

Intertextuality and Quranic Terms in Translated Literature: The Case of Saleh Hosseini's Works

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Abstract

In the domain of Persian literature, the Holy Qur'an has consistently played an influential subtextual role in shaping the formal and semantic aesthetics of literary works. The present study, aiming to analyze intertextual relations, investigates Saleh Hosseini's utilization of Quranic terms and concepts in his translations of English literary works. To this end, based on Kristeva's (1966) theory of intertextuality and Genette's (1982) taxonomy, selected examples from seven translated works were analyzed. Following the examination and analysis of the data, a comprehensive interview with the translator was conducted to triangulate the findings. The results indicate that the translator employed two main strategies—explicit intertextuality (direct use of Quranic terms and verses) and paratextuality (using footnotes and appendices)—to create complex references in translations. This approach, while maintaining fidelity to the source semantic networks, reconstructed the text within the cultural context of the target language, providing a multilayered and polyvocal experience for the target readers. In light of the analysis of the collected textual data and the translator's responses in the interview, it can be concluded that literary translation, far beyond the mere transfer of words, is a creative, interpretive, and intertextual process that facilitates deep cultural and discursive interaction among various texts.

Keywords: The Qur'an, intertextuality, literary translation, Kristeva, Genette

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Introduction

The Holy Qur'an has long been one of the most significant subtexts of Persian literature, serving as a constant source of inspiration for numerous poets and writers. The utilization of Quranic verses and concepts has not only enriched the semantic and aesthetic quality of these works but also signifies the inextricable link between literature and religious and cultural discourses. Examining how these elements are reflected in the translation of literary works is a fundamental question in Translation Studies.

To elucidate this matter, we need to first address the concept of intertextuality, a pivotal notion in 20th-century literary criticism. The origin of this term can be traced back to Bakhtin, who—prior to Kristeva—emphasized concepts such as dialogisme and polyphonie within a text, considering the novel an arena for the simultaneous presence of various voices and styles (Samoyault, 2005, p. 11). Drawing inspiration from Bakhtin's perspectives, Kristeva (1966) coined the term “intertextuality”, arguing that no text is independent; rather, it is always formed in connection with prior texts and existing discourses (Allen, 2011).

This concept also featured prominently in Barthes' (1968) famous essay, *The Death of the Author*. By emphasizing the active role of the reader, Barthes demonstrated that the meaning and interpretation of a text are only formed through the reader's encounter with it. He stated that every text is a fabric woven from various quotations, references, and cultural echoes—both from the past and the present—extensively embedded within it. He believed that the text is part of a network of other texts and should not be mistaken for its primary source. Consequently, the attempt to find the “original source” is, in fact, a form of falling into the erroneous belief of the work's genealogy, as many quotations are unidentified or untraceable, and their role gains significance only in interaction with the text and the reader (Allen, 2011, p. 67).

In this context, Genette (1982), expanding upon Kristeva's views, classified all forms of relationship between a text and the other texts with which it interacts under the title of transtextuality, dividing it into five categories, of which intertextuality is only one. The other four branches are: paratextuality, architextuality, metatextuality, and hypertextuality, each including its own specific sub-categories (Namvar Motlagh, 2007a, p. 83). According to Genette (1997a), textual transcendence refers to what he broadly characterizes as “all that sets the text in a relationship, whether obvious or concealed, with other texts” (p. 1). He introduces *transtextuality* as his own adaptation of a concept that many other scholars generally describe as intertextuality. Within this framework, Genette (1997a) narrows the notion of intertextuality itself, defining it as “a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts ... the actual presence of one text within another” (pp. 1–2).

Barthes (1974) also explicitly emphasizes that every text is intertextual in nature and goes on to say that “they are so many fragments of something that has always been already read, done, experienced” (p. 20). This perspective clarifies the boundary between Kristeva's concept of intertextuality and Genette's notion of transtextuality, as Genette is clearly seeking to identify the relationships of influence and reception between texts, and in the branch of hypertextuality, this interaction between two or more texts is the fundamental focus of his analysis (Namvar Motlagh, 2007a, pp. 85–86).

Furthermore, Abrams (1993, p. 285) defines intertextuality as the set of ways through which a literary text establishes an inextricable link with other texts. According to Magendaz (2006, p. 161), this combination and co-occurrence of texts only gains meaning in the reader's mind. If the reader cannot correctly identify and analyze the connection between texts, their interpretation will be incomplete and sometimes erroneous. Given the complex and multi-layered nature of literary works, the translator's role holds a subtlety equal to that of the author. As Farahzad (2009, p. 127) states, translation is an “intertextual practice” that connects source text and target text. Just as the author

consciously employs intertextual elements, the translator needs to act with the same level of awareness and, by choosing appropriate strategies, convey the experience of encountering intertextual elements to the target language readers (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 15).

Religious intertextual elements hold a special position in this regard. In addition to their cultural and religious load, they are accompanied by deep semantic layers, and their transfer to another language requires great precision and creativity. Examining translators' strategies in dealing with such elements can reveal new dimensions of the challenges and achievements of literary translation. The present study seeks to answer the following questions: First, what instances of Quranic intertextual elements are present in the translations? Second, what strategies has the translator employed to integrate intertextual references into the translations?

