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Scientific Issues in the Holy Qur'an: The Meaning and Translation of Verses Relating to the Creation of the Universe

by

Khalid Yahya Abu-Milha

Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Durham

2003



In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

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Department of Linguistics and English Language / IMEIS

University of Durham

2003

28 APR 2004

سورة الروم

وَمِنْ ءَايَـٰتِهِۦ خَلْقُ ٱلسَّمَـٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱخْتِلَـٰفُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَٰنِكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ
فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَـٰتٍ لِّلْعَـٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾

And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours; verily in that are Signs for those who know.

(The Holy Qur'an 30:22)

Abstract

Khalid Abu-Milha

Ph.D., University of Durham, 2003

Scientific Issues in the Holy Qur'an: The Meaning and Translation of Verses Relating to the Creation of the Universe

This study, as its title suggests, is mainly concerned with translating into English Qur'anic verses which are believed by some scholars to contain allusions to certain scientific facts related to the creation of the universe.

Recently, there has been an increasing focus on what is claimed to be the scientific content of the Holy Qur'an. Many Muslim scholars and writers in the present age argue that the meaning of certain verses can be extended to include certain scientific insights. They argue that their conclusions are based on specific linguistic characteristics of the relevant verses. This work addresses this issue from the perspective of translation.

The thesis attempts to investigate how the translation of the relevant verses could possibly reflect the way in which these conclusions have been arrived at. It discusses the question of choosing the appropriate approach for translating these verses, and whether considering such verses in contrast with other text types in the Holy Qur'an may yield useful insights in this regard. To this end, five of the most widely used translations of the Holy Qur'an have been selected to be analysed in this thesis. These are the translations of Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Arthur J. Arberry, Muhammed Marmaduke Pickthall, and M. H. Shakir.

For the purposes of this work, translation approaches can be roughly grouped into two main schools of thought: the functional, and the linguistic. One major approach from each school of thought will be examined for its applicability in handling the translation of theses verses. From the first school of thought, Nida's approach (Nida 1964, and Nida and Taber 1969) will be chosen as an approach mostly used in religious translation, particularly Bible translation. From the second school of thought, Newmark's (1981) semantic translation will be chosen as an approach that pays due attention to the linguistic aspect and does not lose sight of the contextual aspect of language.

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DECLARATION

The author of this thesis declares that this thesis results entirely from his own work, and that none of the material here has been previously submitted to this or any other university. The works of others have been acknowledged.

Dedication

To my beloved parents,
and my wife's parents, who were
all patient during our long absence
abroad; to my wife and my
children, to them all
I dedicate this
work.

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Acknowledgements

All praise is due to Allah the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful, without Whom the researcher and his humble thesis would have never seen the light. To the Creator, Who created man and revealed the Holy Qur'an, to the Cherisher, Who bestowed health, to the Sustainer, Who awarded wealth, to the Resurrector, to Whom we shall return after death; to Allah who created us from nothing, presented us from His Infinite Bounty with the gift of life without any previous good deeds to deserve such a gift or make us worthy of His many other favours in this life and in the Hereafter, to Allah, Who conferred knowledge, patience, and endurance, and offered love and guidance – to Him goes all the credit for achieving this humble work.

Sincere thanks go to all those who have helped in the various stages of the production of this work, even with a mere word of encouragement. They are too many to mention here. Therefore, I apologise if they are not singled out here.

Special thanks go to my sponsor, the Ministry of Higher Education in Saudi Arabia, particularly King Khalid University for giving me the opportunity to prepare this piece of work.

My particular gratitude is extended to my supervisor, Dr. James Dickins, for his guidance, invaluable help, and kindness, which have made this work possible. I am grateful to him for his patience, support and constructive comments.

I am also thankful to my second supervisor from the Department of Linguistics and English Language, Mr. Randal Holme. My appreciation is also extended to Dr. Fadia Faqir (IMEIS) who took over the responsibility of supervising me during Dr. James Dickins's academic leave.

My profound thanks and gratitude are extended with full respect, honour, and love to my beloved parents who were my first teachers of the Holy Qur'an. I am grateful to them for everything they have done for me and for their sincere *Du'a:'*, encouragement, and moral support, which were of great help.

I am exceptionally indebted to my wife without whose support, cooperation, and tolerance this work would have never come into existence. She has always been there in times of need, offering help and encouragement, and taking full care of me, our home and our children besides her study of English and computer. I am really short of suitable words to express my thankfulness and gratitude to her for sacrificing her College study of physics in Abha to accompany me in my long journey for MA. and Ph.D. studies in U.K.

I am also deeply thankful to my friends Dr. Abdulgabbar Al-Sharafi and Dr. Othman Almisned (University of Durham) for their academic support and help.

Sincere thanks also go to all the brothers in Durham University Islamic Society for their moral support and sincere encouragement.

A very sincere thank go to my brother, Muhammad Abu-Milha, who took over much of the responsibility towards our family in Saudi Arabia during my long years of study abroad.

I should not also forget to mention my friend Muhammad Farhan and thank him for his great help which facilitated my travel for my studies abroad.
I thank all my friends who used to ring me from Saudi Arabia from time to time with sincere words of encouragement and support, especially Ali Ma'shi, Khalid Asiri, Fahad Asiri, Abdullah Fu'ad, and Abdullah Ftais.

Last but not least, thanks to all Durham Library Librarians, and departmental secretarial staff, especially Mrs. Barbara Farnworth (IMEIS) for their administrative assistance.

Khalid Abu-Milha

Durham, 2003

TRANSLITERATION

The transliteration system used in this thesis is as follows:

Consonants					
ARABIC LETTERS	**ENGLISH LETTERS**	**ARABIC LETTERS**	**ENGLISH LETTERS**	**ARABIC LETTERS**	**ENGLISH LETTERS**
ء	ʾ	ش	*sh*	م	*m*
ب	*b*	ص	*s̲*	ن	*n*
ت	*t*	ض	*d̲*	ه	*h*
ث	*th*	ط	*t̲*	و	*w*
ج	*j*	ظ	*z̲*	ي	*y*
ح	*ḥ*	ع	ʿ	**Short vowels**	
خ	*kh*	غ	*gh*	ـَ	*a*
د	*d*	ف	*f*	ـُ	*u*
ذ	*dh*	ق	*q*	ـِ	*i*
ر	*r*	ك	*k*	**Long vowels**	
ز	*z*	ل	*l*	ـا	*a:*
س	*s*			ـو	*u:*
				ـي	*i:*

This transliteration system applies to all the Arabic words transliterated in this thesis including Arabic reference titles and names of authors except when the author provides his own spelling for his name which may not conform to this transliteration system. Accordingly, a name like ''النجّار is written as 'El-Naggar', not 'Al-Najja:r'.

Exception also extends to the Arabic words that appear with different transliteration system in some quotations from other authors. In most cases, all the quoted authors use one and the same transliteration system, which, for technical reasons, cannot be adopted in the entire thesis. Therefore, the following conversion table may be used for convenience:

Arabic letters	**Transliteration system adopted in the thesis**	**Transliteration system used by most of the quoted authors**
ح	h̲	ḥ
ص	s̲	ṣ
ض	d̲	ḍ
ط	t̲	ṭ
ظ	z̲	ẓ
Long Vowels		
ـا	a:	ā
ـو	u:	ū
ـي	i:	ī

Another exception from this transliteration system is with those Arabic words whose spellings are already widely accepted in English, such as *Qur'an*, *Koran*, *Ayah*, *Surah*, *tafsir*, *Islam*, *Imam*, etc.

ة is transliterated as '*h*' when final, hence, Ayah and Surah, except when difficulty in pronunciation arises especially, for example, when followed by a *maftu:h* vowel sound, it is then rendered '*t*'.

ال i.e. the definite article in Arabic, whether the 'ل' is pronounced or not, i.e., being *shamsiyyah* or *qamariyyah*, it is always written as a '*l*', hence *Al-Siha:h* and *Al-Qadi:r*.

When transliterating words that have underlined letters, *h*, *s*, *d*, *t*, *z*, immediately following one another the letters are underlined jointly as in *Al-Nass, Al-Qatta:n*, etc.

Abbreviations

SL Source Language.

TL Target Language.

ST Source Text.

TT Target Text.

