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Ideological and Religious Expressions in the Translation of Earnest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* into Arabic

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ABSTRACT

Earnest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) depicts a man's existential struggle through the events of a fisherman who desperately struggles to catch a giant fish. The challenges the protagonist faces drive him to rely on his faith in God as the novel teems with religious utterances and symbols. This study examines the religious and ideological terms and expressions in Hemingway's novel, the source text (ST), and explains how each translator renders these religious expressions in a manner that conforms with the expectations of their audiences. This study compares the two Arabic translations of the novel by two translators from different ideological and religious backgrounds. The translations of this novel show many discrepancies, particularly with regard to the choice of religious terms. The study selects examples from the source text, i.e., English, into the target text, i.e., Arabic, by two Arab translators, Muneer Ba'lbaki (Muslim) and Gabrielle Wahbeh (Christian), that show how the ideology of the translator, specifically religion, influences the choice of terms and expressions. This study finds that the translator's religious, personal, and cultural backgrounds, in this case study, partially affect his or her choice of translated expressions to meet his ideology and the target audiences' expectations.

Keywords: Hemingway; Ideology; Religious Terms; *The Old Man and the Sea*; Translation; Arabic

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1. Introduction

Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* has always been considered as a story that explores universal issues of persistence, fighting, and the connection between man and nature. Although essentially seen as a parable on human endurance, the response it has elicited in different linguistic and cultural settings can be quite varied. Significantly, the text is full of religious symbolism and allusions that have been subject to a number of different interpretations, including that of a Christian allegory. This has been particularly evident in its Arabic translations, where translators of different religions have developed two specific renditions, thus offering two distinct interpretations of the novel's themes. This is relevant to any literary translation, where the task is to render the text and its thematic construction into another language: "[I]t is important to acknowledge that when writing a literary translation, we must not only focus on what the text says, but also on *how* the literary text has been made, constructed, put together ^[1]. Literary translation is always more than a "linguistic transfer" ^[2]; it reflects a deeper engagement with the values, ideologies, and symbols present in both the source and target cultures. Bassnett and Harish ^[3] contend that "[t]ranslation is not an innocent, transparent activity but is highly charged with signification at every stage; it rarely, if ever, involves a relationship of equality between texts, authors or systems." These arguments are manifested in translations of the novella, which is full of religious allusions, a case that can have absolutely different interpretations when the meaning is transferred into a language such as Arabic, a language of a different religion.

The translations of *The Old Man and the Sea* by Muneer Ba'lbaki, a Muslim, and Gabrielle Wahbeh, a Christian, open avenues for contemplating how the same text can be perceived and changed on both sides of the religious and cultural differences. With their translation from English into Arabic, each has contributed to the cultural perspectives that serve to affect how the religious utterances and symbols come out. These changes in translation can be perceived with the use of language between the original and also by the translator's choice to reflect the novel in accordance with religious and cultural values relevant to the audience. This is reminiscent of Bassnett

and Harish ^[3] argue that translation "does not happen in a vacuum, but in a continuum; it is not an isolated act, it is part of an ongoing process of intercultural transfer." Translators inevitably carry the weight of their socio-cultural and ideological backgrounds, which manipulate their interpretation and re-creation of the source text. As Bassnett and Harish ^[3] argue, "translation is a highly manipulative activity that involves all kinds of stages in the process of transfer across linguistic and cultural boundaries." By way of the Ba'lbaki and Wahbeh example, there were two religiously and culturally different people translating key religious references—thus affecting how the text is interpreted by the Arabic-speaking peoples of these two religious communities ^[4,5].

This article makes use of a comparative critical analysis in order to investigate the two Arabic translations of Hemingway's novel. By illustrating selected key passages in which religious ideology is manifest, we shall bring out the ways in which religious background has played into the translation strategies of these translators. The latter will focus on the religious references, symbols, and expressions as they appear in the translation, with the view to tracing the ideological underpinnings that shaped such choices. Methodologically, this has been done by comparing the Arabic translations as closely as possible with the English source text, focusing on both overt and subtle differences in the treatment of religious themes. As Venuti ^[6] reminds us, domestication and foreignization are not neutral techniques but ideological stances: the former aligns the text with target cultural norms, while the latter foregrounds its foreignness. Wahbeh's recurrent domestication of Christian prayers into Islamic forms illustrates how translation may reinforce prevailing cultural ideologies at the expense of source-text specificity. Similarly, Tymoczko ^[7] emphasizes that the translator's "place of enunciation" is inseparable from ideological positioning; thus, both Wahbeh and Ba'lbaki inevitably project their cultural and religious contexts onto Hemingway's text ^[4,5]. Schäffner ^[8] further argues that ideology is embedded at multiple textual levels, not only lexical but also syntactic and discursive, which is evident in shifts such as Wahbeh's omissions or Ba'lbaki's literal renderings. In line with Baker's notion of framing, these translators re-narrativize Hemingway's text in ways that reflect and reproduce dominant ideological discourses

in their respective societies ^[9]. The current research adopts critical theories of translation in addition to the comparative approach, especially those that assign importance to the ideological role in the act of translation. The work of scholars such as Bassnett and Andre ^[10] greatly contributes to the discussion on how literary translation is an act of recreation marked by the ideological and cultural stance of the translator herself or himself. We attempted to prove through analysis that religious ideology is just one aspect of the process and perception of translation, and such an interplay may enrich the comprehension not only of the text per se but of its original and translated forms.

Despite a growing body of scholarship on ideology in translation ^[8,10,11], most studies have focused on political, cultural, or feminist ideologies, with comparatively little attention given to the influence of religious ideology. Even when religion is considered, research often investigates the translation of Islamic or Christian texts in isolation rather than in cross-religious comparison. What is lacking, therefore, is a systematic analysis of how translators of different religious affiliations render the same text and how their ideological positioning shapes the target text. This study addresses this gap by examining two Arabic translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, highlighting the ways in which religious identity informs translation choices. In doing so, it contributes to both translation studies and literary criticism by foregrounding the complex interplay between faith, ideology, and cross-cultural reception.

In so doing, we shift the analysis from a traditional one focusing on the strategies applied to render the text in the source language into a target language to a critical one comparing the underpinnings of the source and target texts. Indeed, literary translation needs not only focus on comparing the source text and target text, but could also consider the translators' ideological background and how it affects the recreation of the target text. As House ^[12] argues, "[l]iterary translation is often regarded as an art of 're-creation'". The notion of recreation was also emphasised by Elnaili ^[13], who asserts that literary translation is "the retelling of a story in the voice of the author and the feelings of the characters in the tale" (p. 181). Bassnett and Andre ^[10] argued that "translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text" and that any text reflects the stance and ideology of its author. Bassnett and Andre ^[10], therefore, asserted that the author's

ideology functions to "manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way". Consequently, any translation or recreation of a text should reflect the ideology taken by the translator. Otherwise, the translated text does not fully adhere to the original text's meanings. Elnaili ^[13] concurs that literary texts are laden with embedded meanings and that, in the quest to 'recreate' them, "the translator ought to consider how to reproduce the frame and the theme of the narrative in the target-text" (p. 181). This is particularly the case in fiction, which may typically be manipulated to convey hidden messages and ideologies which could be treated in its translation to a target language.