Literature Review

Intertextuality has consistently been a central topic in Translation Studies, religious texts, and literature. Federici (2007) views the translator as a cultural intermediary whose "intertextual baggage", influenced by their identity and cultural background, affects the translation process. Similarly, Alawi (2010), in a study on translation between Arabic and English, emphasizes the importance of practical knowledge and intertextual awareness in translation training, demonstrating that proficiency in translation is the result of practice and the recognition of textual relationships.

Regarding the Holy Qur'an, Ebrahimi and Dastranj (2019), using an analytical-descriptive approach, examined the concept of «اغواء» "Ighwā'" through the intertextual and conceptual relationships of the words. By analyzing collocations such as «ربّ» "Rabb" (Lord) and «اغواء» "Ighwā'" and emphasizing the two narrative axes of Iblis (satan) and the offenders' apology, they conclude that this word expresses the absolute sovereignty of God and the meaning of falling from the path of spiritual growth.

In another case related to Quranic intertextuality and literature, Ahmadi et al. (2019) investigated the extent of the Qur'an's influence on the poems of Ali ibn Isa al-Irbili and showed that the poet drew inspiration from the Holy Qur'an at various linguistic and conceptual levels. Furthermore, Pirak (2022), based on the theory of intertextuality and a descriptive-analytical method, analyzed the influence of the Holy Qur'an on the poems of Nusrat Rahman at three levels: lexical, compound, and thematic. Furthermore, Sarbaz et al. (2023), in their analysis of Kilani's novel *Amaliqat al-Shamal*, demonstrated the author's use of verses and Islamic narratives to enhance the artistic and intellectual aspects of the work.

In the domain of the Bible and literature, García Raffi and García Raffi (2024) examined the presence and structural, rhetorical, and conceptual roles of the Bible in De Pol's novels. Their research findings indicate that these works, though lacking religious intent, are heavily influenced by the Bible in their literary formation.

Overall, the aforementioned studies have primarily focused on the direct influence of sacred texts (such as the Qur'an and the Bible) on literary works created in the source language. While these studies lay the groundwork for understanding subtextual relationships, they fall short in addressing the active role of the translator in intertextual processes. The main research gap in this field is the lack of tri-textual analyses (three texts that are intertextually connected) —where the translator encounters references to the Bible in an English text and must adapt and re-textualize it within the target culture's context with the Quranic subtext. The current study aims to address this gap by focusing on Hosseini's use of Quranic concepts in the translation of English works into Persian. This research emphasizes the translator's interpretive role, viewing the translation process not as a mere lexical transfer but as an active intertextual recreation and the synchronization of the religious discourses of the source and target, thereby generating a distinctive analytical value in Translation Studies.

Theoretical Framework

The present study examines the translator's use of Quranic elements in literary translations, relying on Kristeva's (1966) theory of intertextuality and Genette's (1982) taxonomy as its theoretical foundation for identifying and analyzing textual relations within literary works and their translations. Kristeva (1966) argues that every text is the product of dialogue with other texts and a system of prior cultural references. Expanding on this concept, Genette (1982) classifies all cross-textual relations into five categories: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality, and architextuality. Among these, intertextuality—defined as the direct or indirect presence of one text within another—forms the analytical core of the present research (Namvar Motlagh, 2011 b, pp. 58–59). Moreover, Genette's (1997b) second type of transtextuality is styled paratextuality. The paratext, as Genette explains, marks those elements which lie on the threshold of the text and which help to direct and control the reception of a text by its readers. This threshold consists of a peritext, consisting of elements such as titles, chapter titles, prefaces and notes (Genette, 1997b).

Within this focused intertextual approach, the analysis identifies two major forms of textual presence: (1) intertextuality (explicit inclusion), such as quotations, recognizable allusions, and direct references to earlier texts; and (2) paratextuality, in which thresholds surrounding the text— explanatory notes, prefaces, or marginalia—guide the activation of intertextual relations and shape interpretive pathways. Therefore, drawing upon these intertextual frameworks, the study provides a precise and operational method for examining how the translator employs intertextual references, how they preserve, modify, and how such choices affect the literary and cultural resonance of the translated text.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach. Data were collected through library-based research and consisted of seven original English literary works, their Persian translations, and the Holy Qur'an as the primary intertextual reference. Sampling was conducted purposively, and only instances containing salient markers of Quranic intertextuality were selected for analysis. From each literary work, five chapters were examined, yielding a range of potential samples. From these, only the most representative and analytically significant cases were selected.

Each selected sample was analyzed at three levels: (1) the source text, (2) the target (translated) text, and (3) the corresponding Quranic or religious intertextual reference. In addition, the findings of the textual analysis were triangulated with data obtained from a semi-structured interview with the translator. The results from both sources were then systematically compared and interpreted in relation to one another.

The corpus of the study includes seven English literary works and their Persian translations by Hosseini (see Table 1). These works were selected as suitable samples for examining the translator's role in the intertextual domain due to their rich religious intertextual elements.