TR Target Reader

TC Target Culture

Lit. Literally.

Notes

- Unless otherwise stated, the translations of the verses quoted in the body of the thesis are Yusuf Ali's.

- The Ayah numbers follow the Egyptian Standard Version although some of the translations used in this thesis follow a different system.

- It is customary to follow the names of the Prophets and Messengers of Allah with '(عليه السلام)' and the name of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) with '(ﷺ)'. This custom is adopted in this thesis.

- Following a widely accepted and followed convention, Qur'anic Ayahs are written between decorated brackets: ﴿------﴾.

1 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation for Research

While I was working as a teacher assistant in The Department of English Language and Translation, Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University, Abha branch (now King Khalid University), who generously granted me this scholarship, the head of this religiously oriented Department gave me a copy of a PhD thesis tackling some aspects of Qur'an translation[1]. Since then, it has been my dream to pursue my postgraduate study in the field of translating the Holy Qur'an into English. Choosing the specific topic that I wanted to investigate was the most difficult part. On another occasion, the Department sponsored a lecture delivered by Hammud[2], the author of *Geography as a Clue to Faith*. This lecture was held in Asir Central Hospital. At the end of the lecture, copies of this book were distributed among the audience, and I got a copy. Reading the book, I wondered whether the English translations of the verses discussed were quoted from a published translation of the Qur'an. I compared the translations in the book with two published translations by Yusuf Ali and Al-Hilali and Khan, and found some differences. Since then, I have become interested in this topic in particular. During my MA study in translation in the University of Durham, I tried to find helpful insights for translating the Holy Qur'an from this perspective. I did my MA dissertation[3] in a related topic, namely investigating the differences between two text types of the Holy Qur'an; texts of narrative nature and texts containing what are believed to be references to some scientific facts. What caused my interest to grow even further in the present topic in particular was the recent increasing focus on the claimed scientific content of the Holy Qur'an. The trend towards scientific exegesis of some verses of the Holy Qur'an is currently supported by a great number of contemporary Muslim scholars of different schools of thought, and finds significant support among ordinary Muslims[4]. Many books have been published reflecting this trend, TV interviews made with scholars supporting it, and TV series discussing these issues have been broadcast on many Arabic TV channels. Many conferences have also been held in

---

[1] El Shiekh, A., (1990). *A Study of Two Major Translation of the Holy Koran (The Last Section) - A Linguistic Approach*. Ph.D. thesis. University of Alexandria..

[2] Hammud also presents a current TV series which highlights some aspects of what is believed to be the scientific content of the Qur'an and is broadcast by Saudi TV.

[3] Abu-Milha, K., (1998). *A Text-Linguistic Approach to Translation: Some Aspects of Register Analysis in the Holy Qur'an*. MA. dissertation. University of Durham.

[4] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997). *Ittija:ha:t Al-Tafsi:r fi Al-Qarn Al-Ra:bi 'ashar*. 3rd. ed. Beirut: Mu'assasat Al-Risa:lah. vol.2, p.577.

different parts of the world to highlight this issue. Because of the international character of such conferences, it was necessary for the participating scholars to present English translations of the verses they discuss. I noted that most of the translations they quote were their own. Sometimes they explain that the most widely used published translations do not reflect the issues they want to highlight. They argue that the scientific facts suggested in the Holy Qur'an are presented in the original Arabic text in a way that enables different interpretations according to the level of knowledge available to man at a certain time. For example, Bucaille (1996)[5] explains how the Holy Qur'an has struck a delicate balance as it has addressed those natural phenomena about which mistaken beliefs were current at the time of the Qur'an's revelation in such a way that did not confirm such mistaken beliefs, but nevertheless expressed simple ideas applicable to these phenomena and comprehensible by people of that age. Yet, he claims that they contain nuanced meanings that can lead a more knowledgeable audience of a different time and place to a better understanding once it starts pondering over them in light of more advanced knowledge. He goes on to explain that this shows how the Holy Qur'an was relevant and interesting for its original addressees (who were, for geographical reasons, the people of Makkah and Madinah, the Bedouins of the Arabian Peninsula at the time of revelation) as well as for different recipients at different times and places. "This is a mark", Bucaille stresses, "of the Qur'an's universality."[6] They argue that the Holy Qur'an uses terms and expressions that are flexible enough to be open to different interpretations, and that modern science has opened new horizons for a better understanding of some verses from the Holy Qur'an with the discovery of such facts. Al-Sha'ra:wi: also (1988)[7] explains that the Qur'an is relevant and interesting for all generations in such a way that every generation comes, reads the Holy Qur'an, and discovers new interesting and relevant issues, and still its wonders never end. I was amazed by such suggestions that these verses can still have new meanings in the present age. I found this issue even more interesting to investigate in relation to translating the Holy Qur'an into English. Regarding their English translations, Bucaille (1996), comments that passages from the Qur'an relating to what he believes to be scientific data are unfortunately "badly translated and interpreted, so that a scientist has every right to

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[5] Bucaille, M., (1996). *The Bible, the Qur'an, and Science: the Holy Scriptures Examined in the Light of Modern Knowledge*. New Delhi: Islamic Book Service., p. 170.
[6] Ibid., p. 171.
[7] Al-Sha'ra:wi:, M. M., (1988). *Mu'jizat Al-Qur'an*. Cairo: Maktabat Al-Tura:th Al-'Isla:mi., p. 21.

make criticisms –with apparent justification— that the Book does not actually deserve at all. ... inaccuracies in translation or erroneous commentaries (the one is often associated with the other), which would not have surprised anybody one or two centuries ago, offend today's scientists. When faced with a badly translated phrase containing a scientifically unacceptable statement, the scientist is prevented from taking the phrase into serious consideration."[8] He goes on to explain that such errors in translation exist because translators often take up, rather uncritically, the interpretations given by older commentators. He goes on, "In their day, the latter had an excuse for having given an inappropriate definition to an Arabic word containing several possible meanings; they could not possibly have understood the real sense of the word or phrase which has only become clear in the present day thanks to scientific knowledge".[9]

[8] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 118.
[9] Ibid.

1.2 Difficulties Encountered

Choosing to conduct doctoral research in the field of translating the Holy Qur'an was not an easy decision. As a Muslim, I was extremely hesitant because I feared lest I should go astray in what I say. The issue of translating the Holy Qur'an has been controversial. According to El Shiekh (1990)[10], numerous Muslims, including religious scholars, believe that the translation of the Qur'an is either impossible or sacrilegious, if not both. He explains that these scholars base their argument on the fact that the Qur'an consists of the very Words of God, which cannot and should not be substituted by any other words. The Qur'an, they say, is revealed in Arabic and should stay available only in Arabic.

I was also discouraged by some views that carrying out research in translating the Holy Qur'an is not really related to translation because the comparison will be made between the original Arabic text and the translation of its meanings, or its explanation, not its actual translation, as if translation were usually concerned with anything other than meaning!

Another discouraging factor in respect to my conducting this research relates to issues such as faithfulness and fidelity. These issues have been controversial in translating texts produced by human beings, so what about translating what Muslims believe to be the very Word of God? As George Steiner puts it in his foreword to *Translating Religious Texts*:

> Here we flounder in deep waters. If a text is 'revealed', if its initial encoding is then transferred into a mundane and fallible sign-system, that of secular and post-Adamic speech, to what truth-functions, to what correspondent faithfulness can any translation aspire?[11]

Faced with the above-mentioned difficulties and many others, I had to think deeply and find a way out of this dilemma. I did not have to look far for solutions for I met so many Muslims in this country who did not know Arabic, and yet the majority of them could read

---

[10] El Shiekh, A., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 3.
[11] In Jasper, D. ed., (1993). *Translating Religious Texts: Translation, Transgression, and Interpretation.* New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press., p. xiii.