Panda ^[14] defines ideology as "the larger abstract phenomena which can encompass all political discourses and the discourses related to translation"; it "can be political, sociocultural and religious". In other words, "[i]deology concerns systems of belief and ideas which are common to individuals and to communities". Ideology is defined by Hatim and Mason ^[15] as "the tacit assumptions, beliefs and value systems which are shared collectively by social groups". Consequently, we can define religious ideology as the beliefs and values that govern society's viewing of all aspects of life based on tight restrictions posed by a certain religion. Based on the foregoing, it is clear that any text is a combination of language and ideology. Thus, the translator should ascertain that language and ideology are rendered carefully in translating it. Barnes ^[16] believes that "religion is reflected in text through the means of ideology". In the same vein, Al-Mohannadi ^[17] argues:

Ideological translations largely depend upon the translator identifying his or her target audience and making changes accordingly. If a translator knows his/her target audience he/she may be tempted to alter the original, even adding to or subtracting from the ST, to suit the sensibilities of his/her readership. (p. 533)

While translation studies have focused on how ideology is rendered into another language, little is known about the effect of religious ideology on the recreation of a text (i.e., translation), especially in literary translation. Moreover, no studies have considered a comparative analysis of two translations where translators' ideologically religious motivations are different, a situation that is hypothesised to affect the choices they make in their translation. The trans-

lator may intentionally or unintentionally misinterpret the ideology or stance of the author. As Puurtinen ^[18] puts it,

In translation, ideologically motivated linguistic structures of a source text may be manipulated either unintentionally because of inadequate language and/or translation skills or insufficient knowledge of the relationship between language and ideology, or intentionally owing to translation norms, requirements of the translation commission or the translator's own attitudes towards the source text subject (p. 55).

While translation and ideology have been discussed extensively in relation to postcolonial politics ^[19], feminist interventions ^[20], or cultural representation ^[6], far fewer studies have theorized the role of *religious ideology* in shaping translation. This relative neglect risks marginalizing how faith-based frameworks influence translators' choices in contexts where religion strongly informs cultural identity. By analyzing two Arabic translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* produced by translators of different religious affiliations, this study extends the theoretical debates on ideology in translation beyond the political and cultural into the religious. In this sense, it joins ongoing discussions on the "rewriting" function of translation ^[10] while also dialoguing with Venuti ^[6] concern with translator visibility. The paper contributes to these debates by foregrounding how translators' ideological and religious positionalities act as interpretive frames that guide decisions of omission, substitution, or literal rendering.

The present study considers two translations of *The Old Man and the Sea* into Arabic. Gabrielle Wahbeh is a Christian whose translation was first published in Egypt by The Egyptian and Lebanese Publishing House in 2007. Wahbeh has a PhD in literary criticism. He wrote 19 books and 64 short stories in Arabic. His oeuvre revolves around literary criticism and theater. He also translated 10 books from English into Arabic; among which is Pearl Buck's *East Wind: West Wind* ^[21]. The second translator, Muneer Al-Ba'lbaki, is a Muslim whose translation was published in 2002 in Beirut by Dar al-Elm lel-Mlayeen Publishing House. Al-Ba'lbaki, as appears on his CV, has a degree in Arabic literature and History of Islam from the American University of Beirut. He is a translator and dictionary maker. Among his translations from English to Arabic are *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *A Tale of Two Cities*. He is

widely known in the Arab World for authoring the notable series of *Al-Mawrid* dictionaries that encompasses 28 English-Arabic-English dictionaries. Al-Ba'lbaki witnessed the multifaceted civil war in Lebanon (1975-1990), which largely divided the country into Muslim and Christian factions. In undertaking this study, we draw on Hatim and Jeremy's ^[22] conceptual framework of translation as an ambit that involves three aspects, as follows:

1. The process of transferring a written text from SL to TL, conducted by a translator, or translators, in a specific socio-cultural context,
2. The written product, or TT, which results from that process and which functions in the socio-cultural context of the TL, and
3. The cognitive, linguistic, visual, cultural and ideological phenomena which are an integral part of 1 and 2. (Emphasis is in source)

These steps are formulated as questions that lead the study as follows:

1. How does the translator's personal and cultural background influence his or her actions when transferring written texts from one language to another in a certain socio-cultural setting?
2. How is the final translated text related to and interacting with the cultural and social dynamics of the community of the target language?
3. To what extent do cognitive, linguistic, visual, cultural, and ideological factors have an impact on the translation textuality produced during the translation-making process?

1.1. Ideology in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*

Hemingway, an iconic figure in 20th-century literature, is known for his distinct writing style characterized by brevity and understatement, often referred to as the "iceberg theory." His minimalist style reflects the natural speech patterns of his characters and their communication "making modern writing more simple. Hemingway is best known for paring sentences down, and making the barest bones the sparest embodiment of modern life" ^[23]. Although Hemingway was not religious, his style reflects the Catholic influence on his narratives through symbols, dialogues, and

expressions. As Bloom ^[24] suggests, “perhaps there was a nostalgia for a Catholic order always abiding in Hemingway’s consciousness, but the cosmos of his fiction, early and late, is American Gnostic.” Without doubt, Hemingway’s ideology reflects a blend of existentialism, absurdity, stoicism and a profound appreciation for the human condition.

Hemingway’s critical reception in America has been significant and complex, reflecting his profound influence on modern literature. His *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) was celebrated for its themes of disillusionment, alienation, and sense of loss ^[25]. His novella *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) earned him the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1953 and paved the way for him to win Nobel Prize in Literature in 1954 ^[26]. *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) narrates the struggle of an old man to catch a fish at sea. The novel includes linguistic and ideological allusions to Christianity. Following the argument by Bassnett and Andre ^[10] noted above, the novel is written in a way that reflects the religious ideology of Hemingway. These religious utterances showcase the challenges of the protagonist and picture his sufferings by means of reference to religion, Christianity. The author includes many biblical references and terms that reflect the stance of the author. These religious references are rendered differently by translators based on their ideological stances.