Table 1. English Novels and Persian Translations

Specifications of English Novels			Specifications of Persian Novels		
Title	Author	Date	Title	Translator	Date
<i>The Last Temptation of Christ</i>	Kazantzakis	1955	آخرین وسوسه مسیح	Hosseini	1360
<i>Lord Jim</i>	Conrad	1900	لرد جیم	Hosseini	1375
<i>Report to Greco</i>	Kazantzakis	1961	گزارش به خاک یونان	Hosseini	1387
<i>The Great Code: The Bible and Literature</i>	Frye	1990	رمز کل: کتاب مقدس و ادبیات	Hosseini	1388
<i>The Sound and the Fury</i>	Faulkner	1929	خشم و هیاهو	Hosseini	1390
<i>Moby Dick</i>	Melville	1851	موبی دیک یا نهنگ بحر	Hosseini	1401
<i>Short Novels</i>	Melville	1854	سه داستان	Hosseini	1401

Findings

In the analysis of Hosseini's translations, numerous instances of the conscious application of Quranic intertextuality were found, some of which are analyzed below.

A. Analysis of Explicit Quranic Intertextuality in Translations

Seven instances of explicit Quranic intertextuality are presented in Table 2 and discussed below.

Table 2. Examples of Explicit Quranic Intertextual Elements

No.	Source Texts	Translations	Intertextual References
1	Natural Depravity: A depravity according to nature! (<i>Billy Bad</i> , p. 143).	فطرت فاجره: فجور مطابق با فطرت (بیلی باد بحری، ص. ۲۰۷).	Sura Ash-Shams (91), verse 8: فَاللَّهُمَّهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا
2	Spokesman (<i>Billy Bad</i> , p. 180)	نگاهی آنچنان که گویی نگاه گوینده فرزندان غیور (رشکین) یعقوب بوده باشد (بیلی باد بحری، ص. ۲۳۱).	Sura Yusuf (12), verse 10: قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ ...
3	Magan est Veritus et Praevalebit (<i>Lord Jim</i> , p. 191)	جمله‌ای از «کتاب مقدس»، که برگردان دقیق آن - با توجه به حدیث نبوی می‌شود: الحق یعلو و لا یعلی علیه (لرد جیم، ص. ۱۸۹).	Prophetic Hadith (Use of Hadith as a cultural-religious subtext).
4	Transcendent God (<i>The Great Code: The Bible and Literature</i> , p. 25).	خدای تعالی (رمز کل: کتاب مقدس و ادبیات، ص. ۳۹).	Frequent Quranic and Islamic vocabulary: تعالی
5	Tempter (<i>The Last Temptation of Christ</i> , p. 45).	خناس (آخرین وسوسه مسیح، ص. ۶۶).	Sura An-Nas (114), verse 4: مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ
6	It smells like the left wing of the day of judgment; it is an argument for the pit (<i>Moby Dick</i> , p. 404).	بوی آن مانند بویی است که در روز قیامت از اصحاب یسار شنیده می‌شود. این بو حتی است مبنی بر وجود هاویه (موبی دیک، ص. ۵۵۳).	Sura Al-Qari'ah (101), verse 9: فَأَمَّهُ هَٰوِيَةٌ
7	Son of darkness (<i>Moby Dick</i> , p. 101).	این ظلمت (موبی دیک، ص. ۱۴۷).	The concept of the contrast between Light and Darkness in the Qur'an (e.g., Sura An-Nur (24), verse 35)

As Kristeva (1966) asserts, no text is produced in isolation; rather, it is always formed in relation and dialogue with other texts. This statement is doubly important in translation, as the translator is not

merely a conveyer of meaning but, through their linguistic and cultural choices, recreates the text within a new network of intertextual relationships. Genette (1982), with his concept of “transtextuality” and specifically “intertextuality”, also shows that the actual presence of previous texts in the new text—whether as an overt quotation or a lexical substitution—can create a new meaning (as cited in Namvar-Motlagh, 2007a). This view aligns well with Hosseini’s approach to translation.

In response to the question of why the translator utilizes Quranic terms in the translation, he states: “many English novels, at their core, are close to Quranic themes ... That is why I sometimes draw upon the language and context of the Qur’an so that the Persian-speaking reader can better connect with the spirit of the work”. He further adds, “the art of the translator lies in being able to use expressions and compounds derived from other influential texts”.

To substantiate this claim one can refer to the translation of *Moby Dick*, where the translator uses the Quranic term هاويه (Hawiyah) for the English term (pit) (example 7). In the original text, this word carries a semantic load limited to the Biblical image of the place of sinners on the Day of Judgment. In the interview, the translator emphasizes the importance of mastery over the target language and culture, stating, “one of the fundamental principles of translation is familiarity with the target language and culture and complete skill in its application”. This skill is evident in the choice of هاويه, as Hosseini has not only conveyed the meaning of the original text but has also situated it within the Islamic theological system. In the footnote, he asserts, “according to the Gospel of Matthew (Chapter 15), on the Day of Judgment, those condemned to the fire of hell stand on the left side of God, contrary to the people of Paradise who stand on the right side and are, in Quranic terminology, the companions of the right” (Hosseini, 2022, p. 553).