at least a few chapters of the Holy Qur'an and had memorised some, while others had memorised the whole Qur'an, but understood very little of the meaning in Arabic. To be able to make sense of what they read or memorise, they had to depend on the translation of the Holy Qur'an into their native languages. Moreover, according to Islamic belief, the Holy Qur'an is addressed to all mankind.[12] In this regard, Hoyland[13] writes: "Muhammad evidently thought of his faith as being open to all: 'We have sent you as a messenger to mankind' (Quran 4.79); 'Say [Muhammad], I am the messenger of God to you all' (7.158), 'We have only sent you as a herald and warner to all mankind' (34.28). Consequently the Quran makes no attempt to identify the early Muslim community along national lines." It therefore seems plausible that the Holy Qur'an should be understandable by all peoples, regardless of their cultures or languages. In order for peoples from languages other than Arabic to be able to understand the Holy Qur'an, they should either master Arabic, which does not seem to be a practical solution, especially when we take into consideration the issue of cultural difference between Arabic and English, the language with which this study is concerned, or have translations of the Holy Qur'an into their own languages. Actually, considering the problems involved in translating the Holy Qur'an into English, one may wish to favour the solution of teaching everyone Arabic!:

> When one considers the complexities involved in translating a work such as the Quran, one often wonders whether it might not be easier for the whole English-speaking world to learn Arabic in order to read the Quran than for one translator to bring the Quran to the whole of the English-speaking world. As far-fetched as this option may sound, it is the one favoured by most Muslim scholars, whose opinion it is that the Quran is only the Quran if it is in Arabic, and that however much it is translated, and into however many languages, the product which emerges on the other side can never be anything more than one man's humble – and, it goes without saying, fallible – interpretation.[14]

This, it seems, is enough justification to translate and carry out research in the field of translating the Holy Qur'an. Besides, a translation will always remain only a translation, and never claims to be the original. In this regard, Turner explains in the introduction of his interpretation of the Qur'an, remarks, "Of course, to say that the Quran is untranslatable is

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[12] The Holy Qur'an (21: 107), (34: 28).
[13] Hoyland, R. G., (2001). *Arabia and the Arabs :from the Bronze Age to the coming of Islam.* London: Routledge. p.243.
[14] Behbudi, M. B. and Turner, C., (1997). *The Quran: A New Interpretation.* Surrey: Curzon., p. xiii.

not to say that it should never be translated. What one must bear in mind when reading a translation of the Quran, however, is that what is lost in translation is the Quran itself." [15] Similarly, Abdul-Raof maintains, "a Vulgate or Latin Qur'an cannot be a replacement of the original text: translation of the Qur'an is an aid to understanding the Qur'an and not a substitution".[16] Moreover, Ali (1998)[17] writes:

> ... although the production of Qur'anic translations is so important to the understanding of Islam especially for non-Arabic speakers, we all have to bear in mind that the Qur'an is only the Qur'an when it is in its original Arabic wording, and that no translation can substitute or become a replacement of that Holy Book. Bearing this in mind at all times solves the problems of the untranslatability of the Qur'an ... Translatability does not mean replacement.

El Shiekh (1990)[18] also refutes the objection to the translation of the Holy Qur'an on the grounds that the Qur'an consists of the very Words of God which cannot and should not be substituted by any other words. El Shiekh explains that translating the Qur'an is not providing a substitution for the Divine Words of God, but only an attempt to help convey the message of God to other peoples by the transfer of meaning from one language to another. Similarly, Boullata (2000) asserts, "A translation of the Qur'an into any other language cannot really be *the* Qur'an, regardless of the accuracy and faithfulness of the translation; for every language has its own characteristics, its own cultural background, its own way of conveying meaning, its own structures to establish communication, its own idiom."[19]

I was also encouraged to go on with my research when I came across many PhD and MA theses that tackled various aspects in the field of translating the Holy Qur'an. In addition, reading the literature, I noticed that much work has been devoted to Biblical translation

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[15] Behbudi, M. B. and Turner, C., (1997), Op. Cit., p. xiii.
[16] Abdul-Raof, H., (2001). *Qur'an translation :discourse, texture and exegesis.* Richmond: Curzon. p.179.
[17] Ali, A. A. F. M., (1998). *Measuring and Weighing Terms in the Qur'an: Their Meaning with Reference to Six English Translations.* Ph.D. thesis. University of Durham., p. 16.
[18] El Shiekh, A., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 3.
[19] Boullata, I. J. ed., (2000). *Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an.* Richmond, Surrey: Curzon., p. x.

studies. This encouraged me to dedicate my energy and time during my PhD study to investigating some aspects of the translation of the Holy Qur'an into English.

Moreover, the Holy Qur'an is believed to be the most eloquent Arabic text. Almisned (2001) asserts, "Because of the purity of its style and elegance of its diction, the Qur'an has come to be considered as the standard of Arabic even by those who have no belief in its pretensions to a divine origin..."[20]. Mir (2000)[21] also explains that the Holy Qur'an is chiefly, but not exclusively, a theological text. "In a very fundamental sense", he argues, "it is literature, too." He goes on to explain that the Qur'an is regarded as a literary masterpiece by both, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Similarly, Ayoub (2000) points out:

> The Qur'ān may be regarded as the most important literary document in the Arabic language. Its vocabulary and idiom have, moreover, permeated all Islamic languages, thus giving it a unique place in world literature...In addition to its literary-theological significance, the Qur'ān can be appreciated as pure literature of a high order, for it contains in a unique way all the elements and qualities of good classical literature: poetic imageries metaphors and similes, stories, anecdotes and parables, moral precepts and religious injunctions.[22]

Even if someone questions its divine origin, the Holy Qur'an should still be highly appreciated as literature:

> Although the Qur'ān is considered by the believing Muslim to be the exact reproduction of a heavenly document, it is for us a literary document in which are collected the revelations which Muhammad presented as divine inspiration in the period from about 610 to his death. In general there is no doubt about the genuineness of the revelations that have been handed down, even if many details concerning the exact wording are problematic. It may be assumed that the Qur'ān in its present form contains the greatest part of the revelations

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[20] Almisned, O., (2001). *Metaphor in The Qur'an: An Assessment of Three English Translations of Surat Al-Hajj*. Ph.D. thesis. University of Durham., p. 30.
[21] Mir, M., (2000). *Irony in the Qur'an: A Study of the Story of Joseph*. In: Boullata, Issa J., ed. Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an. 173-187. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon., p. 173.
[22] Ayoub, M., (2000). *Literary Exegesis of the Qur'an: The Case of al-Sharif al-Radi*. In: Boullata, Issa J., ed. Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an. 292-309. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon., p. 292.

which actually occurred; on the other hand, one cannot support the claim that it includes all of the revelations.[23]

Moreover, "The question of authorship certainly does not affect the fact that the Qur'an has meaning."[24]

It is well-known that the Arabs, who were at that time at the pinnacle of rhetoric and eloquence, were challenged to produce anything like it if they thought it was human and not divine speech.[25] Therefore, it is hoped that tackling some aspects of its translation might yield valuable benefits for other researchers.

There are a number of other major difficulties in respect of this research which deserve to be mentioned. This work originally began with discussing from the perspective of translation a number of Qur'anic verses which some scholars believe to contain scientific allusions. However, as the research unfolded, many other points and issues kept emerging and imposing themselves. They required further investigation and elaboration. In particular, I had to review the different trends regarding the very topic of scientific exegesis and to shed some light on its historical background. This resulted in the relatively large size of this work. However, this review itself uncovered significant links to the issue of translating the Qur'an. The main focus of this thesis, it goes without saying, has been translation.

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[23] Gätje, H., (1976). *The Qur'an and its Exegesis: Selected Texts with Classical and Modern Muslim Interpretations.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul., p. 23.
[24] Zubir, B. N., (1999). *Balagha as an Instrument of Qur'an Interpretation: A Study of Al-Kashshaf.* Ph.D. thesis. University of London., p. 17.
[25] Abdul-Raof, H., (2001), Op. Cit. p.37. See the Holy Qur'an (2:23; 11:13; 17:88; 52:33-34).

1.3 Research Question and Theoretical Considerations

This thesis aims to answer the central question of how to translate the relevant verses in a way that could possibly show how those who suggest scientific expansions of their meanings have been able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of certain linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned. It discusses the question of choosing the appropriate approach for translating these verses, and whether considering such verses in contrast with other text types in the Holy Qur'an may yield useful insights in this regard. Verses which are claimed to contain scientific allusions can be divided into two main types: verses talking about some aspects of the creation of the universe and these referring to some aspects of the creation of man[26]. In order to limit the scope of the study to a manageable size, I have confined myself to five translations of the meanings of the Holy Qur'an[27] and to examining verses of the first type, i.e. those talking about some aspects of the creation of the universe.