The initial message of the novel can be summarized by Santiago (the protagonist): “A man can be destroyed, but can’t be defeated.” Sa-ngiamwibool ^[27] argues that “[t]he attempt to fight against inevitable destiny that is a universal and natural order of life touches the mind.” This theme is constructed by picturing the strength of the old man who insists on trying to catch a giant fish and risks his life in this quest. According to Kumbakonam ^[28], Hemingway attempts to balance the aloneness of the protagonist in this journey of catching the marlin. The embedded message of the story is that the author attempts to embody a religious figure, Jesus Christ, in the character of the protagonist, Santiago. He alludes to Christianity; Sa-ngiamwibool ^[27] states, “All symbols and allusions relate to Christ”. In particular, Sa-ngiamwibool ^[27] shows, “[t]he protagonist ... was depicted as Christ” and “the picture in color of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and another of the Virgin of Cobre on the wall in his house ... relates him to Christ”.

Critics, such as Waldmeir ^[29], questioned Hemingway’s religious ideological stance in *The Old Man and the Sea*. in his works. Waldmeir expresses this by asking:

Is the story, as it appears at first glance to be, a Christian allegory? Has the old master tough guy [i.e., Hemingway] decided, in the words of Colonel Cantwell, ‘to run as a Christian’? If neither of these questions can be answered with an unqualified affirmative—and I submit that they cannot—then a further question must be asked: Just what is the book’s message? (p. 146).

Nickel ^[30] also refers to Hemingway’s Catholic belief and shows that this religious ideology is observed in Hemingway’s writings, more noticeably in *The Old Man and the Sea*. Nickel strongly assert that Hemingway’s religious ideology is manifested in his works either explicitly or implicitly, despite the fact that some writers note that Hemingway was not convinced of his parents’ religion. As Lynn ^[31] writes, “[t]here is absolutely no indication ... that in his youth he rejected the premises of his parents’ religion. Despite his retrospective characterization of himself as a rebel and a runaway, he had no record of absenteeism from church”.

1.2. *The Old Man and the Sea*: An Overview

Hemingway’s novella, written in English in 1951, gained wide international popularity and was translated into many languages, including Arabic. The language of the novel in its English version is clear, and it reflects the style of the author. The story is reflective of real-life experiences and envisages the challenges many people face in their lives. It shows the connection between struggle and faith and between nature and religion. Obviously, Hemingway was influenced by Christianity; “numerous Christian symbols are embedded in all elements of this novella” ^[27]. As noted above, the protagonist, Santiago, symbolizes Christ. Hemingway refers to Jesus Christ implicitly and explicitly, as the protagonist, Santiago, symbolizes Christ. The novel alludes to this in many places, including “the position in which the old man collapses on his bed” ^[27] and “on very final pages of the novel, Hemingway refers him to the most subtle and transcendental symbolic parallel to Christ’s sacrifice or death” ^[27].

Santiago, the protagonist, is a fisherman from Spain who becomes extremely frustrated because of the struggles of life. He desperately spent most of his life trying to catch a fish to prove his strength to others who used to ridicule him. His friend, Manolin, continuously encouraged him to try to catch a fish. The story continues by telling us that Santiago took his boat to a far point in the sea to achieve his goal of catching a fish. After struggling for two days, he finally catches a marlin. On the way back, some sharks attack the carcass of the fish he caught and eat it, leaving the skeleton which is tied to his boat. When Santiago reaches the shore, he leaves the skeleton and goes back home. The other fishermen see the skeleton and are impressed by its size. Santiago is never defeated; he keeps trying to catch a giant fish despite all the challenges. The skeleton is said to be a representation of Christ^[32]. Many quotes also link the old man to Christ. Examples include, “I am not religious,” he said and “But I will say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys that I should catch this fish, and I promise to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre if I catch him. That is a promise”^[33].

2. Literature Review

The role of ideology in translation has long been emphasized in Translation Studies. Foundational works by Bassnett and Andre^[10] and Venuti^[6] argue that translation is never a neutral transfer of meaning but an act of rewriting that reflects the translator’s ideological positioning. Tymoczko^[7] similarly insists that the “place of enunciation” of the translator shapes the ideological reframing of texts, while Schäffner^[8] highlights that ideology permeates all textual levels, from lexical choice to discursive framing. These perspectives have provided a rich foundation for analyzing the intersections of translation, power, and ideology across various genres. However, much of this theoretical discussion has focused on political or cultural contexts, leaving other dimensions such as religious ideology underexplored.

Within the Arabic tradition, scholarship has highlighted the extent to which translators’ ideological orientations affect their renderings of literary texts. Abou Rached^[34], for example, demonstrates how Iraqi women’s narratives translated into English foreground exile, war, and feminist struggles, with translation acting as a political act of mediation. Giaber^[35] shows how Muneer Ba’lbaki’s translation

of *A Farewell to Arms* into Arabic reveals the translator’s stylistic and ideological commitments, particularly the use of Classical Arabic and religious undertones that shift the register of the text. Al-Harashseh^[36], employing a critical discourse analysis framework, reveals that Muslim translators often add honorifics and soften negative references when translating texts about Islam authored by non-Muslim writers. In contrast, Yousefi^[37] concludes that translators’ religious backgrounds do not deterministically affect quality, noting that ideology interacts with but does not solely dictate translation decisions.

While these studies demonstrate the broad influence of ideology on translation strategies, they remain fragmented. Each foregrounds a different type of ideology—political^[34], stylistic/religious^[35], or Islamic sensitivity^[36]—without situating their findings within a comparative framework. Moreover, few studies systematically examine the same source text translated by translators of different religious backgrounds, an omission that limits our understanding of how divergent religious affiliations shape translation strategies in comparable contexts.

Research on religious ideology in translation has often focused on sacred texts. For example, studies on Qur’an translation have examined how attributes of Allah or plural nouns are rendered differently depending on translators’ theological orientations^[38–40]. Similarly, Christian texts have been analyzed in terms of doctrinal fidelity versus audience accessibility^[16]. These works confirm that translators’ religious commitments inevitably surface in lexical and discursive decisions. Yet, most of this scholarship isolates either Islamic or Christian texts, rather than placing them in dialogue through cross-religious comparative analysis.

This gap is significant because religion remains a dominant axis of cultural identity in Arabic-speaking societies. The neglect of comparative research into religious ideology risks overlooking how translators actively reframe interfaith narratives for different readerships. A comparative focus is particularly important in contexts where Christian and Muslim translators both render the same Western text into Arabic, since their choices not only affect textual meaning but also the broader cultural circulation of interfaith symbolism.

Taken together, existing scholarship highlights the ideological dimensions of translation but leaves three key

gaps. First, the majority of works foreground political, feminist, or cultural ideologies, while religious ideology remains marginal in theoretical discussions. Second, even when religion is considered, research tends to focus on either Islamic or Christian texts in isolation, rather than comparing translations across religious affiliations. Third, very few studies adopt a comparative methodology where the same source text is examined through the lens of two or more translators' divergent ideological and religious commitments.

