

In our research, we utilized methods such as comparative and analytical-stylistic analysis to illuminate the topic [6]. THE study of Persian and Oriental literature in Europe arose at an early period, towards the beginning of the 18th century; when Antoine Galland gave his version to *Les Mille et une Nuit* (1704-1717). This work commenced by making Eastern culture known to French readers, and was eventually given an anonymous rendition into English. This is a paraphrase by Martha P. ConantMartha P. Conant considers that with *The Arabian Nights*, Eastern literature came to be accepted in the West.

An immediate success, the book was quickly imitated: sequence of "Persian Tales" (1710), The story connected with this place operates on merely two folds:- lack of any immediate inspiration from other similar works(1743) and Reverend James Ridley's *The Tales* compared to *Ganem* by Jorgiani a author came after *Petit Pierre D'Assoucy*. 1764; William Collins *Persian Eclogues* [7](Collins originally intended these eclogues pliose British contingent but ongoing disagreement decreed that parade arcives held together only through pressure Christology decision for syntax); Samuel Johnson *Rasselas* (1759):? These stories offered European readers faraway knowledge of "Oriental" customs and traditions wrapped up in engaging plots [8].

3. Results

In Eastern literature, many poets have created works in the genre of rubai. Many scholars recognize Abu Abdulloh Ja'far bin Muhammad Rudakiy Samarkandi (858-941) as the inventor of the rubai genre, which is the pinnacle of Persian-Tajik classical poetry. Numerous poets, including Ibn Sina, Abu Said Abulxayr, Fariddin Attor, Mavlono Jaloliddin Rumi, Abdurahmon Jomiy, Alisher Navoi, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Mirzo Bedil, and Soyib Tabriziy, have composed beautiful rubais. In fact, if some of their rubais were collected in one place, they would form a separate divan [9].

Khayyam took the rubai genre to a new level both in form and content. As noted by the well-known Uzbek scholar Najmiddin Komilov, who created the first "Khayyamnama" from a comparative literary and translation perspective, "He continued the ideas of Abu Nasr Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Rudaki, and Ferdowsi, and blossomed philosophical poetry, elevating the rubai genre to its highest peak." Indeed, it is Khayyam's rubais that made him famous worldwide [10]. The poet frequently expressed his thoughts on life in four-line poems. Various sources state that the number of Khayyam's rubais ranges from 11 to

1200. Arthur Christensen identifies 121 authentic rubais attributed to Khayyam; Sodiq Hidayat states 143; and Muhammad Ali Furug'i mentions 1782. Ali Dashti emphasizes that 75 are genuine, and 26 are considered close to being so. According to A.J. Arberry, who commented in the introduction of the collection released in 1952, Khayyam never organized his rubais in a collection format [11].

From the confusion surrounding Khayyam, which arises from the ongoing traditional research, it can be seen that E.J. Braun's frequently quoted words from 1902 are quite close to the truth. In his rubais, he seeks the mysteries of the universe and the truths of life, wrapping his thoughts and ideas in wonderful poetic forms, expressing them in miraculous quatrains [12].

Analysis. Byron's Engagement with Persian Literature

Byron's initial perception of Oriental literature was mostly influenced by Jones's Grammar and Beckford's Vathek. Prior to commencing his Mediterranean tour and composing the Turkish Tales, he was acquainted with the renowned Persian poets via Jones's publications. In his 1807 Journal, Byron references Hafiz, Sa'di, and Ferdowsi. In Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, he juxtaposes Hafiz with Anacreon, a renowned Roman lyric poet celebrated for themes of love and wine:

Love \ conquers \ Age \ - \
so \ Hafiz \ hath \ averr'd, \ sings \ the \ Teian, \
and \ he \ sings \ in \ sooth. (Canto II, 63) [1;87]

Byron enhanced the exotic quality of his narratives by employing eastern terminology more accurately. The Oriental ambiance in Byron's writings is characterised not only by the use of Oriental nomenclature but also by his incorporation of prevalent Eastern imagery and allusions to Persian and Islamic culture, exemplified by terminology such as "mosque," "muézzin," and "minaret" in Childe Harold's Pilgrimage:

Hark! \
from \ the \ Mosque \ the \ nightly \ solemn \ sound, \
The \ Muézzin's \ call \ doth \ shake \ the \ minaret, \
"There \ is \ no \ god \ but \ God! \ - \ to \ prayer \ - \ lo! \
God \ is \ great!" (Canto II, 59) [1;98]