To obtain an adequate translation of the verse as a whole, the accurate linguistic meaning of some key individual lexical items seen both individually and contextually should be considered first. Due consideration should be paid to both the semantic fields of such lexical items as well as their contexts. Nida (1964) asserts, "An adequate theory of meaning cannot ... remain tied either to the semantic field or to the semantic context, for both field and context are equally important, particularly if one views language as a dynamic structure ..."[28] Thus, the discussion in this research will address semantic issues on both levels: the textual level as well as the level of individual lexical items.

It is true that translation is mainly concerned with a text as a whole rather than its individual components, sentences or words, but accuracy and success in translating the text as a whole depends to a great extent on the successful translation of the lexical items which make up the text. It is also true that in most texts the successful translation of the text as a

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[26] Al-Swaida:n. T., (2000). *'i'ja:z Al-Qur'an fi: Al-Falak wa Al-Majarra:t: Tape No. 5* . [Audio Tape]. Riyadh: Qurtubah..
[27] See below.
[28] Nida, E. A., (1964). *Toward a Science of Translating, with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating*. Leiden: E. J. Brill., p. 38.

whole does not necessarily entail word-for-word rendering, or, in other words, does not necessitate that the translator ponder over each and every word to make sure that s/he has successfully found a suitable counterpart for it in the TT. Nevertheless, there are always certain key words that carry a great deal of the total meaning, and they can never be overlooked, or dealt with inadequately. These kinds of words are prevalent in the verses under consideration here. They are believed by some scholars to allude to certain scientific facts in a special way enabling different interpretations according to the level of knowledge available to man at a certain time. Therefore, this work places great emphasis on the meaning of these words individually first, then contextually, as considering words out of context proves, in almost all cases, a fruitful approach with regard to establishing the meaning of the word involved. However, it should be stressed that even in cases when the context dictates the meaning of a word, its basic meaning should itself have a bearing on the context in which it occurs as "linguistic expressions come into a context of use with a set of possible meanings to be selected."[29] Thus, understanding the meaning of words at the lower level, that is, individually, helps a great deal in determining their meaning contextually.

As the main theme of the present thesis is to attempt to find out what the suitable approach is within translation theory for handling the translation of Qur'anic verses under discussion in this research, viz. those which are believed to contain allusions to scientific facts related to the creation of the universe, and whether considering such verses in contrast with other text types in the Holy Qur'an may yield useful insights in this regard, some of the approaches in translation theory will be reviewed for their applicability in handling the translation of these verses. However, it is not the aim of this study to investigate translation theory in detail. For the purposes of this work, translation approaches can be roughly grouped into two main schools of thought: the functional, and the linguistic.[30] One major approach from each school of thought will be examined in chapter four for its applicability in handling the translation of these verses. From the first school of thought, Nida's

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[29] Frawley, W., (1992). *Linguistic Semantics*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers., p. 37.

[30] See Nord, C., (1997). *A Functional Typology of Translations*. In: Trosborg, Anna, ed. Text Typology and Translation. 43-66. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins., p. 43, Snell-Hornby, M., (1995). *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*. Rev. ed. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins Pub. Co., p. 14. See chapter four of this thesis for more details.

approach (Nida 1964, and Nida and Taber 1969) will be chosen as the approach mostly used in religious translation, particularly Bible translation. From the second school of thought, Newmark's (1981) semantic translation will be chosen as the approach that pays due attention to the linguistic aspect of language and does not lose sight of the contextual aspect.

Sometimes the choice of a particular translation approach cannot be made with respect to a text as a whole; adjustments have to be made with regard to different parts within one text. Perhaps this is why Hewson and Martin (1991)[31] hold that translation is not instrumental, with re-usable techniques to convert any ST into a TT. They believe that it should, on the contrary, be looked upon as a comparative process adjustable to the special requirements of both source and target languages involved. In other words, one may find that a certain translation approach is more appropriate for a particular part of a certain text, but may not be suitable for the whole text. It seems that this is what happens actually in practice, resulting sometimes in accusations that a translator is being inconsistent in his translation approach. Discussing the issue of literal vs. free translation, Hatim (1997) writes:

> Some translation theorists present these two aspects of the translation process as though they were alternative ones, one or the other of which is to be opted for at one time, depending on the translator's own brand of theory or the prevailing orthodoxy. But, as Hatim and Mason (1990, 1997) make abundantly clear, 'literalness' or 'freedom' are intrinsic properties of the relevant part of the text being translated.[32]

Kirk (1986) also supports this view:

> Presumably exactness of translation is a matter of degree... Depending on their predominant purposes and interests, different translators will give priority to maximising different kinds of exactness. In rendering the names of plants, for example, translation for scientific purposes will aim at the literal meaning regardless of the relative familiarity or cultural significance of species to speakers of the translating language. In other cases

[31] Hewson, L. and Martin, J., (1991). *Redefining Translation: the Variational Approach.* London: Routledge., p. 7.
[32] Hatim, B., (1997). *Communication Across Cultures: Translation Theory and Contrastive Text Linguistics.* Exeter, England: University of Exeter Press., p. 105.

> literalness can have ludicrous results because... exactness of literal equivalence by no means entails exactness of cultural equivalence.[33]

Therefore, regarding the choice of the analysed translations in terms of the approaches discussed, it can be said, as explained above, that translators do not usually adopt a certain method and stick to it throughout depending on their school of thought. There will inevitably be variations according to the nature of the text or subtext in hand. For example, Pickthall says about his translation, "The Book is here rendered almost literally"[34], but he also states that he depends on the traditional interpretation. The traditional interpretation sometimes does not fully respect the literal meaning. Moreover, he sometimes depends on the traditionally understood implications at the expense of the linguistic meaning with regard to the verses discussed in this research, as will be discussed in chapter seven. This in practice, as will be discussed in chapter four, is similar to the dynamic equivalence approach. Commenting on Pickthall's translation, Gätje (1976) writes, "Translation by a well-known British writer who converted to Islam, often reflects traditional Muslim interpretation rather than the literal meaning of the Arabic text."[35]As far as the analysed verses in this thesis are concerned, it can be said that classifying the translations from the beginning as belonging to one school of thought or the other will not be helpful. A more appropriate approach is to analyse the translations with regard to the verses discussed and uncover the method applied. Furthermore, it is not important to classify the analysed translations from the beginning into different translation methods (dynamic equivalence, semantic, literal, etc.) because this thesis does not aim to produce an exhaustive analysis of such translations, i.e. analyse large-scale examples in terms of the approaches employed. Rather, the thesis investigates particular examples. In addition, it can be said that most of the analysed translations were made before the development of translation theory in its modern form (the second half of the 20th century[36]), in which such approaches as dynamic equivalence or semantic translation have been clearly defined. Of course, translation has been practised since ancient times, but it was mainly approached as an art based on intuition and instinctive choice. The basic dichotomy was typically between free and literal

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[33] Kirk, R., (1986). *Translation Determined.* Oxford: Clarendon Press., p. 73.
[34] Pickthall, M. M., (2000). *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an: An Explanatory Translation.* London: Islamic Dawah Centre International. p.3.
[35] Gätje, H., (1976), Op. Cit., p.292.
[36] Munday, J., (2001). *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications.* London: Routledge. p.7.

translation, word for word or sense for sense[37]. Although translators usually explain in their introductions the method they are going to adopt, it can be said that in most of the analysed translations the distinction is drawn between the literal approach and the stylistic approach.

As for the choice of the translations used in this work, the following may be said. First of all, the translations used here are those of Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Muhammad Muhsin Khan, Arthur J. Arberry, Muhammed Marmaduke Pickthall, and M. H. Shakir. These five translations are among the widely used translations that readers are most likely to consult, regardless of the school of thought to which their producers belong. Moreover, these translations differ in many aspects, which renders contrasting them one with the other very useful. However, they were not selected solely for these two reasons. The choice of these translations in particular to be studied in this thesis is also related to the following:

(a) With the exception of Arberry, all the translators are Muslims, which, to a high degree, rules out any doubts with regard to their intentions or deliberate distortion of the Qur'anic message in their translations. Arberry's translation is also faithful[38] and believed by some to be the most accurate and sympathetic translation done so far by a non-Muslim.[39]

(b) Yusuf Ali's and Pickthall's translations are the most popular among Muslims[40]. Moreover, Ali's, and Al-Hilali and Khan's translations are the most popular ones in the researcher's country; they are widely used by students in the translation and language departments in most universities in Saudi Arabia.