The present study addresses these gaps by conducting a comparative analysis of two Arabic translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*—one by Gabrielle Wahbeh, a Christian, and another by Muneer Ba'lbaki, a Muslim. By systematically analyzing how religious expressions are rendered, the study foregrounds religion as an underexplored but decisive axis of ideological framing in literary translation. In doing so, it contributes not only to translation studies but also to broader debates on cultural representation and interfaith reception in Arabic literary contexts.

Scholarship on ideology in translation has explored how translators' political, cultural, and gendered positionalities shape their textual decisions [6,8,10,11]. Within the Arabic context, researchers have examined ideological shifts in literary translation, often linking them to cultural or religious influences [34–37]. However, despite the rich body of scholarship, systematic comparisons of translations by translators of *different religious affiliations* remain rare. This study fills that gap by investigating how two translators, a Muslim and a Christian, render the same ideologically charged expressions in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*.

The literature on literary translation abounds with studies investigating differences between various translations of the literary text in terms of strategies of translation and/or the linguistic features used. Some of these works considered one or more types of ideology, while others merely focused on strategies of translation. For example, Abou Rached [34] follows the experience of six Iraqi women writers whose literary works have been translated into English, attuned to their thematic and political contexts. Abou Rached [34] posits that translation is not so much a mere transfer of linguistic structures but, more importantly, a political act that brings into a new linguistic and cultur-

al context the value of the cultural and ideological landscape. Abou Rached tells the way the themes of exile, war, and survival are mediated in English in the works of writers such as Samira Al-Mana and Daizy Al-Amir, mostly by feminist translation. The work foregrounds the importance of cultural contexts and ideological framing in the process of translation, especially when having to do with texts that cross the religious and political boundaries. The relevance of Abou Rached's work is evident through its focus on the ideological implications of translation. In both versions, the translators have to mediate the political and feminist ideologies with which these novels of Iraqi women are fraught, without distortion of the original context, be it in Arabic or English.

Giaber [35] looked at literary translation by analysing the lexical choices used in a translation of Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*. The researcher aimed to show how literary translation recreates the original work in a target language by maintaining the lexical and stylistic choices by the translator because these choices give the work its aesthetic value. The translation considered in this study was conducted into Arabic by M. Baalbaki. The results indicate that the translator was influenced by his first language, which is evident in his use of words from Classical Arabic, which are generally unfamiliar and less frequent than Standard Arabic words. Classical Arabic (CA) is the form of Arabic used for writing in the Quran and early Islamic literature, and it is the basis of Arabic grammar and vocabulary. Hence, there is little difference from that which was used in the 7th century. Modern Standard Arabic is purified and standardized Classical Arabic developed in the 19th and 20th centuries in order to become an official language for media, education, and other formal relations throughout the Arab world. It has the grammatical structure of CA but uses modern vocabulary and becomes more accessible to speakers of Arabic in the contemporary world. The findings also show an influence of the religious ideology of the translator, which was evident in using Islamic connotations and collocations. The researcher concluded that these changes in style and lexical choice led to a change in the register of the novel from informal to highly formal, with a cast of religious ideology.

Al-Harashsheh [36] examined the connection between translation and the religious ideology of the translator by analyzing texts written about Islam authored by non-Mus-

lim writers and translated by Muslim translators. He asked 49 undergraduate students majoring in translation to render three texts into Arabic to see how their religious ideologies would affect the produced translation of the STs. Applying a critical discourse analysis as a framework for analysis, the researcher found that the translators were strongly affected by their religious and ideological backgrounds. In particular, it was found that the translators added honorific terms to certain expressions and sacred references and omitted words with negative connotations to suit their ideological underpinnings in rendering their Arabic translations. Al-Harashseh concluded that “ideology stems from the religious and cultural norms or values of people, so Muslim translators tend to reshape, modify or omit the original text that may have words or expressions that may be hostile or severe, according to translators” (2013, p. 110).

Yousefi^[37] explored the effect of religious beliefs and ideologies on the quality of translation by analysing translations of five Islamic texts produced by two groups of translators; the first group included Muslim translators, while the second included non-Muslim translators. The researcher used Waddington’s model of assessment to evaluate the quality of translation by each group. The results show that there is no relationship between the religious background of the translator and the quality of the produced translation. Unlike Contrary to Aichele^[41], who believes that “no translation is ever complete. The selection of possible meanings to be excluded or included is always ideological”, Yousefi concluded that “[a] translation which is ideologically far from the original text is not a translation anymore, it is like a new text and the translator would be like a writer” (2017, p. 37).

Taken together, these studies confirm that ideology is a decisive factor in shaping translation strategies, yet they differ in the types of ideology they foreground. Abou Rached^[34] emphasizes political and feminist dimensions in the translation of Iraqi women’s narratives, while Giaber^[35] points to stylistic and lexical shifts influenced by religious undertones in Ba’lbaki’s translation of *A Farewell to Arms*. Al-Harashseh^[36], adopting a critical discourse analysis approach, directly links Muslim translators’ ideological commitments to textual modifications, particularly the addition of honorifics and omissions of negative connotations. Yousefi^[37], however, challenges the assumption that reli-

gious background necessarily determines translation quality, suggesting that translators’ decisions are more nuanced than deterministic.

Despite these valuable insights, the literature remains fragmented. Most works isolate a single ideological dimension (political, feminist, or religious) or focus exclusively on either Islamic or Christian texts. Few studies have conducted a systematic comparison of two translations of the *same literary text* produced by translators of different religious affiliations. This gap is particularly significant because it overlooks how divergent religious ideologies may lead to distinct strategies of domestication, omission, or literalism, ultimately shaping target audiences’ perception of religious identity. The present study addresses this gap by providing a comparative analysis of two Arabic translations of Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*, thereby contributing to a more integrated understanding of the intersection between ideology, religion, and literary translation.

What these studies demonstrate is that translation is never an ideologically neutral activity, but a site where broader debates about representation, identity, and power are played out. However, most of these works engage either with political or feminist ideologies, leaving religious ideology underexplored. Building on Hatim and Mason’s^[15] notion of translation as “communicative acts embedded in ideological contexts,” this study responds to calls to expand the theoretical scope of translation studies^[8,9] by integrating religion as a critical dimension. In doing so, it highlights the importance of viewing translation as an act of *cultural mediation* where religious as well as political identities shape the rewriting of texts. Such positioning allows us to theorize the role of the translator not only as a linguistic mediator but also as an ideological and religious agent.

3. Methodology

This study adopts *The Old Man and the Sea* as a case study along with two Arabic translations, one by Gabrielle Wahbeh^[5] and another by Muneer Ba’lbaki^[4]. The research employs a comparative qualitative analysis to highlight how the translators’ different religious and ideological backgrounds influence their rendering of religious expressions.