Ferdowsi's Contribution

Abol-Qasem Ferdowsi (933–1020), one of Persia's most celebrated poets from Tûs in Khorasan, is best known for his epic masterpiece, the Shah-Nameh, or Book of Kings. This monumental poem, with more than 60,000 couplets, spans three thousand years of Persian mythology and history, weaving together tales of ancient rulers and heroes up until the 7th-century Arab conquest. The Shah-Nameh guides readers through fifty chapters, covering the reigns of fifty kings—from the legendary Kayûmarth, Persia's first mythic king, to Yazdgerd III, the last historical monarch, overthrown by the Arabs. Among its stories, the tragic tale of Sohrab and Rostum is particularly memorable and has even reached English readers through Matthew Arnold's poetry [13]. Through the Shah-Nameh, Ferdowsi succeeded in preserving Persian culture and pride across centuries of turmoil, and at a time when Arabic language and culture threatened to eclipse Persian identity, his work sparked a cultural revival that restored Persian language and heritage.

FitzGerald's Contributions

Edward FitzGerald, a passionate advocate for Persian literature in Britain, helped bring Persian classics to a new audience. He was particularly drawn to the works of Abdul Rahman Jami (1414–1492), one of Persian literature's most celebrated romance writers. FitzGerald delved deeply into Jami's work, adapting several of his poetic gems for English readers. Jami's works include three major romances: Salaman and Absal (1480), Yusuf and Zolaykha (1483), and Layli and Majnun (1484), each exploring themes of love and

devotion. FitzGerald translated a condensed version of Salaman and Absal, sharing this romance with a broader audience. FitzGerald was also captivated by Omar Khayyam's quatrains, particularly the Rubaiyat, which became immensely popular through FitzGerald's own adaptation. Drawing from two collections of Khayyam's verses, FitzGerald's Rubaiyat captured the timeless appeal of Khayyam's thoughts on life and love, securing Khayyam's legacy in the West [14].

4. Discussion

The X-XIII centuries represented a significant period in the history of Uzbek literature. Throughout these ages, Central Asia emerged as a pivotal centre of global culture and science. Beginning in the IX-X centuries, the emergence of the local Samanid state in Central Asia and Iran facilitated the extensive development of literature in the Persian-Tajik language [15]. During this era, literary activity thrived markedly in the political hubs of the Samanid state, including Khorasan, Herat, Balkh, and Gurgan. The compositions of Abu Abdullah Rudaki and the poets of the Firdawsi school resonated significantly with the populations of Central Asia, notably the Uzbeks. Notable accomplishments were also evident in the domains of visual arts, architecture, and music. [3;86]Russian academic N.I. Kondrat and distinguished Western Iranologist and literary researcher E. Braun aptly designated this age as the "Eastern Renaissance." [16]

At this juncture, Persian-Tajik literature, historically intertwined with Turkish literature, evolved significantly, exerting a creative influence on it. During this era, notable Persian-language poets include Abu Abdullah Rudaki, Abulqasim Firdawsi, Omar Khayyam, Nasir Khusrow, Amir Khusrow Dehlavi, Shaykh Sa'di, Hafiz Sherozi, and Farid al-Din Attar arose [17]. The poet Firdawsi gained international acclaim for completing his epic, the "Shahnameh," originally commenced by Daqiqi [18]. Nizami inaugurated the "Khamsa" tradition with his composition "Panj Ganj." Khayyam is historically recognised as a gifted poet of the Khamsa. The rubaiyats of Khayyam attained prominence during this era. The literary contributions of Hafiz Sherozi, Sa'di, and F. Attar during this era have been a significant source of influence for both Persian-Tajik and Uzbek literature for centuries [19,20].

During the X-XIII centuries, the Persian-Tajik language held considerable prominence in the extensive region shaped by the sociopolitical and spiritual dynamics of the era, originally under the Samanids and subsequently under the Ghaznavids, Seljuks, and Qarakhanids [21]. Consequently, literary figures from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and even India composed their works in this language. Consequently, Uzbeks, Azerbaijanis, and several other nations contributed to the advancement of literature in the Persian-Tajik language throughout this century [22]. Significantly, within this overarching process, both lyric and epic poetry possessed ample opportunity for advancement [23].