(c) Al-Hilali and Khan's translation was sponsored by the Saudi Government to be published by the King Fahad Complex for printing the Holy Qur'an in Madinah. Millions of copies are printed and distributed free to visitors of Saudi Arabia to perform *hajj* or

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[37] Bell, R. T., (1991). *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*. London: Longman. p.7.
[38] El Shiekh, A., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 66.
[39] Almisned, O., (2001), Op. Cit., p. 55.
[40] See Robinson, N., (1996). *Discovering the Qur'an: A Contemporary Approach to a Veiled Text*. London: SCM Press., p. 4; Gätje, H., (1976), Op. Cit., pp. 291, 292; Denffer, A. v., (1983). *'Ulu:m Al-Qur'an: An Introduction to the Sciences of the Qur'an*. Leicester: The Islamic Foundation. p. 147; and El Shiekh, A., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 54.

'*umrah.* Other copies are also distributed in many Islamic centres and mosques around the world by Saudi Arabian embassies.

(d) In his translation, Arberry has attempted to preserve the music and the rhythm of the Qur'an, and hence produce a stylistic effect echoing, as far as possible, that of the original. Therefore, his translation has acquired a special status among all Qur'anic translations into English[41].

(e) Shakir's translation is usually recommended by Western scholars who have written about the Holy Qur'an for its use of modern English.[42]

(f) Due to the popularity of these five translations as reliable and good translations, they are available over the Internet in many sites of academic institutions and international universities, which means that they can be easily accessed.[43]

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[41] Gätje, H., (1976), Op. Cit., pp. 291; El Shiekh, A., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 66.
[42] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 5.
[43] For example, The University of Southern California, USA: http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/quran; Brown University, USA: http://mama.stg.brown.edu/webs/quran_browser/pqeasy.shtml; Islamic Web: http://islamicweb.com/?folder=quran&file=quran_wizard .

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

This thesis discusses from the perspective of translation a number of the verses often cited by those who claim that the Holy Qur'an contains scientific data. It is claimed that the number of such verses may be 750[44]. Therefore, no exhaustive study is attempted here. What can be done, however, is to discuss some of the most interesting examples of the claimed references to scientific issues in the Qur'an, and thereby suggest some possible further avenues of research. Thus, a selective approach to the research will be adopted here due the constraints of space. The discussion in this study, as mentioned in the previous section, will be limited to some selected examples of the verses talking about some aspects of the creation of the universe. For this purpose, five of the most widely used translations of the Qur'an will be selected for analysis in this research.

When they discuss the issue of new meanings and new interpretations of some verses of the Holy Qur'an in terms of the new advancement in human knowledge, proponents of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an (for example, Al-Sha'ra:wi: 1988[45]) maintain that the Qur'an is divided into two parts. The first part contains those verses whose meanings and functions have remained fairly stable until today. These verses are mainly those dealing with issues of faith, the limits imposed by *shari:'ah*, and the practices of worship. The second part may be open to new interpretations. It consists of those verses that can acquire new meanings and functions to suit the age in which they are received. These are mainly the verses talking about some aspects of the creation of the universe and the creation of man.[46]

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[44] Al-Ju:hari:, quoted in Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit., vol.2, p.565, and in Al-Dhahabi:, M., (1995). *Al-Tafsi:r wa Al-Mufassiru:n*. 6th Ed. Cairo: Maṭba'at Al-Madani. vol.2, p.545; Maḥmu:d Aḥmad Mahdi:' quoted in Khir, B. M., (2000). *The Qur'an and Science: The Debate on the Validity of Scientific Interpretations*. Journal of Qur'anic Stdies II[2], 19-35. 26.

[45] Al-Sha'ra:wi:, M. M., (1988), Op. Cit., p. 21.

[46] See section 3.2 for more details.

1.5 Importance of this Study

It is important to conduct the present research for the following reasons:

Recently, there has been an increasing focus on what is believed to be the scientific content of the Holy Qur'an. Since the view that there can be scientific extensions of the meanings of some verses is supported by many Muslim scholars and writers in the present age, it is reasonable to see how the translation of the relevant verses could possibly reflect the way in which these conclusions have been arrived at. This thesis attempts to tackle this issue and show the way in which those who suggest scientific expansions of meanings have been able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of specific linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned.

To the best of my knowledge, no previous attempt has been made to conduct a comparative study between different translations of the Holy Qur'an into English with regard to these verses which are believed to contain allusions to scientific issues. There have been, however, a number of scattered attempts to highlight what is believed to be the scientific content of some verses and suggest translations into English that reflect this content. For example, in a number of lectures held in different parts of the world in 1999 and 2000[47], and broadcast live via TV, Professor Zaghlu:l El-Naggar presented some examples of these verses and provided his suggested translation to reflect the scientific content of the Qur'anic text. This issue will be referred to in chapter seven when discussing the examples involved[48]. Also, in his Ph.D. thesis entitled "Geographical Science and the Holy Qur'an: an Experimental Study of Physical & Agricultural Geography in the Holy Qur'an" Shad (1997)[49] conducted a comparative study between recent scientific discoveries in the field of geography and references to such discoveries in the Holy Qur'an. He presented some translations of the Holy Qur'an and commented that they are lacking in many aspects. As

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[47] For example, in Dubai in Dec 2000 (Ramadhan 1421), during Dubai International Competition for Memorizing the Holy Qur'an.

[48] See examples 7.2.23, 7.2.24, and 7.2.25.

[49] Shad, T. J., (1997). *Geographical Science and the Holy Quran: An Experimental Study of Physical & Agricultural Geography in the Holy Qur'an*. Ph.D. thesis. University of Glasgow.

his topic was limited to geography, no linguistic analysis was provided for the chosen translations to explain where they were lacking, nor was a comparative study made between them. In his book "Human Development, as Revealed in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith: the Creation of Man between Medicine and the Qur'an", Dr. Mohammed Ali Albar[50] has attempted a medical translation of some of the Qur'anic verses.

[50] Albar, M. A., (1996). *Human Development, as Revealed in the Holy Qur'an and Hadith: the Creation of Man between Medicine and the Qur'an.* Jeddah: Saudi Publishing and Distributing House..

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters in addition to this introductory chapter, which covers, among other issues, the reasons for choosing this particular topic, theoretical considerations, and the scope and limitations of the present work.

As this thesis relates science and religion in the field of translation, it is necessary to shed some light on what is meant by 'science' in general, and the use of this term in the present research in particular. Therefore, the definition of science, the relationship between science and religion, the rise of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an, and the ongoing debate about whether or not this approach is legitimate will be the main issues discussed in chapter two.

Chapter three sheds some light on the historical background of the Holy Qur'an. The discussion in this chapter will be limited to issues directly related to the topic of the present work. It discusses the issue of the purported universality of the Holy Qur'an in terms of: (1) stable vs. developing meaning, (2) occasions of revelation, and (3) the Qur'an and cultural difference.

Chapter four will review some of the approaches in translation theory in an attempt to discover the most suitable approach for handling the translation of Qur'anic verses under discussion in this research. There are two main schools of thought in the field of translation theory: the functional, and the linguistic.[51] One major approach from each school of thought (Nida's approach (Nida 1964, and Nida and Taber 1969) from the first, and Newmark's (1981) semantic translation from the second) will be examined in this chapter for its applicability in handling the translation of these verses.

This takes us to chapter five, where further general issues in language and translation theory of immediate relevance to the present research are tackled. As this thesis is

[51] See Nord, C., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 43, Snell-Hornby, M., (1995), Op. Cit., p. 14.

primarily centred on the issue of meaning, chapter five elaborates on this topic. In this chapter, different approaches to meaning are presented, and different views on types of meaning are discussed. Issues related to word meaning, sentence meaning, and text meaning are also tackled in this chapter. One of the issues considered in this thesis is that relating to certain lexical items which some proponents of scientific exegesis regard as expanding their meanings to suit the present age in accordance with the discoveries of modern science. Accordingly an attempt is made in this chapter to establish a mechanism by means of which the expansion and fluidity of meaning are governed.