3.1. Corpus Size and Scope

The corpus of analysis consists of all instances of reli-

gious and ideological expressions in Hemingway's novella that bear a Christian connotation or symbolic association. A total of 84 expressions were identified in the source text (ST). Each occurrence was examined in both translations, producing 168 expressions for analysis. Focusing on this bounded corpus ensures that the findings are representative and manageable, while also allowing systematic comparison across translators.

To ensure transparency, the identification of religious utterances proceeded through a three-step process. First, all occurrences of potentially religious or ideologically loaded terms in the English source text were manually highlighted by two independent coders. Second, each occurrence was cross-checked against biblical references, liturgical prayers, or culturally recognized Christian expressions to confirm its religious significance. Third, ambiguous cases (e.g., general invocations of "God" or interjections such as "Oh God") were discussed by the coders and included only when the narrative context clearly indicated religious connotation. This systematic approach minimizes subjectivity and ensures that only expressions central to the novel's ideological dimension were retained for analysis.

3.2. Selection Criteria

In operationalizing "religious utterances," we applied four criteria:

- 1) **Explicit reference** to Christian figures, prayers, rituals, or institutions (e.g., "Hail Mary," "Blessed Virgin," "Virgin of Cobre").
- 2) **Implicit symbolism** with strong theological resonance (e.g., vows, pilgrimages, references to divine assistance).
- 3) **Frequency and salience** within the narrative (expressions repeated or thematically central were prioritized).
- 4) **Narrative function**, i.e., whether the expression contributed to the ideological construction of Santiago as a Christ-like figure.

Expressions functioning as colloquial interjections without theological weight (e.g., "Oh God" in everyday speech) were excluded unless tied to a broader religious act such as prayer. This ensured that the corpus reflected utterances with both semantic and functional significance for

religious ideology.

3.3. Analytical Framework

The analysis draws on critical discourse analysis (CDA) and comparative translation analysis ^[10,15,22]. The unit of analysis was each religiously loaded expression in the ST and its corresponding renderings in both translations. The following categories were used to code and interpret the data:

- **Literal transfer** (close adherence to the wording of the ST)
- **Omission** (deliberate or unconscious removal of religious elements)
- **Substitution/domestication** (replacing Christian references with Islamic equivalents or general terms)
- **Cultural adaptation** (adjustments to resonate with the target audience's religious ideology)

Through this framework, ideology was operationalized as the translator's lexical and discursive choices, which reveal alignment with or divergence from the religious norms of their audience.

To enhance coding transparency, we developed a coding manual that defined each category with examples drawn from both the source and target texts. For instance, "substitution/domestication" was coded when Christian-specific terms (e.g., "Christ," "Blessed Virgin") were replaced with Islamic equivalents (e.g., "Allah"). Two coders independently applied these categories to the full set of 84 utterances. Inter-coder agreement was calculated at 91%, and remaining discrepancies were resolved through discussion until consensus was reached. This procedure strengthens the reliability of the analysis and reduces the risk of interpretive bias.

3.4. Systematic Procedure

To ensure transparency and replicability, the analysis followed these steps:

1. **Identification:** All religious and ideological expressions were manually identified in the ST.
2. **Extraction:** Their corresponding renderings were located in Wahbeh's and Ba'lbaki's translations.
3. **Categorization:** Each instance was classified ac-

cording to the categories listed above (literal transfer, omission, substitution, cultural adaptation).

4. **Comparison:** The translators' choices were compared side by side for each instance.
5. **Interpretation:** The findings were interpreted in light of the translators' religious affiliations and the socio-cultural contexts of their audience (Muslim-majority Egypt vs. religiously mixed Lebanon).
6. **Validation.** To further ensure methodological rigor, the final coded dataset was reviewed against existing classifications of religious utterances in Hemingway's works [27,30]. This comparative validation confirmed that our criteria captured the key religiously loaded elements identified in prior scholarship, thereby situating our analysis within established academic discussions.

By adopting this systematic procedure, the study strengthens the reliability of the analysis and enhances its

replicability for future research on ideology and translation.

4. Analysis and Results

In this study, we sought to answer two questions: What are the decisions made by two translators of different religious backgrounds to translate religious utterances, symbols, and expressions identified in the source texts? To what extent is the translation choice of religious utterances, symbols, and expressions in the target text affected by the translators' religious ideology? This sub-section shows the analysis that provides answers to these questions. First, we present the analysis of both Arabic versions of the novel, and second, we discuss the findings to show how their translations differ. Below is the result of the qualitative analysis that was adopted through the content analysis technique to present the findings. This analysis shows selected examples that include religious terms or references to religion and the way they were translated in the two translations at hand.

1— God help him to take it.

Ba'lbaki	Wahbeh
يا إلهي ساعدها على التهامها	اللهم أعنها لتأخذها
/ja: ?ila:hi: sa:ʕidha: ʕala: ?iltihamiha:/	/ʔalla:humma ʔaʕinoɦa: litʔuɣðaha:/

We can notice the difference in translating this utterance by Wahbeh and Ba'lbaki into Arabic. In the source text, protagonist prays to God to let the fish take the bait so that he can catch it by saying: "God help him to take it". This statement is translated by Wahbeh as a request and praying for God, but in a way that conforms to prayers in Islam. This manifests itself by using "اللهم" which is a supplication to someone who is close: 'I beg You, close God' and which emphasizes dependence on God and solely calling out to Him. Also, "help her" is translated into "أعنها" because "أعنها" is found in prayers for God in Islam as in the Arabic common dua'a (supplication): "رَبِّ أَعْنِي وَلَا تُعِنِّ رِبَّ أَعْنِي" (God help me, and do not help [others] on me). Wahbeh manages to accurately create the intended meaning of

the author, which is invoking God let the fish to catch the bait by using Islamic rhetoric and customs, instead of translating the text literally.

On the other hand, Ba'lbaki translates the word "God" into "يا إلهي", which is not a strong way of praying for God in Islam or Christianity. For example, "يا إلهي" is used in Arabic to express awe, so it can be understood in different ways; it does not express a sole dependence on God for help. In addition, the verb "help" is translated differently by the two translators. Ba'lbaki translates "help it" into "ساعدها" which provides only a literal meaning and does not deliver the strong meaning that Wahbeh provides. Therefore, Ba'lbaki fails to create the intended precise meaning of the author, which is invoking God help the fish eat the bait.

2— Christ knows he can't have gone.