Here, the translator has not only translated the Biblical narrative into Persian but has also enriched it with verses from the Qur’an. This example clearly shows that Hosseini sought not merely an equivalent-seeking translation but adapted the text to the Quranic semantic system. According to Kristeva’s theory, this is a reflection of the co-existence of discourses, as the Christian narrative engages with the Quranic narrative in a single text, creating a polyvocal meaning.

Another example is found in the same translation (Example 8). In the original text, the phrase “Son of darkness” could have had a simple and neutral translation, but the translator rendered it as ابن ظلمت (Ibn Zulmat). This choice, while closer to the Arabic and Quranic linguistic tradition, also evokes the conceptual load of the Quranic contrast between “Light” نور and “Darkness” ظلمت. From Genette’s (1982) perspective, this choice is a type of explicit linguistic intertextuality that directly refers to Quranic vocabulary. At the same time, based on Kristeva’s view (1966), such a choice shows that the translation is formed as a network of references, and even the simplest words carry a broad cultural-religious load.

Similar examples are also evident in the translation of *Billy Budd*. For instance, the word (Spokesman), which seemingly has a general meaning, is translated as گوینده (Guwaindeh) by invoking the Qur’an (Example 2). This is exactly what Hosseini emphasizes in the interview: “Familiarity with the subject of the original text is essential for successful translation.” He is familiar with the original text, the target text, and the sacred texts of both languages, and this familiarity makes it possible to construct intertextual equivalents. In explaining the choice of this equivalent in a footnote, he states: “The original text uses ‘spokesman’. But by considering the story of Joseph narrated in the Qur’an, قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ لَا تَقْتُلُوا يُوسُفَ وَأَلْقُوهُ فِي غَيَابَتِ الْجُبِّ يَلْتَقِطُهُ بَعْضُ السَّيَّارَةِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَاعِلِينَ (Yusuf/10)—‘A spokesman from among them said, “Do not kill Joseph, but drop him into the bottom of the well; he may be picked up by some travelers, if you are going to do so”—I have chosen the term گوینده (Hosseini, 2022, p. 231).

In the translation of this book, Hosseini was not only looking for an equivalent for “spokesman” but also linked its narrative to the story of Joseph. Also in the same translation, the term فطرت فاجره (Fitrat-e Fājirah) is adopted instead of (Natural Depravity) (Example 1). Instead of the common translation of “corruption” or “depravity”, the translator chose the word فجور (Fujur) from the verse فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا (A-Shams/8), and created a new compound called فطرت فاجره. He adds in the footnote:

Instead of *depravity*, the contemporary Farhang-e Hezareh dictionary gives “corruption”, but “corruption” is not entirely adequate for the purpose. This word is a theological term and, in light of the Protestant belief, refers to the inherent or innate corruption that has become intertwined with human existence due to “Original Sin” (Adam and Eve’s sin for disobeying God and eating the forbidden fruit). Further proof for this argument could be this beautiful poem by Hafiz: «از دل تنگ گنهکار برآرم آهی / کآتش اندر گنه آدم و حوا فکنم»، “From my soul, cramped and sinful, I will raise a sigh / That shall set fire to the sin of Adam and Eve”. In any case, considering this verse: وَ نَفْسِي وَ مَا سَوَّاهَا فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَ تَقْوَاهَا: (By the soul and how He formed it and inspired it with its wickedness and its piety)—{فجور}— was chosen instead of *depravity*. Furthermore, فطرت فاجره is a transposition of فجور فطری (*Fajr-e Fitri*) (Hosseini, 2022, p. 207).

This choice is a clear example of explicit intertextuality that is not only based on the sacred text but is also creatively restructured. In this context, Kristeva (1984, p. 60) says:

We shall call transposition the signifying process’ ability to pass from one sign system to another, to exchange and permute them; and representability of the specific articulation of the semiotic and thethetic for a sign system. Transposition plays an essential role here inasmuch as it implies the abandonment of a former sign system, the passage to a second via an instinctual intermediary common to the two systems, and the articulation of the new system with its new representability.

In Kristeva’s (1966) view, this restructuring indicates the text’s interaction with several layers of meaning: Christian theology of Original Sin, the Quranic tradition of *fujur* and *taqwa*, and even the poetry of Hafiz, to which the translator has referred. Thus, the translation becomes a polyvocal text in which various discourses are intertwined.

Another example is also evident in the translation of *Lord Jim*. In this novel, the Latin phrase “Magan est Veritus et Praevalebit” has its roots in the Christian tradition. The translator replaced this phrase with the Prophetic Hadith الحق يعلو ولا يعلى عليه (The truth prevails and nothing prevails over it) (Example 3). This choice once again shows that Hosseini does not regard translation as a means to merely convey the meaning of words, but rather as a means to strengthen the intertextual links between sacred texts.