To identify the verses discussed as a specific group, a review of text types in the Qur'an is conducted in chapter six. Another purpose of this is to see if the questions with which this thesis is concerned may be appropriately answered if the nature of the text type to which the verses under investigation in this research belong is studied in contrast with other text types in the Holy Qur'an in an attempt to identify its features. The traditional text typology of the Holy Qur'an is also compared with modern text typologies in this chapter.

Chapter seven, which is the longest chapter in the thesis, is devoted to a detailed analysis of selected English translations of these verses. In each example, the traditional views of the Commentators on their meanings are discussed. Then, the scientific expansions of the meaning suggested by some proponents of scientific exegesis are considered. A discussion of the linguistic meaning, both individually and contextually, of the key lexical items found in these verses is also provided for each example. The selected English translations of these particular verses are compared and contrasted in each example. The thesis ends with a conclusion which sums up the findings and provides suggestions for further research.

A word has to be said regarding the arrangement of the main chapters of the thesis. An alternative arrangement to the one which has been chosen would be to present the analysis and comparison of the published and most widely used translations of the Qur'an before discussing the different trends within translation theory. This comparison will be carried

out in terms of the suggested scientific exegetic extensions as contrasted with other alternative explanations that do not rely on scientific exegesis. A linguistic analysis of how scientific extensions may be possible as claimed by some proponents of scientific exegesis will also be conducted in the same chapter. If the conclusion is that the published translations do not reflect the suggested proposals, an investigation into translation theory will be conducted to suggest an approach for translating the discussed verses to achieve the intended aim. Then, certain translations are suggested or selected, which are based on the conclusions drawn regarding the suggested approach for achieving the intended aim. However, for practical reasons, it seems more appropriate to put the discussion of the application of the suggested approach to achieve the intended aim in the section analysing the translations, i.e. chapter seven. This makes it easier for the reader to compare what is suggested with the analysed translations. As a result, the discussion of translation theories (as well as the general relevant issues) has been put before the practical part of the thesis so that the discussions in chapter seven of the suggested translations as compared with the analysed published translations are able to draw on previous discussion of translation theories. Therefore, chapter seven is to be read particularly in the light of chapters four and five.

2 CHAPTER TWO: SCIENCE AND RELIGION

2.1 Definition of Science

As this thesis addresses the issue of translating into English verses which some proponents of scientific exegesis believe to contain references to scientific data in the Holy Qur'an, it is necessary to shed some light on what is meant by 'science' in general, and the use of this term in the present research in particular. I shall begin by considering some traditional definitions that one may find in dictionaries and encyclopaedias, and then the views of some philosophers of science will be consulted. Oxford English Dictionary gives the following definitions of 'science':

> The state or fact of knowing; knowledge or cognizance of something specified or implied; also, with wider reference, knowledge (more or less extensive) as a personal attribute... Knowledge acquired by study; acquaintance with or mastery of any department of learning. Also *pl*. (a person's) various kinds of knowledge... A particular branch of knowledge or study; a recognized department of learning... A craft, trade, or occupation requiring trained skill. *Obs*.... In a more restricted sense: A branch of study which is concerned either with a connected body of demonstrated truths or with observed facts systematically classified and more or less colligated by being brought under general laws, and which includes trustworthy methods for the discovery of new truth within its own domain... [With defining adjective] designating particular classes of sciences...: *abstract, concrete, biological, descriptive, exact, experimental, historical, mathematical, mechanical, moral, mixed, pure, natural, physical.*

In World Book Millennium 2000 Encyclopaedia, the following explanation is given:

> Science covers the broad field of knowledge that deals with observed facts and the relationships among those facts. The word *science* comes from the Latin word *scientia*, which means knowledge... A theory developed by a scientist cannot be accepted as part of scientific knowledge until it has been verified by the studies and experiments of other researchers. In fact, for any knowledge to be truly scientific, it must be repeatedly tested experimentally and found to be true. This characteristic of science sets it apart from other branches of knowledge. For example, the *humanities*, which include religion, philosophy, and the arts, deal with ideas about human nature and the meaning of life. Such ideas cannot be scientifically proved. There is no test that tells whether a philosophical system is "right." No one can determine scientifically what feeling an artist tried to express in a

painting. Nor can anyone perform an experiment to check for an error in a poem or a symphony.[52]

In the accompanying dictionary, the following definitions of 'science' are provided:

> 1a. knowledge based on observed facts and tested truths arranged in an orderly system. Ex. the laws of science, pure science. Science is verified knowledge; that is, knowledge that can be validated and communicated to other people (George Simpson). b. a branch of such knowledge. Biology, chemistry, physics, and astronomy are natural sciences. Economics and sociology are social sciences. Agriculture and engineering are applied sciences. 2. a branch of such knowledge dealing with the phenomena of the universe and their laws; a physical or natural science. Ex. Geology, botany, and zoology are sciences. 3. skill based on training and practice; technique. Ex. the science of judo, the science of sailing, to have housework down to a fine science. (SYN) proficiency. 4. a particular branch of knowledge or study, especially as distinguished from art. Ex. the science of perspective. 5. the search for truth. Ex. a martyr to science. Be love my youth's pursuit, and science crown my age (Thomas Gray).

As is clear from the above quotations, there are many meanings for 'science' ranging from knowledge proven by testable facts, to the ability to do judo or sailing through to a search for truth. In his book entitled *What is this thing called science?*, Chalmers (1983)[53] discusses the fuzzy nature of the definitions and approaches to science. He explains that 'science' is not restricted to traditional science such as physics, now "many areas of study are described as science..." including political science, social science, library science, administrative science, speech science, forest science, dairy science, meat and animal science, and even mortuary science. Then he sums up the popular view of scientific knowledge in modern times:

> Scientific knowledge is proven knowledge. Scientific theories are derived in some rigorous way from the facts of experience acquired by observation and experiment. Science is based on what we can see and hear and touch, etc. Personal opinion or preferences and speculative imaginings have no place in science. Science is objective. Scientific knowledge is reliable knowledge because it is objectively proven knowledge.

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[52] World Book Millennium 2000 Encyclopaedia, under 'Science'.
[53] Chalmers, A. F., (1982). *What is This Thing Called Science?: An Assessment of the Nature and Status of Science and its Methods.* 2nd ed. Milton Keynes: Open U.P., pp. xv-xvi.

Much ink has been spilt in the logic and philosophy of science over the controversy of what is and what is not science, different approaches to science have been proposed, and many definitions have been suggested.[54] Indeed, some criteria for defining science may lead to concluding that organized crime qualifies as science! [55] I should not go into details about these matters here; it is enough for the purposes of this research to explain what is meant by scientific data in the Holy Qur'an. Proponents of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an include under this title what they believe to be facts that have been proven scientifically by such methods as experiments and observation like the reflecting function of the sky, the fact that the earth is round, that the sun, the earth, and the moon move in space, and that the sun is the source of light.[56] For example, in his book, *The Bible, the Qur'an and Science*, Bucaille defines the scientific data in the Holy Qur'an he discusses:

> It must be stressed that when scientific data are discussed here, what is meant is data definitely established. This consideration rules out any explanatory theories, once useful in illuminating a phenomenon and easily dispensed with to make way for further explanations more in keeping with scientific progress. What I intend to consider here are incontrovertible facts and even if science can only provide incomplete data, they will nevertheless be sufficiently well established to be used without fear of error.[57]

However, proponents of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an have to take into consideration the issue of the possibility that a certain obvious 'fact' may one day turn out to be not as obvious as it was thought to be. "What we regard as obvious is much too dependent on and relative to our education, our prejudices and our culture to be a reliable guide to what is reasonable. To many cultures, at various stages in history, it was obvious that the earth was flat." [58] Addressing the relevant issue of relating scientific data to the Qur'anic revelation, Ahmad (1998)[59] raises the following important questions:

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[54] See for example Popper, K. R., (1999). *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. London: Routledge., Chalmers, A. F., (1982), Op. Cit., Magee, B., (1973). *Popper*. London: Fontana..

[55] Chalmers, A. F., (1982), Op. Cit., p. 109, quoting Feyerabend's criticism in Feyerabend, P. K., (1974). *Consolations for the Specialist*. In: Lakatos, I. and Musgrave, A., ed. Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge. 200-201. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.of Kuhn's view in Kuhn, T. S., (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press..

