Introduction

Mona Baker in her introduction to *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* argues:

New disciplines ‘in the making’ as it were are particularly exciting for the rich research potential they hold and the sheer intellectual energy they are capable of generating. This intellectual energy can attract—as it has done in the case of translated studies—the interest of scholars working within the more traditional discipline, because it can revitalise a staid framework with new challenges, new avenues of enquiry and new perspectives on pursuing such enquiry. Hence, the current interest in translation across a variety of disciplines, from linguistics to ethnography and from cultural studies to psychology, to name only a few.¹

This eminent scholar of Translation Studies believes that new disciplines attract scholars with their variety and liveliness that is the result of the fact that their potential is not yet realized or in the course of being realized.²

Translation Studies is a relatively new discipline in the Arts and Humanities, by comparison to other disciplines. It is the discipline of
the 1990s as many known scholars believe. Its perspective for research is very broad since it is still developing and interest in it has increased over the past few decades as we have observed.

Recent translation theory develops a general theory, the Target-Oriented Approach (TOA) originated by Gideon Toury:

Recent Translation Studies has found itself effectively using Toury's model (…)

Several aspects of Toury's theory have contributed to development within the field (…)

Toury claims that his unified theoretical framework is valid for all translational Phenomena and it helps scholars with their research in a systematic way. He also asserts that his theory is highly concerned with literary translation:

[…] Most of the author’s actual work in translation studies, on both theoretical and methodological levels, as well all of his field studies, have been carried out with special regard to literary translation. Nevertheless, he regards most of the mechanisms dealt with as pertaining not to this specific type of
translation alone, but to translation in general, as a type of semiotic activity and product.\textsuperscript{5}

Toury’s Map of Translation Studies, as an integral part of the discipline, provides a platform for various related research such as ‘Theoretical’, ‘Descriptive’ and ‘Applied’, of which Descriptive Translation Studies branch (DTS) appears to be the most valuable one. These branches provide researchers with methodology for interdisciplinary research based to their area of interests. They would be able to shed light on new aspects of the literary works in translation using the features of this new discipline.

Curiously, however, this new discipline and its finding has been-to a considerable extent-disregarded in English departments. This may be so because not many scholars know about the systematic evolution of the discipline. The new discipline provides countless new research topics. It seems to have given a new life to the field of literature also. Although individual research in this field has been conducted, nonetheless, English departments are still biased and scholars appear to be rather disinterested in expanding the field of literature by trying interdisciplinary models.
Therefore, this researcher decided to investigate in the interdisciplinary study by selecting two English translations of a great literary work and following the methodology introduced by the Descriptive branch of the discipline of Translation Studies. Researcher endeavours to show how new aspects of literature – even Classics- can be studied by the facilities provided by the new discipline.

Among the many available translations of Omar Khayyam’s *Rubaiyat* provided in the appendix⁶, researcher has selected two for the diachronic study as it is intended. Diachronic study is conducted customarily with several works (more than two, usually) but, as it will be discussed in Chapter Two, limitations of the research would not allow for a discussion of so many translations thoroughly. However, in the course of this study, a brief discussion of the other translations will be conducted. Furthermore, the time between the two principle translations in this research displays a gap of more than one century and many other translations have occurred in between them. Researcher has selected Edward Fitzgerald’s
translation and Peter Avery & John Heath-Stubb’s translation respectively. Researcher’s concern with several important factors in translation has led to this selection. The former is well-known as a free translation and the latter is more literal. Another fact is that they belong to different literary periods. However, other interesting and salient aspects also guided to this selection.

**Objectives and Scope of Research**

As the title indicates, by employing DTS (Descriptive Translation Studies) as methodology and theory as well, the study undertakes an examination of the selected English translations of Omar Khayyam’s Quatrains. The primary objective of this research is therefore the objective of the DTS that is “to describe the observable facts of translating and translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience”.