In the translation of *The Last Temptation of Christ*, there is also an illustrative example. The word “Tempter” which means “one who tempts”, is replaced with the Quranic term خنّاس (Khannās) (Example 5). Regarding this, the translator adds in the footnote: خنّاس means “Tempter” ‘Satanic whispers’. But since it began with a capital letter, I preferred to use this Quranic term—خنّاس (Hosseini, 1981, p. 66). This choice clearly refers to a verse from Sura An-Nas: مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ: (An-Nas/4). Such an approach indicates that the translator seeks to link the religious-Islamic load with the translation and thereby localize it for the Persian-speaking audience.

In *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*, the selection of the phrase {خدای تعالی} (Khodāy-e Ta’ālā - The Exalted God) for (Transcendent God) is a perfect example of a Quranic reference (Example 4). The choice of the word {تعالی} (*Ta’ālā* - Exalted) is clearly reminiscent of Quranic usages, and thus the Western text is re-read within an Islamic framework. As Hosseini mentions in the interview, “Literary taste and talent are necessities.” This choice reveals that, relying on his taste and religious-literary knowledge, the translator transforms translation into an arena of cultural interaction. The importance

of this method is that the translated text becomes part of the ongoing dialogue between religions and traditions, and its meaning is redefined in the cultural context of the target audience.

The analysis of the collected examples shows that Hosseini is not only a translator familiar with the source and target languages but also has a deep understanding of cultural and religious layers and views translation as a creative act. This approach results in English literary works being restructured within an Islamic context and becoming more familiar and understandable to the Persian-speaking audience. His translations, according to the theories of Kristeva and Genette, are a prominent example of polyvocal and explicit intertextuality: Old Testament narratives, Quranic verses, Christian tradition, classical Persian literature, and the original English text intermingle and create new meanings.

In other words, Hosseini's translations are not merely representations of the original texts, but rather recreations that place Western literary texts within a network of intertextual relationships with the Qur'an. This recreation both makes the transfer of meaning possible and turns translation into an arena for cultural interaction. Thus, the translator plays the role of a cultural intermediary and, through the use of explicit intertextuality, reproduces the texts within the cultural-religious context of the target audience.

Analysis of Paratextual Quranic Intertextuality in Translations

Seven instances of paratextual Quranic intertextuality are presented in Table 3 and discussed below.

Table 3. Examples of Paratextuality

No.	Source Text	Translation	Intertextual Reference
1	Mammom (<i>Report to Greco</i> , p. 350)	ممونا (گزارش به خاک یونان، ص. ۴۱۳)	Sura Al-Qasas (28), verses 76 to 82: إِنَّ قَارُونَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوسَى فَبَغَى عَلَيْهِمْ
2	Golden Calf (<i>Report to Greco</i> , p. 220)	گوساله طلایی (گزارش به خاک یونان، ص. ۲۸۵)	Sura Taha (20), verses 85 to 98: فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَهُ خُورٌ فَقَالُوا هَذَا إِلَهُكُمْ وَإِلَهُ مُوسَى
3	Benjamin the child of mine old age held hostage into Egypt (<i>The Sound and the Fury</i> , p. 155)	بنجامین فرزند روزگار پیری‌ام که در مصر به گروگان گرفتندش (خشم و هیاهو، ص. ۱۹۶)	Sura Yusuf (12), verse 80: قَالَ كَبِيرُهُمْ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ آبَاءَكُمْ قَدْ أَخَذَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِيثَاقًا مِنَ اللَّهِ
4	When the word of the Lord came a second time; and Jonah, bruised and beaten-his ears, like two sea-shells, still multitudinously murmuring of the ocean-Jonah did the Almighty's bidding (<i>Moby Dick</i> , p. 65)	هنگامی که کلام خدا بار دوم بر یونس نازل می‌شود و یونس، زخمی و کوفته - گوش‌هایش مانند دو صدف، که زمزمه اقیانوس از همه سو از آنها برمی‌آید - فرمان خدای عزوجل را به‌جای می‌آورد (موبی دیک، ص. ۹۷)	Sura Al-Anbiya (21), verse 87: فَنَادَى فِي الظُّلُمَاتِ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنْتَ سُبْحَانَكَ إِنِّي كُنْتُ مِنَ الظَّالِمِينَ
5	Ahikar has left his mark on at least the Apocrypha (Tobit is said to be Ahikar's uncle); on Greek literature, where he is identified with Aesop; and on the Koran (Sura 10), which as a rule has even less interest in secular literature than other sacred books. (<i>The Great Code: The Bible and Literature</i> , p. 123)	نقش تأثیر اخیقار دست‌کم در اسفار مجعول پیداست (گفته‌اند که تو بیت عمومی اخیقار بوده است)؛ و همین‌طور در ادبیات یونان که در آنجا با ازوپ هم‌تا می‌شود؛ و همین‌طور هم در قرآن (سوره دهم) که در آن علی‌القاعده علاقه به ادبیات ملکی بسی کمتر از دیگر کتب مقدس است (رمز کل: کتاب مقدس و ادبیات، ص. ۱۷۸)	Sura An-Naml (27), verse 40: قَالَ الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ

6	... Like pious Solomon devoutly worshipping among his thousand concubines (<i>Moby Dick</i> , p. 378)	... همچون سلیمان شاه که در میان زنان متعه دوکروری اش خاضعانه به درگاه احدیت نیایش می کند (موبی دیک، ص. ۵۱۶)	Sura Al-Baqarah (2), verse 102: وَمَا كَفَرَ سُلَيْمَانُ وَلَكِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ كَفَرُوا يُعَلِّمُونَ النَّاسَ السِّحْرَ
7	... He is condemned to the pots, and, like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, his sperm, oil, and bone pass unscathed through fire (<i>Moby Dick</i> , p. 408)	... محکوم شدنش به دیگ های مسی و، همچون شدرک و میشک و عبدنفو، گذر روپینه اسپرماستی و روغن و استخوانش از میان آتش را (موبی دیک، ص. ۵۵۹)	Sura Al-Baqarah (2), verse 102: قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ

In Hosseini's literary translations, numerous examples of the use of paratextuality can be observed, indicating his interpretive and allusive approach when confronting intertextual texts. *Report to Greco* is a revealing example for examining religious intertextual elements. In the source text, the term "Mammōn" is rooted in the Christian tradition and is presented as a symbol of wealth (Example 1 in Table 3). The translator, with cultural precision, links it to the concept of "Qarun" in the Qur'an and explains in the footnote: "Mammōn (a Syriac word) means wealth. In the Gospel of Matthew, it is said that one cannot serve both God and Mammōn. Mammōn is the symbol of gold. Perhaps it can be said that in the Qur'an, Qarun is mentioned with this same meaning" (Hosseini, 1387, p. 413). This choice is not merely lexical but a type of interpretation that allows the Persian reader to re-read the text through a Quranic lens. Such an approach demonstrates that the translator, instead of simply reproducing Christian connotations, attempts to find an intertextual equivalent in Islamic culture that conveys a similar semantic load.

In the same book, the reference to the "Golden Calf" is also significant (Example 2 in Table 3). In the Biblical tradition, this symbol refers to the Israelites' worship of a golden calf, but the translator aligns it with the "Samiri's Calf" in the Qur'an through the footnote: "The Golden Calf is the same as what is called the Samiri's Calf in Islamic culture" (Hosseini, 1387, p. 285). This subtle note is an example of paratextuality. The difference between this type of alignment and explicit intertextuality is that the target text does not overtly mention the source, but only provides a context so that the audience can recognize the reference. This approach aligns exactly with what Hosseini explains in the interview: "My intention is not to religionize the text; rather, it is to convey its profound meaning". Thus, the translation becomes not only a bridge between two languages but between two different religious and cultural systems.

Another example of this approach can be seen in the translation of Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (Example 3 in Table 3). In this novel, the character of Benjamin is introduced as the "child who was held hostage into Egypt". The translator clarifies in the footnote: "According to the Bible, the person held hostage in Egypt is Simeon" (Hosseini, 1390, p. 196). The translator, faithful to the source text, has tried to bring this difference to the readers' attention and provided a context for the audience to grasp the implicit nature of this reference. This approach indicates that the translator consciously distinguishes between the author's narratives and the Bible and aims to make the reader aware of the textual differences. From Genette's (1982) perspective, such an approach is a clear example of paratextuality because the Biblical reference is not overtly reflected but is only revealed through the translator's comparison and annotation.

Additionally, in the translation of *Moby Dick*, there are also notable examples of paratextuality. In this novel, Prophet Solomon is mentioned devoutly worshipping among his thousand concubines (Example 7 in Table 3). This image is rooted in the Old Testament, but the translator, by including a Quranic explanation in the footnote, emphasizes that according to the explicit text of the Qur'an, Prophet Solomon is free from such slanders or accusations:

It is mentioned in the Old Testament that Prophet Solomon had more than a thousand concubines. It is necessary to recall that in the Bible, both Prophet David and Prophet Solomon are considered kings of the Jewish people, and therefore such accusations are not unexpected. But we Muslims, according to the explicit text of the Qur'an, especially Surah An-Nisa, verse 163—"indeed, We have revealed to you as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him. And We revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the Descendants, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the book [of Psalms]"—consider them true Prophets, and based on this, we hold Prophet Solomon to be free from these slanders or accusations. (Hosseini, 1401, p. 516)

The translator, while accepting the existence of the Biblical narrative, simultaneously aligns it with the Quranic reading and, through this alignment, constructs new semantic boundaries for the target text. The Persian reader, who is familiar with Islamic texts, realizes through these explanations that Biblical narratives always require re-reading in light of the Qur'an. This work shows that the translator's role in confronting implicit intertextuality is not merely informative, but also includes interpretive and textual correction based on the target audience's intellectual and religious system. In other words, this reminder is a clear instance of "enlightenment"—something Hosseini considers the "translator's task" in the interview: "Enlightenment". Here, the translator neither changes the text nor explicitly quotes the source; rather, with a footnote, he reminds the audience the difference in sacred narratives.