[56] See chapter seven for more details.

[57] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. vii.

[58] Chalmers, A. F., (1982), Op. Cit., p. 20. On the notion of Flat-Earthism, see Schadewald, R. J., (2000). *Flat-Earthism*. In: Ferngren, Gary B., Larson, Edward J., and Amundsen, Darrel W., eds. The History of

> How far we can trust the conclusions drawn from such comparisons between scriptural observations and known scientific facts, is the question which must be addressed here. Time continues to refine the conceptual faculties of man, forever widening the horizon of his awareness. Hence man's understanding of things is subject to constant change. How then can one rely on the verdict of any given scientific era and accept it as final? Take for instance the case of the natural laws which are unanimously accepted as universal and unchanging. Yet it cannot be said that they were understood alike by the philosophers and scientists of all ages. In view of this, will not the scientific testimony of the contemporary age in favour of Quranic revelation lose some of its dependability? Can one rely with absolute certainty on the finality of this verdict? Will it not be justified to suggest that the universally accepted concepts of today may be put to question by the advanced intellectual enlightenment of tomorrow?

These questions show how delicate the issue of relating scientific facts to the Holy Qur'an is. They can be summarized in the following question: How can what is believed to be, at least for Muslims, the final truth, i.e. the Holy Qur'an, be interpreted in terms of scientific facts which are liable to change? Ahmad (1998) goes on to answer such questions:

> To raise such questions is justified indeed but only partially so. All the concepts of the past have not necessarily changed in subsequent ages. There are countless cases of human understanding of things which, after undergoing some change for a period of time, became stabilized ultimately. There is many a law of nature which having been once accepted as universal truth, always remained so without further debate. There may occur some minor adjustments but in general their understanding remains unaltered. No intricate philosophical or scientific discussion is required any more to prove their validity... Evidently there are limitations to the possibilities of change in the human understanding of things. The main body of scientific knowledge, once established and stabilized, remains essentially the same except for some fine modifications in the fringe area... Again there are things which become certainties, not because they have been tested over a long period of time, but because their truth is universally demonstrable. All new ideas and discoveries pertaining to natural laws and behaviour of matter fall into this category when proved through experimentation in different laboratories of the world. It is to such established truths that we refer when we testify the truths of spiritual claims by applying them to the touchstone of scientific discoveries.[60]

Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia. [vol. 1833.], 359-361. New York: Garland Pub., pp. 359-61.

[59] Ahmad, M. T., (1998). *Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth.* Tilford, Surrey: Islam International Publications, Ltd., p. 287.

[60] Ibid., pp. 287-289.

2.2 Science and Religion: Conflict or Collaboration?

It may seem confusing that this thesis attempts to investigate the translation of verses which are believed to contain scientific data extracted from a religious book such as the Holy Qur'an. In Western thought, it is sometimes assumed that religion and science are incompatible. Watts (1998) explains that during the last hundred years or so, religion and science in the Western context have been believed to be in conflict, if not incompatible.[61] Contradiction between the Scriptures and science, together with the sweeping tide of materialism in the present age may ultimately lead to atheism. Bucaille (1996) writes:

> Judaism and Christianity make no secret of their inability to cope with the tide of materialism and invasion of the West by atheism. Both of them are completely taken off guard, and from one decade to the next one can surely see how seriously diminished their resistance is to this tide that threatens to sweep everything away. The materialist atheist sees in classical Christianity nothing more than a system constructed by men over the last two thousand years designed to ensure the authority of a minority over their fellow men. He is unable to find in Judeo-Christian writings any language that is even vaguely similar to his own; they contain so many improbabilities, contradictions and incompatibilities with modern scientific data, that he refuses to take texts into consideration that the vast majority of theologians would like to see accepted as an inseparable whole.[62]

Among the well-known Western scientists with anti-religious views is Richard Dawkins, who advocates Darwin's theories "to disprove the existence of any deity other than the blind principle of natural selection."[63]

Chalmers (1983), explaining the popular view of scientific knowledge from the Western perspective, writes:

> This view first became popular during and as a consequence of the Scientific Revolution that took place mainly during the seventeenth century and that was brought about by such great pioneering scientists as Galileo and Newton. The philosopher Francis Bacon and many of his contemporaries summed up the scientific attitude of the times when they

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[61] Watts, F. N. ed., (1998). *Science Meets Faith: Theology and Science in Conversation*. London: SPCK., p. 1.
[62] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 117.
[63] Ahmad, M. T., (1998), Op. Cit., p. xx. See pages 515- 561 of this book for discussion and criticism of Dawkin's views.

> insisted that if we want to understand nature we must consult nature and not the writings of Aristotle. The progressive forces of the seventeenth century came to see as mistaken the preoccupation of mediaeval natural philosophers with the works of the ancients, especially Aristotle, and also with the Bible, as the sources of scientific knowledge.[64]

Thus, "in modern times, science is highly esteemed" to the degree that it "is seen as the modern religion, playing a similar role to that played by Christianity in Europe in earlier eras."[65] Concerning science, religion, and State Chalmers[66] writes:

> In schools... science is taught as a matter of course. "Thus, while an American can now choose the religion he likes, he is still not permitted to demand that his children learn magic rather than science at school. There is a separation between state and Church, there is no separation between state and science". What we need to do in the light of this, writes Feyerabend, is to "free society from the strangling hold of an ideologically petrified science just as our ancestors freed us from the strangling hold of the One True Relgion! [sic.][67]"

Commenting on the relationship between science and religion from the historical perspective within the Western context, Bowker (1998) writes:

> The relationship between science and religion has been described in various ways, falling between two extremes. At one extreme, the relationship is seen as one of warfare, as in the titles of two nineteenth-century books, J. W. Draper's *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science* (1874), and A. D. White's *A History of the Warfare of Science With Theology* (1896). At this extreme, science is understood to have engaged religion in a series of encounters, usually taken to begin with Galileo, but often taken still further back to Lucretius or to the Greek atomists. In any case, the warfare model sees a progressive campaign (and often the words 'progressive' and 'progress' are freely used) in which science drives back the frontiers of ignorance and superstition. It is Edward Lear's campaign against 'the screamy ganders of the church, who put darkness forward and insist that it is light'...At the other extreme are those who take the view that since there is only one common subject-matter, namely the cosmos and human life within it, religions are necessarily early and somewhat more intuitive accounts of that some [sic.][68] subject-matter.

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[64] Chalmers, A. F., (1982), Op. Cit., p. 1.
[65] Ibid., pp. xv, xvii.
[66] Ibid., p. 142, quoting , Feyerabend, P. K., (1975). *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*. London: NLB.
[67] *Religion* is mistyped.
[68] Presumably 'same' is meant.

> While science may therefore correct the inevitable mistakes of the earlier accounts, in essentials science confirms the basic intuitions of religion.[69]

Bowker[70] (1998) continues to argue that the relationship between science and religion is, however, much more complicated. It starts from the two questions: what is meant by science, and what is meant by religion? These questions, he asserts, cannot be answered by means of simplistic definitions. He goes on to clarify, "What we have in mind as science and what we have in mind as religion will clearly affect how we think they can be related. If, for example, we believe that both are systems for the development of empirical propositions about putative matters of fact concerning the same subject-matter, namely, human nature and the cosmos, then obviously we will end up with a warfare model of the relationship. If we confine science to physics, cosmology, evolution and genetics, then we will clearly have a very narrow conversation with religion, especially if religion is identified with Christianity."[71] On the other hand, neglecting religious belief altogether with the development of scientific knowledge will eventually lead to making science into a god[72]: "If we suppose that science alone has a legitimate claim to truth, and that consequently it alone has authority to say what the world is and how human lives within it should be lived, then we are close to making science into a new religion..."[73]. But scientific knowledge cannot answer all questions, the help of religion should be sought, as Polkinghorne[74] puts it, "we can and should take with all due seriousness all that cosmology can tell us about the past history and future prospects of the wonderful and fruitful universe in which we live. Rather than conflicting with religion, these scientific insights raise metaquestions, going beyond science's competency to answer, but meaningful and demanding a response from those who, like all scientists, are embued [sic.][75] with a thirst for understanding. I have proposed that religion can provide coherent and intellectually