Ba'lbaki	Wahbeh
المسيح يعلم أنَّ من المستحيل أن تذهب	الله وحده يعلم
/ʔalma:si:ɦu jaʕlamu ʔanna mina ʔalmustaɦi:l ʔan taðɦab/	/ʔalla:h waɦduɦu: jaʕlam/

In the source text, Santiago's reference to "Christ" reflects his belief that he has not lost the fish. saying "Christ" knows it. In the two target texts, "Christ" is translated in two different ways that reflect the religious background of the translators. Wahbeh uses "الله" (Allah) instead of "المسيح" (Jesus Christ) as he, as a Christian, believes that Jesus is a god too and that 'Jesus' and 'God' can be used interchangeably. Using 'Allah' rather than 'Christ' is a conscious choice by Wahbeh because he knows that the word would resonate more with Muslims who compose the majority of the Ara-

bic-speaking world. However, Ba'lbaki translates 'Christ' as "المسيح" which is a messenger in the Muslim view. Using "المسيح" would signify the religious ideology that matches the expectations of the Christian target audience. As a result, he translates "Christ" literally to allow the audience to relate more to the translation. Wahbeh avoids literal translation and domesticates the text, while Ba'lbaki translates the text literally to meet the expectations of the Christian reception environment. Their translations show how religion and target audiences affect the process of word choice.

3— He commenced to say his prayers: Blessed Virgin, pray for the death of this fish.

Ba'lbaki	Wahbeh
تلكمسل هذه بتوم لجأ نم يلص ، مريم قس يدقلا اهتيأ :متاولص ولتي عرشو /wafaraʕa jatlu: ʕalawa:tihi: ʔajjatuḥa: lqaddi:satu marjam, ʕalli: min ʔajli mawt ha:ḏihi: ssamaka/	تلكمسل هذه بتوم لجأ نم... :متاولص ددري عرشو /wafaraʕa jurradid ʕalawa:tihi: ...min ʔajli mawt ha:ḏihi: ssamaka/

In the source text, the author says that the protagonist began to say his prayers in order to catch the fish. The infinitive 'to say' is translated into "يردد" (repeat) by Wahbeh and "يتلو" (recite) by Ba'lbaki, both of which produce different meanings. Ba'lbaki's "يتلو" is an expression used by Muslims specifically for reciting the Qur'an and emphasizes the holiness of the words of God. In this translation, Ba'lbaki is influenced by the Qur'an as the word "يتلو" appears in the Qur'an many times. When comparing the above translations, we notice the invisibility of religion's influence by adhering to the source text's exact wording (Blessed Virgin). This might be justified by the translator's

sensitive position as a Muslim or for the sake of committing to the source text. Unlike Ba'lbaki, Wahbeh translates 'to say' literally but fails to choose a prayer-related term to convey the meaning precisely. The verb "يردد" can be used for any kind of speech. In fact, Ba'lbaki's translation makes more sense to Muslims who use the noun "تلاوة" for reciting the Qur'an. Wahbeh's translation of 'to say' in its literal meaning may be acceptable for non-Muslims. In contrast, Ba'lbaki passed over 'blessed Virgin' in his translation. This might be for reducing the mention of the Christian religion's prayers to icons, or he might assume that these are accepted by the audience of all religions.

4—"Hail Mary full of Grace the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen." Then he added, "Blessed Virgin, pray for the death of this fish."

Ba'lbaki	Wahbeh
السلام عليك يا مريم، يا ممثلة النعمة. الرب معك. مباركة أنت بين النساء، ومباركة هي ثمرة بطنك يسوع المسيح. أيتها القديسة مريم، يا أم الله، صلي من أجلنا نحن الخاطئين الآن، وفي ساعة موتنا آمين! ثم اضاف: أيتها العذراء المباركة، صلي من أجل موت هذه السمكة. /ʔassala:mu ʕalajki: ja: marjam, ja: mumtaliʔatu nniʕmah. ʔarabbu maʕaki:. mubaarakatun ʔanti: bajna nnisa:ʔ, wa mubaarakatun hiya ʕamaratu baṭnaki: jesu:ʕu lmasi:h. ʔajjatuḥa: lqaddi:satu marjam, ja: ʔummalla:h, ʕalli: min ʔajlina: nahnu lḫaṭiʔi:na ʔala:n, wa fi: sa:ʕati: mawtina: ʔa:mi:n! ʕumma ʔaḏa:fa: ʔajjatuḥa: lʕaḏra:ʔu lmubaarakata, ʕalli: min ʔajli mawt ha:ḏihi: ssamaka/.	Omitted

These prayers are taken from Luka (1:28), and they have a significant meaning in Christianity. The old man was reciting these prayers when he was about to catch the fish alone. After eighty-four days attempting to catch a fish, finally the huge fish catches the bait and holds on the line. Santiago makes a promise to God "I will say ten our fathers and

ten Hail Mary." Wahbeh does not translate this part; instead, he omits it. This Christian prayer is recited by Santiago so that he can catch the fish in the source text. Wahbeh's translation throughout the novel shows tendency to avoid Christian utterances in order not to shock the intended audience. If Wahbeh chooses an Islamic dua'a in place of the Christian

prayer, he would derail the intended meaning of the word in the source text. On the other hand, Ba'lbaki translates the prayers as if they were a major part of the story which shows

the faith of the old man. He transfers these prayers faithfully. He also translates to the Lebanese community with Christian majority who are familiar with the prayers.

5—I promise to make a pilgrim to the Virgin of Cobre.

Ba'lbaki	Wahbeh Omitted
إني لأقسم لأحجن إلى مزار العذراء /ʔinni: laʔuqsimu laʔahujjanna ʔila: maza:ri lʔaðra:ʔ/	

This excerpt in the source text means that Santiago vows to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre, a sacred place of worship in Cuba if he catches the fish. In his translation, Wahbeh omits this part because the concept and destination of a religious pilgrimage are different for Muslims and Christians. If Wahbeh chooses to replace the Virgin of Cobre with Mecca, the sacred city to which Muslims make a pilgrimage, it will not make sense to the members of the target audience because Santiago is not a Muslim. On the other hand, if Wahbeh chooses to translate

the Virgin of Cobre as “العذراء كوبر” (Virgin Cobre), it needs an explanation, which would interrupt the narrative and risk confusing the audience. Ba'lbaki chooses to convey the meaning of the source text and translates “Virgin of Cobre” into “مزار العذراء” (the Virgin's shrine), showing that it is a worship place that people make pilgrimage to. Christians would accept and understand Ba'lbaki's translation because they have knowledge about the Virgin of Cobre and consider it a sacred place, so his translation meets their expectations.

6—The sacred heart of Jesus

Ba'lbaki	Wahbeh
قلب يسوع الأقدس /qalbu ljasu:ʕi lʔaqdas/	للقلب المقدس /lilqalbi lmuqaddas/

Ba'lbaki translates the utterance literally as “قلب يسوع الأقدس” and keeps it associated with the Catholic Church terms. “القلب المقدس” (the sacred heart), as translated by Wahbeh, is associated with other churches as a symbol of love and humanity. Ba'lbaki here follows the target cultural orientation as he lives and translates to the Lebanese community with a Christian majority. The most dominant sect is the Catholic one, i.e., he translates while keeping the audience in mind. On the other hand, Wahbeh is probably familiar with Christian sects; he translates the phrase depending on his religious understanding and knowledge.