In the same novel, the story of Jonah is recreated with an indirect reference to his suffering, wounds, and God's repeated command, a matter addressed in both the Old Testament and the Holy Qur'an (Example 4 in Table 3). The author implicitly uses the narrative of the sacred texts, and the translator, in a footnote links it to verses from Surah Al-Anbiya and Surah Al-Saffat, allowing the Persian reader a better understanding of the intertextual layers (Hosseini, 1401, pp. 97-98).

Elsewhere in the same work (Example 7 in Table 3), the translator expands the text's semantic layers by placing the narrative of the Three Hebrew Youths alongside the stories of Siyāvosh and Prophet Abraham {قُلْنَا يَا نَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ} (Al-Anbiya/69). This action transforms the translation into a cultural act in which the source text is linked through translation to Siyāvosh in Iranian myths and Prophet Abraham in the Qur'an. This amalgamation demonstrates the translator's deep understanding of the intertextual nature of literature, as it transcends the source text from its cultural limitations and reproduces it in a multi-layered context. The translator's explanation is quoted below:

These three—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—are the three youths who, for defying Nebuchadnezzar's command to worship and prostrate themselves before the golden idol, are thrown into a blazing furnace, but the fire does not harm them (Book of Daniel, Chapter 3). In ancient Iranian tradition, it was also believed that fire does not harm the pure. An example is Siyāvosh's passage through fire and his safe emergence. And certainly, in the Holy Qur'an, the fire becoming a garden for Prophet Abraham. (Hosseini, 1401, p. 559)

Additionally, in *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*, there is a reference to the character of Ahikar, who appears in Greek literature, and the author of the work has attributed it to the Qur'an (Example 6 in Table 3). The translator expresses his doubt in the footnote and suggests that the author's intention might have been Asaf ibn Barkhiya or Luqman: "It is unknown what the author's source of information was, as such a thing is not found in the Qur'an. Perhaps the intention was Asaf ibn Barkhiya; and perhaps Luqman" (Hosseini, 1388, p. 177). This interpretive task demonstrates that the translator is not merely a conveyer of the text but is a commentator who tries to clarify intertextual ambiguities. This explanation helps the audience recognize the implicit reference, even if the primary source is not accurately mentioned in the text.

Elsewhere in the same book, we read (*burning bush*), which refers to the Biblical narrative of God revealing Himself to Moses from within a burning bush (Example 5 in Table 3). This reference remains allusive and at the level of implicit intertextuality in the source text. The translator expands this reference in a footnote (Hosseini, 1388, p. 165), linking it to three reference texts: first to the Qur'an (*Shajar Akhḍar* - Green Tree in Surah Al-Qasas, verses 30–31), then to Hafez: "The Fire of Moses" — «بیا» «که آتش موسی نمود گل» (come, for the Fire of Moses manifested as a rose), and finally to Mollana (Rumi): "The Burning Tree" — «چون کلیم حق بشد سوی درخت آتشین» since Moses, the possessor of truth, went towards the burning tree. Such an approach is a clear instance of paratextuality; the source text only has a brief allusion, but the translator, by adding Quranic and mystical layers, establishes it in a new culture. This choice is directly aligned with the translator's statement in the interview: "My intention in using the language of the Qur'an is not to religionize the text; rather, it is to convey its profound meaning". Thus, the translator not only clarifies the Biblical reference for the Persian reader but also links it to a broader network of sacred and mystical texts. He broadens the semantic field of the initial allusion by adding Quranic and mystical layers, allowing the audience to recognize this reference within their cultural and religious context.

The significance of this approach lies in the translator's simultaneous adherence to two principles: first, fidelity to the source text and the transfer of its intertextual layers, and second, fidelity to the target culture by providing familiar Quranic references for the Iranian audience. This amalgamation elevates translation beyond mere linguistic reproduction and transforms it into a cultural interpretation. In other words, intertextual references in Hosseini's translations establish a "dialogue of texts"—a dialogue in which the Bible, the Qur'an, Iranian myths, and Persian literature are placed alongside each other, creating new meaning.

Discussion and Conclusion

Literary translation, especially in texts with a high cultural and religious load, is a process that transcends the mere transfer of words and assumes an interpretive, creative, and cross-cultural nature. In literary works, authors often grant new depth and semantic richness to their texts by directly or indirectly referencing sacred texts or past literary works. These references—whether explicit or implicit—make the understanding of the work challenging. The target language audience may lack the necessary knowledge to decode these references; therefore, the translator needs to play an active and creative role, acting as a cultural mediator to facilitate the complete understanding and experience of the text for the reader. The examination of Hosseini's translations, along with the analysis of the interview conducted with him, indicates that in such texts, the translator is a cultural mediator and interpreter of meaning. Hosseini himself asserts that the "translator's task is enlightenment" and that a translator should only choose works that add something to the "human soul". This ethics-driven perspective has made translation, in his view, an interpretive and meaning-creating act, not a mechanical reflection of the source text's structure and vocabulary. He believes that preserving the author's style means conveying the "intent" in the form of the target language, not transferring the structures of a foreign language into the target language.