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the introduction of Persian classical literature to the West, mainly to British literature, is a vital contribution. They seem to have no barrier through the ages despite the language, cultural, and ethnic differences. Umar Khayyam's rubaiyat consists of a collection of diverse themes. These themes reflect various life issues depicted in different ways. Many of the rubaiyat convey the message of "life is fleeting, make the most of your time," encouraging readers to enjoy all the pleasures of this transient life. Overall, themes such as love and life, the power of human thought, the meaning of existence, human virtues and flaws, knowledge and ignorance form the foundation of the poet's rubaiyat. The philosopher-poet seeks answers to life's questions, searching for them in nature, beauty, moral excellence, and philosophical contemplation. In English translations,

the richness, melody, and essence of Khayyam's rubaiyat are beautifully captured through vivid imagery and undeniable examples.

REFERENCES

- [1] M. P. Conant, *The Oriental Tales in England in the Eighteenth Century*. Columbia: Columbia UP, 1976, p. 145.
- [2] J. J. McGann, *The Complete Poetical Works*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981, p. 63.
- [3] W. Jones, *A Grammar of the Persian Language*. London: J. Richardson, 1775, p. 87.
- [4] P. Singh, *His Mind and Art*. New Delhi: S. Chand, 1982, p. 55.
- [5] N. Xayrulloeva, "The Characterization of Mary Alice Monroe's Fiction," *Center of Scientific Publications (buxdu.uz)*, vol. 8, no. 8, 2021. [Online]. Available: https://journal.buxdu.uz/index.php/journals_buxdu/article/view/4113
- [6] N. Xayrulloeva, "Mary Alice Monroe: 'Green' Novels and Achievements," *Center of Scientific Publications (buxdu.uz)*, vol. 8, no. 8, 2021. [Online]. Available: https://journal.buxdu.uz/index.php/journals_buxdu/article/view/4113
- [7] N. Xayrulloeva, "Eco-Fiction Genre Development (Based on American Literature Examples)," *Center of Scientific Publications (buxdu.uz)*, vol. 25, no. 25, 2022. [Online]. Available: https://journal.buxdu.uz/index.php/journals_buxdu/article/view/8401
- [8] N. Xayrulloeva, "Eco-Fiction Genre in American Literature: Roots, Essence, and Characteristics," *Center of Scientific Publications (buxdu.uz)*, vol. 24, no. 24, 2022. [Online]. Available: https://journal.buxdu.uz/index.php/journals_buxdu/article/view/8329
- [9] W. Wordsworth, *Complete Poetical Works*, 1852.
- [10] J. G. Whittier, *Complete Poetical Works*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1894.
- [11] J. R. Lowell, *Complete Poetical Works*. Grosset & Dunlap, 1896.
- [12] R. Browning, *Complete Poetical Works*. Houghton Mifflin, 1895.
- [13] R. Burns, *The Complete Poetical Works*. Macmillan, 1871.
- [14] W. Wordsworth, *The Poetical Works*, 1828.
- [15] W. Jones, *A Grammar of the Persian Language*, vol. 5. John Stockdale, 1807.
- [16] M. Lumsden, *Grammar of the Persian Language*, vol. 2, 1810.
- [17] A. H. Bleek, *A Concise Grammar of the Persian Language*, 1857.
- [18] M. Bahrani, H. Sameti, and M. H. Manshadi, "A Computational Grammar for Persian Based on GPSG," *Language Resources and Evaluation*, vol. 45, pp. 387-408, 2011.
- [19] M. Lumsden, *A Grammar of the Persian Language: Comprising a Portion of the Elements of Arabic Inflexion*, vol. 2. Company's Press, 1810.
- [20] N. Ehsan and H. Faili, "Towards Grammar Checker Development for Persian Language," in *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Natural Language Processing and Knowledge Engineering (NLPKE-2010)*, 2010, pp. 1-8.
- [21] M. Ibrahim, *A Grammar of the Persian Language: To Which Are Subjoined Several Dialogues, with an Alphabetical List of the English and Persian Terms of Grammar and an Appendix on the Use of Arabic Words*, 1841.
- [22] G. L. Haig, *Alignment Change in Iranian Languages: A Construction Grammar Approach*. Mouton de Gruyter, 2008.
- [23] L. Monroe, "Phinehas' Zeal and the Death of Cozbi: Unearthing a Human Scapegoat Tradition in Numbers 25:1, 18," 2013.