The religious icons of the Virgin of Cobre (or the Virgin of Charity) and the Sacred Heart are transferred precisely by Ba'albaki in a comprehensibly clear attempt to ease referring to by the audiences of religions other than Catholic Christians. The images of the Virgin of Cobre, the patron saint of Cuba, and the Sacred Heart, a symbol of Christ's love for humanity, are still commonly found in the homes of Catholics today. As a Muslim, Wahbeh expects distant religious ideologies in the audience. Looking at the opposite side, the Wahbeh seems less cautious and less considerate to other ideologies' holders.

7—But I will say ten our Fathers and ten Hail Marys

B'albaki	Wahbeh
لكني خليق بأن اتلو «أبانا» والسلام عليك يا مريم /lakinni: ʔali:qun biʔan ʔatlu: ʔaba:na: wa ssala:mu ʕalajki: ja: marjam/	ولكنني أبتهل كثيرا إلى الله وإلى جميع القديسين والقديسات /walakinnani: ʔabtahilu kaθi:ran ʔila: ʔalla:hi wa ʔila: dzami:ʕi lqaddi:si:na walqaddi:sa:t/

In the source text, the protagonist expresses his willingness to praise God and Mary in order to catch the fish by saying: “I will say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys”. Al-

though the protagonist avoids mentioning the word “God”, Wahbeh chooses to include it. Wahbeh's back translation is “But I frequently pray to God and all male and female

saints”, using the word ‘God’ “الله” before “ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys” because, in Islam, God is the only one who has the power to answer prayers. Avoiding any reference to “الله”, the translator may appear as if he denies to role God in helping the protagonist in catching the fish. Wahbeh tends to generalise religious icons by referring to ‘Saints’. On the other hand, Ba’lbaki chooses to translate this prayer literally. Christians pray to Mary and Fathers to get what they want, so Ba’lbaki translates it in a way that Christians would understand and accept. Ba’albaki tends to translate the religious expressions uttered neutrally; he

keeps the religious icons in Chatholic Christianity - Our Father, Maryam, and Virgin of Cobre - as they appeared in the source text. He does not change the religion references embraced in the novel. Ba’lbaki seems more faithful to the source text as he possibly lacks knowledge about Christian utterances. To avoid misrepresenting the prayers and utterances, he translates them literally. Wahbeh, on the other hand, feels comfortable to manipulate the text due to his knowledge of Christianity. As a result, he omits and changes certain parts of the text to make it acceptable to Muslim audiences.

8—The Virgin of Cobre

Ba’lbaki	Wahbeh
عذراء كوبر	للعذراء
/ʕaðra:ʔ ku:bar/	

Here, Ba’lbaki adapts the borrowing method in order to translate this religious figure, the Virgin of Cobre as he fails to find an equivalent in Arabic. Wahbeh omits the word ‘Cobre’ as such a term may be odd or unacceptable to the target audience. Alternatively, to bridge this cultural gap, either of the translators could have included footnotes that explicate the significance of the Virgin of Cobre by explaining that these are typical sacred pictures found in any Catholic home in Cuba and that the Virgin of Cobre is a sacred figure worshipped particularly on this island. The examples provided here indicate that Wahbeh is committed to translating religious terms and utterances by conforming to target audiences’ religious ideology. Although Wahbeh is a Christian, he chooses to translate according to the norms of the reception environment, as Islam is the major religion across the Arab World. Consequently, he avoids translating certain Biblical references and books to their names in Arabic. He chooses alternative techniques and expressions, such as omitting passages and replacing some excerpts with well-known Islamic prayers. For example, he translates ‘Christ’ into “الله” instead of “المسيح”. On the other hand, Ba’lbaki seems more faithful to the source text; he does not omit any part from the source text and translates the novel fairly literally.

5. Discussion

Understanding the effect of the translator’s religious ideology on decision-making while translating a literary

text is key to having a clear idea about the possibility of steering the direction of religious symbols, utterances, and expressions in the original text. As Suzanne Levine^[42] argues, “[a] translation should be a critical act ... creating doubt, posing questions to the reader, recontextualising the ideology of the original text.” This can be determined by the translator whose task in this case is domesticating these religious elements to suit the taste and gain the acceptability of the aimed audience. The religious equivalents or alternatives decided by two translators belonging to different religious ideologies but aiming the same target audiences of Arabs of both religions, raises the urge to analyze their choices of the translations adopted. Both translators consciously used certain methods and techniques in order to convey the appropriate meaning for each respective audience, especially in their translation of religious utterances. On the one hand, Ba’lbaki used literal translation and was too faithful to the source text in some cases, which affected coherence. This is clear in many examples from his translation of the novel. Contrarily, he translated other utterances with influence from the Quran, as he translated “says his prayers” into “وشرع يتلو صلواته” according to his own ideology and religious background, as the translator is Muslim. However, this shift of translation is not repeated many times in his translation as he is translating for a Christian society.

On the other hand, Wahbeh was more affected by the mostly Muslim reception environment. In order to make the translated version fit the target audiences’ norms and

conventions, he chose to omit some parts while translating the religious Christian utterances from the source text. Many of these Christian utterances may be unknown to the Egyptian-Muslim environment. For example, in many cases, Wahbeh translated “Christ” as “الله” instead of “المسيح”. He also uses many Muslim utterances in place of the Christian utterances, such as translating “God help him” into “اللهم اعنهما”. Here, Wahbeh’s choice to replace Christian utterances with Islamic utterances results in a more successful translation for the intended audience than a literal translation of the phrase. The two translators utilized a methodology that focused on conveying the appropriate meaning to each target audience that would allow an easy grasp of the desired meaning from the ST.

Because both translators were translating for a reception environment whose religious ideologies differed from their own, it seems that there was little influence from the translators’ religious backgrounds on the translated versions. Apparently, all the shifts appropriate to the reception environment came as a result from conscious decisions. In order to meet the expectations of the respective environment, both translators made the necessary shifts. As Tymoczko^[7] notes, ideology resides not only in the text but in the translator’s stance and cultural positioning, which shape how the text is reframed for new audiences. This perspective helps explain why Wahbeh and Ba’lbaki diverge in their handling of prayers and invocations.

The study shows that translating literary works is different between each translator according to the target audience and by respecting their norms and way of thinking. The shifts that translators make produce more influential and successful texts by understanding the underlying message of these literary works. Schäffner^[8] similarly reminds us that ideology manifests across multiple textual levels, from lexical choice to discursive framing. This is evident in Wahbeh’s omissions of Christian-specific prayers versus Ba’lbaki’s literal retention of them.