The analysis of Hosseini's translations shows that the Qur'an and Persian literature are two essential intertextual sources in his works; sources that stem from his long-standing familiarity with them. As he states in the interview, "he has been reading the Qur'an since adolescence and has also memorized masterpieces such as *Golestan* and the *Divan of Hafez*". This literary-religious memory plays an active role in his translations, enabling him to make the implicit layers of the source text more tangible for the Persian reader. Many of the novels Hosseini has translated are rich in spiritual inquiry, ethical concerns, and Biblical references. Hosseini maintains that this semantic world cannot be adequately

conveyed without drawing on sources familiar to the Persian-speaking audience; therefore, the Qur'an and Persian poetry function as creative tools through which he seeks to clarify and render the text's meaning. In his translations, intertextuality occurs at both the intertextual and paratextual levels. At the intertextual level, he often chooses equivalents that create a clear link between the religious terminology of the English text and the Persian religious tradition. The phrase "Faṭrat-e Fājereh" in *Moby Dick* serves as a scintillating example of this point. At the paratextual level, he uses Quranic imagery and allusions as well as Hafez and Mawlana to explain the hidden layers of the text; such as the translation of the "burning bush", where the image of the burning bush from the Qur'an, alongside the mystical allusions of Persian literature, creates a new network of meaning in the target language through footnote. In the translation of *Moby Dick*, numerous examples of this type of intertextuality can be observed. For instance, the following text "... as the eager Israelites did at the new bursting fountains that poured from the smitten" (p. 318), refers to the story of Moses and the springs of water in the desert, the translator harmonizes the Old Testament narrative with verse 60 of Sura Al-Baqarah. In the footnote, the translator writes: "regarding this, the Qur'an says: "and when Moses sought water, We told him to strike the stone with his staff {فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ} whereupon twelve springs gushed forth from it ..." (Hosseini, 2022, p. 436).

The results derived from the interview indicate that such uses of the Qur'an and Persian literature are neither artificial nor arbitrary; rather, they are part of the translator's interpretive task. Hosseini believes that many of the English novels he translates are "about the soul and spirituality of human beings", and the Persian reader needs a familiar framework to grasp their depth. Therefore, his translations possess a tri-textual structure: the English text with Biblical references, the semantic world of the Qur'an and Persian literary tradition, and finally, the target language, which is the site of the final reconstruction of the text. Hosseini, in his translations, is not merely seeking linguistic equivalence but, by employing Quranic verses and concepts, is reproducing English literary texts within an Islamic cultural-religious framework. This tri-textual structure marks a significant difference from studies that have only addressed the presence of the Qur'an in the source text; because here, the intertextual flow is two-way, and the translator guides it with full awareness. Thus, the Persian-speaking audience, instead of encountering a mere image from the Old Testament, is faced with a familiar and more acceptable Quranic narrative.

Furthermore, the analysis of the data indicates that no instances of "non-explicit intertextuality" in the sense of plagiarism or hidden use of other texts were found in his works. All uses of sacred texts or prior literary works were made with full awareness and in the direction of clarifying the semantic layers. This adds to the academic and ethical credibility of Hosseini's translations and shows that his intertextual use is creative, transparent, and purposeful.

The findings of the present study are consistent and aligned with the findings and theories of previous research in many aspects, but in the nature of the intertextual process, they show fundamental and core differences with the results of some studies and present a significant innovation. On the one hand, the results of this study are consistent with the findings of Federici (2007) and Alawi (2010), who consider the translator as an aware agent with an "intertextual baggage". Hosseini's ability to judiciously use the Qur'an and Persian literature to reveal the hidden layers of the text is a clear example of the realization of these theories. On the other hand, the findings of this research differ from works that have only examined the one-sided influence of the Qur'an on poets or writers of the source language (Ahmadi et al., 2019; Pirak, 2022; Sarbaz et al., 2023); because in Hosseini's translations, the influence of texts is not one-sided but tri-textual: the Biblical reference of the English text passes through the filter of the Qur'an and the translator's literary mindset and is then reconstructed in the Persian language.

Another distinction is between the findings of this study and research such as that by García Raffi and García Raffi (2024), who considered religious references to lack theological intent. In contrast, the textual analysis, and the translator's explanations in the interview indicate that his use of the Qur'an is not merely rhetorical but sometimes redefines or modifies some of the religious references of the source text for the Persian audience; therefore, his approach is not solely literary but interpretive and sometimes corrective.

Finally, the analysis of the data suggests that for Hosseini, fidelity in translation is not a mechanical reliance on the lexical surface but a creative adherence to the semantic and cultural networks of the text. In multiple examples, he shows that to convey the profound meaning, it is necessary to use tools such as meaningful vocabulary, literary allusions, and even short explanations; because true fidelity in such texts is the preservation of the work's "spirit", not its linguistic form. The outcome of this process is translations that are not only faithful to the source text but also build a bridge between different textual traditions and provide a polyphonic and multi-layered experience for the Persian audience. Accordingly, literary translation at the level achieved by Hosseini is not a linguistic activity but an interpretive-cultural act that elevates the text to an arena of intertextual dialogue and recreates meaning at the intersection of three traditions—Biblical, Quranic, and Persian literature.

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