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Description

Ma'ni Aafrini and the Translatability of the Ghazal

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Abstract:

In terms of ghazal translation and its historical context, without an engagement with this knowledge system to understand its poetry through its terms, any translational activity (and its study) can only reproduce an incomplete view of the Ghazal, perpetuating Eurocentric and colonial discourses about the Ghazal, Urdu literature and poetry at large, ignorantly if unwillingly. Thus, it is pertinent that translations of ghazals into English be looked at through the lens of ideas put forward in the writings of its poets and theorists. The present study aims to do this by comparatively assessing three translations of ghazals by Mirza Ghalib. Translations of Urdu ghazals, either in anthology or on single authors now form a substantial corpus. While there have been surveys and analyses of translation of Urdu poetry and ghazals specifically, there is a need for comparative readings of translations and their approach through an engagement with the poetics of the Classical Ghazal.

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