Beyond identifying textual differences, this study contributes to the field of translation studies in three important ways. First, it extends existing discussions of ideology in translation, which have largely centered on political or cultural contexts^[10,11], by foregrounding the role of **religious ideology** as an equally decisive factor in shaping translators’ decisions. Second, methodologically, the comparative

analysis of two translations of the same text by translators of different religious affiliations provides a unique lens for isolating and examining the influence of religious background, an approach rarely employed in previous research. Third, the findings demonstrate that translation is not only a site of textual negotiation but also of **identity construction**: the translators’ choices directly affect how Arab audiences perceive the protagonist’s religious identity and, by extension, how interfaith narratives are circulated across cultural boundaries. In this way, the study advances our understanding of ideological translation by moving beyond description of shifts to an analysis of their broader cultural and religious implications.

The findings also feed into broader theoretical debates in Translation Studies. They illustrate Venuti’s^[6] argument that domestication and foreignization are not merely technical choices but ideological positions, here refracted through religious identity. Wahbeh’s domestication strategies, which align Santiago with Islamic invocational practices, reveal how translators negotiate textual authority by aligning with the dominant ideology of the reception environment. Ba’lbaki’s literalism, conversely, exemplifies a foreignizing stance that resists cultural assimilation but simultaneously restricts accessibility. These dynamics confirm Tymoczko’s^[7] claim that the translator’s “place of enunciation” inevitably shapes the ideological reframing of texts. By bringing religion into this discussion, our study nuances existing theoretical debates and shows that religious ideology can be as decisive as political or cultural ideology in guiding translation strategies.

The implications of these findings extend beyond textual differences. Wahbeh’s choices contribute to reshaping Santiago’s identity for a Muslim audience: by erasing overtly Christian prayers and substituting them with Islamic-like invocations, the protagonist is reframed less as a Christ figure and more as a universal or even culturally proximate one. This domestication strategy enhances accessibility but risks diminishing the novel’s Christian symbolism. Conversely, Ba’lbaki’s literal translations preserve the specificity of Catholic prayers, which strengthens the intertextual link between Santiago and Christ but may render the text more distant or foreign for Muslim audiences. These divergent strategies highlight the translator’s role as a cultural mediator who negotiates religious identity in ways that

inevitably affect reception. More broadly, the study underscores how translators' ideological positioning contributes to shaping cross-cultural understanding. By amplifying or muting religious references, translators influence how Arab audiences engage with Christian imagery, and, in turn, how intercultural and interfaith perceptions are formed through literature. Translation thus emerges not merely as linguistic transfer but as a site where ideology, religion, and cultural politics intersect.

6. Conclusion

When reading the Arabic translation of *The Old Man and the Sea*, it seemed as if it were the original version and that Wahbeh was the original author. The Arabic language is not only natural, but the translation was also coherent and included allusions to Arab culture and Islam. It is difficult to notice that this text is translated from English. The translator allowed this to be possible through replacing some utterances and omitting others, assuring that his voice as a translator was visible throughout the text. Wahbeh's application of some translation shifts throughout the text appeals more to the target audience, which mostly consists of Muslims. Wahbeh's choice to alter certain expressions makes the protagonist's utterances more familiar to the target audience; thus, more expectable. Clearly, the translator remained dedicated to the traditions of the majority of the target culture by including the name of God "الله" and other familiar Arabic sayings and dua'a (supplication) to convey the meaning without interruptive explication, such as footnotes or explanation in the prose. Consequently, the familiarity of these Arabic sayings and dua'a makes it easy to reach the target audience; the translator's voice does not disrupt the narrative's atmosphere.

On the other hand, reading Ba'lbaki's version of the novel obviously shows that he is consistent in his translation because he is addressing his translation to an open society in Lebanon, 36% of which is Christian. His religious background and Islamic religion do not affect his translation, as he keeps using Christian prayers and utterances throughout the novel. He does not follow Wahbeh's techniques like omitting and adding; he just translates the text, as it is, literally, to fit his audiences' expectations. It can be seen that both translators are slightly affected by their reli-

gious backgrounds and ideologies. However, they tend to make real shifts to meet the expectations of their audience, which, in fact, has led to loss of meaning in a few cases.

This study has shown that the religious ideologies of Gabrielle Wahbeh and Muneer Ba'lbaki shaped their Arabic translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* in distinct ways. Wahbeh's strategies of omission and domestication aligned the text more closely with Muslim-majority cultural norms, while Ba'lbaki's literal translations preserved the Christian specificity of the source text. These findings confirm that translation is not merely linguistic transfer but an ideological act that constructs and reconstructs identities across languages and cultures. Theoretically, the study extends existing work on translation and ideology [6,7,8,10] by foregrounding religious ideology as an underexplored dimension of analysis [38-40]. Whereas much previous scholarship has emphasized political or cultural discourses, this research demonstrates that religious affiliation can be equally decisive in shaping translators' choices and, consequently, audiences' engagement with translated texts.

Theoretically, then, this paper contributes to ongoing scholarly debates on ideology in translation by showing how religious identity functions as an interpretive lens comparable to political or cultural ideologies. It advances Bassnett and Andre's [10] notion of translation as rewriting by demonstrating that religious frameworks also drive the selective manipulation of texts. Moreover, it refines Venuti [6] discussion of visibility by illustrating that translators' religious positionality often dictates whether their voice is foregrounded through domestication or backgrounded through literal translation. Thus, the study not only fills a gap in research on religious ideology but also repositions religion as a crucial but understudied axis of ideological framing in translation.

At the same time, several limitations must be acknowledged. The study is restricted to a single literary work and two translators, which limits the generalizability of the findings. In addition, while the analysis has suggested potential effects on audience reception, it has not included empirical data from readers. Future research could therefore build on this study by conducting reception-oriented investigations with Arab Muslim and Christian audiences, by extending the analysis to other religiously laden texts, or by employing corpus-based approaches to track patterns of

ideological translation across larger datasets. Finally, while the present findings indicate that translators' ideological positions may shape how religious identities are presented, claims about actual audience reception remain provisional. Rather than assuming fixed reader responses, this study highlights the importance of future empirical work to assess how translations of religious symbolism are interpreted across communities. By reframing the analysis in this way, the study contributes not only to literary translation research but also to broader discussions about the role of ideology in mediating interfaith understanding and cultural representation.

Author Contributions

Z.A.A.S. has contributed in providing the data and argument related to the literary part. He has also contributed in writing the 'Ideology in Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*' and '*The Old Man and the Sea*: An Overview' sections; L.J.A. has contributed in writing the 'Methodology', 'Analytical Framework' and 'References' sections; S.A. has contributed in writing the 'Analysis and Results' section; M.N.A.S. has contributed in writing the 'Discussion' section. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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