The second objective of this study is to endeavour to employ few aspects of the Polysystem Theory. This theory, which is the basis for Target-Oriented Approach as will be discussed in the Second Chapter, is broad and rather complicated. But in this research the
only point of concern is the position of Persian poetry and, more specifically, the selected translations of *Ruba’iyyat* in the literary Polysystem.

And thirdly, the study provides evidence to illustrate that Omar Khayyam’s *Ruba’iyyat* and, in larger scale, great works of Persian poetry have become degraded as a result of translation in the West—that is why I used the term ‘Quatrain’ in the title and in other parts of the study, to illustrate that, as soon as Khayyam’s poetry was translated into English, it became another entity that lacked many aspects of the *Ruba’iyyat*. Thus, researcher has begun the ‘Trilogy’ of Hafiz, Khayyam and Rumi. The study additionally attempts to demonstrate that Persian Poetry in English translation has passed through three distinct phases of: Reception, Climax and Disregard.

**Significance of the Study**

The significance of the present research is threefold:

Firstly, the discipline of Translation Studies is relatively new, as evident in Chapter Two, and the need for systematic research is tremendous in this field. Yet, conversely, Toury’s map of Translation
Studies and its inherent capabilities as both theory and methodology of translation has not been examined thoroughly in academia. Hence, this endeavour, as interdisciplinary work, can act as a model for scholars interested in this field.

Secondly, this study exclusively proposes the concept of a ‘Trilogy’ with a fresh view towards English translations of Persian poetry. By this means, researchers can predict the position of translated literature in the English literary Polysystem. It will also aid in analysing subsystems in the Polysystem.

Finally, as the most popular English poetry in along time, as many have believed it to be, *Omar Khayyam’s Quatrains* is analysed both intra-textually and extra-textually. This researcher has attempted to provide a platform for the readers to understand the current situation of the poetry of the great Persian poet.

**Methodology**

The current study proceeds along the format of Toury’s Map of Translation Studies and, specifically, Descriptive Translation Studies
(DTS) as the most important aspect of that map. Any target-oriented study of translated texts can be conducted following Toury’s prescribed methodology.

Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) is divided into three branches: Product-Oriented, Process-Oriented and Function-Oriented. The first and the last branches have a stronger connection with our research; hence, researcher shall discuss both the Product and the Function in separate chapters.

In approaching the Product, researcher shall examine prominent inter-textual features of the texts comparatively. The examination of the Function(s) of the texts will require discussion of the extra-textual features. The texts shall be examined contextually in order to discern their impacts made or received in the literary system. Thus, researcher can determine their position in the literary poly-system.
Organization of the study

This study consists of Five Chapters and an Appendix.

Chapter One: Omar Khayyam and His Poetry

In this chapter I elaborate on Omar Khayyam’s life and poetry.

Chapter Two: Target-oriented Approach: Theoretical Framework

Descriptive Translation Studies as a branch of the map of Translation Studies and the framework of this study will be discussed. Out of the three sub-branches of DTS, I will be going through product-oriented and Function-oriented, that have more to do with Target-orientedness as the main concern of this research.

Chapter Three: Product-oriented Approach

This chapter examines the texts according to textual features and, henceforth, we shall analyse the texts apart from their respective contexts.

Chapter Four: Function-oriented Approach

This chapter shall elaborate upon the function and extra-textual features of the translated texts; the focus shall be on the
transmission of the *Ruba’iyyat* to the West and the resultant impact on Western literary circles and how the later translations affected by the system.

**Chapter Five: Assessment**

This chapter concludes the research and is divided into three parts, as follow:

First, we shall discuss the position of the translations as part of the Persian poetry under translation—in the English literary Polysystem. Second, a normative analysis of the selected translations shall be undertaken. Third, I shall provide a platform for the projects that can be built upon the current research under ‘Scope for Further Study’.
Notes.

2. Ibid.
5. Ibid
6. P. 210-228