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[69] Bowker, J., (1998). *Science and Religion: Contest or Confirmation?* In: Watts, Fraser N., ed. Science Meets Faith: Theology and Science in Conversation. 95-119. London: SPCK., pp. 95, 96.
[70] Ibid., p. 97.
[71] Ibid.
[72] See Hesse, M., (1998). *Is Science the New Religion?* In: Watts, Fraser N., ed. Science Meets Faith: Theology and Science in Conversation. 120-135. London: SPCK..
[73] Bowker, J., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 98.
[74] Polkinghorne, J., (1998). *Beyond the Big Bang*. In: Watts, Fraser N., ed. Science Meets Faith: Theology and Science in Conversation. 17-24. London: SPCK., p. 24.
[75] imbued.

satisfying answers to these questions." Similarly, Hesse (1998) asserts that science "does not have any rational authority to put forward metaphysical claims about the origin, destiny, purpose or meaning of the universe. Its rational authority rests only on its successful organization and prediction of empirical data in comparatively local spatio-temporal regions, and on its consequent technological power."[76] Albert Einstein is considered to have been religious. He rejected quantum theory at least partly because it implied that fundamental features of the physical universe are random in nature.[77] He used to refer to God as the 'the Old One'.[78] He said, "I am at all events convinced that *He* [God] does not play dice".[79] John Polkinghorne is another Western scientist with firm religious beliefs. He says about himself, "I have spent most of my working life as a theoretical physicist. All my life I have been a member of the worshiping and believing community of the church, and for the last ten years I have been an Anglican priest."[80] Bowker[81] (1998) explains that in the West, people inherited from the nineteenth century the view that science was in conflict with religion, forcing the latter to retreat into mere mythical symbols and art. This was because while science was believed to be objective, descriptive and representational, religion was seen as subjective and allusive. However, he argues that this position cannot be accepted unquestionably, especially when the relationship between religion and science is looked upon from a different perspective. He argues that this relationship looks entirely different when one realises that "the more comprehensive and persistent issue between religions and science has been one, not of propositions, but of power. Who has the right and the authority, the rewards and the sanctions, which allow them to determine what may and may not happen in human life? Where do the dispositions of authority, control and power lie - at one extreme over the universe, but more locally and more immediately, over human affairs?...The rise of science and the advance of technology demonstrate an authority and mediate a new power of control which is independent of religious construction."[82] He goes on to explain that this annoyed the

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[76] Hesse, M., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 134.
[77] Mooney, C. F., (1996). *Theology and Scientific Knowledge: Changing Models of God's Presence in the World.* Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press., p. 86. This point was raised by James Dickins (personal communication).
[78] Mooney, C. F., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 86.
[79] Quoted in Mooney, C. F., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 86.
[80] Polkinghorne, J. C., (1996). *Serious Talk: Science and Religion in Dialogue.* London: SCM Press., p. 34.
[81] Bowker, J., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 115.
[82] Ibid., p. 116.

religious institutions which had exercised authority and control over society. Thus, he suggests that the nineteenth-century debate about science and religion ought to be seen as a struggle of power and authorities. Referring to the interaction of religion and science in the seventeenth century, Barbour (1997) writes, "It is evident that at some points, such as the Galileo case, the growth of science was hindered by religious beliefs and by the institutional church."[83] He goes on to explain that science and religion were believed to be in warfare "in which the conservative forces of theological dogmatism opposed the progressive forces of scientific rationality and were defeated in successive engagements."[84] However, like Bowker (1998), Barbour is aware that the relationship between science and religion cannot be taken simply as a state of conflict and opposition. He writes, "In recent decades this *conflict thesis* has been extensively criticized as a selective and oversimplified historical account. Science and religion were not unified forces opposing each other like armies on a battlefield. Often, as in the case of Newton, scientific and religious ideas interacted in complex ways within the life of the same person. Many of the debates occurred among scientists and among theologians and not just between the two groups..."[85]

Thus, as the picture has been clarified now that religion and science are not intrinsically in opposition, it seems plausible to assume that they can both contribute to achieving a better life for man in this world. Bowker (1998) argues that:

> There is no intrinsic reason why the propositions and practices of science cannot be accommodated by a religion. After all, the origins of science lie deeply embedded in religious beliefs and motivations... Religions are not primarily addressed to making experimental stories in pursuit of truth; they are addressed to the questions of what a good life is and how it can be lived, and of what the end or purpose of it may be.[86]

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[83] Barbour, I. G., (1998). *Religion and Science: Historical and Contemporary Issues.* London: SCM Press., p. 24.
[84] Ibid., p. 25.
[85] Ibid. For more reading on the historical relationship between science and religion, see Ferngren, G. B. et. al., (2000). *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia.* New York: Garland Pub..
[86] Bowker, J., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 117.

Similarly, Hesse (1998) highlights the role of religions, "In Christian as well as the related monotheisms of Judaism and Islam, there are far deeper insights and resources for social and individual life than are imagined in any sort of scientific humanism or Enlightenment rationalism. These insights can be made the starting-points of an understanding of the significance of both science and religion, not rejected as problematic archaisms which science has superseded."[87] Polkinghorne also asserts that, "Science and religion need each other, and that is why they must talk to each other and why their conversation will bear fruit for both parties."[88]

Thus, it is not implausible, both in the Western context[89], as well as from the Islamic point of view, to engage in discussions encompassing both religion and science. In Islam, it is sometimes believed that scientific discoveries testify to the truthfulness of religion. The Holy Qur'an states:

﴿سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ﴾

Soon will We show them Our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth. Is it not enough that thy Lord doth witness all things?[90]

Muslims believe that the Holy Qur'an is the eternal miracle of Islam. As such, they believe that its miraculous nature continues to exist up to the present age. As this is the age of science, some Muslims[91] believe that the Holy Qur'an contains allusions to many facts discovered only recently.[92] In this regard, Ayoub (2000) points out that many Muslims believe that the miraculous character of the Holy Qur'an has been established on different levels in different ages from literature to science. He explains:

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[87] Hesse, M., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 134.
[88] Polkinghorne, J. C., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 111.
[89] For more discussion on ways of relating science and religion, see Barbour, I. G., (1998), Op. Cit., pp. 77-105.
[90] The Holy Qur'an (41: 53).
[91] See section 2.4 for discussion of different views regarding the scientific explanation of the Holy Qur'an.
[92] See Yahya, H., (2001). *Miracles of the Qur'an*. Toronto: Al-Attique Publishers., p. 11.

The Qur'ān's abiding miracle with which it has challenged humankind's intellectual abilities in all ages is its literary eloquence (*faṣāḥa*), rhetorical excellence (*balāgha)* and lucid expression *(bayān)*. These and other elements of the Qur'ān's literary style and idiom have been studied and elaborated through a special science dealing with the inimitability (*i'jāz*) of the Qur'ān. Muslim intellectuals of every epoch have added new arguments for the miraculous character of their sacred Book. While in the early centuries of Muslim history such arguments centered on the Qur'ān as a miracle of divine speech, in modern times it has been regarded as a miracle of scientific knowledge as well. Many educated Muslims hold that the Qur'ān contains clear allusions to natural laws and phenomena which modern science discovered centuries after its revelation.[93]

Zarabozo (1999)[94] maintains that, "The 'scientific miracles' of the Quran is a topic that has taken the attention of many people recently, especially since the turn of this Hijri century. There is no question that the Quran itself is a miracle. The 'scientific miracles' of the Quran can rightly be considered one aspect of its miraculous nature." Yahya (2001) also writes, "Of course the Qur'an is not a book of science. However, many scientific facts that are expressed in an extremely concise and profound manner in its verses have only been discovered with the technology of the 20th century."[95] Gätje (1971) also mentions some of the miraculous aspects of the Holy Qur'an according to Muslim theology, "The subsequent justification of the resulting miraculous character (*i'jāz*) of the work as conceived by Muslim theology encompasses various points of views, which in part are directly derived from statements from the Qur'ān. Thus, it has been asserted that the Qur'ān contains a number of correct prophecies of future events, that in spite of its considerable volume it exhibits not a single contradiction, and that in its own way it anticipates a number of scientific discoveries."[96]

Seeking knowledge is highly appreciated and encouraged in Islam. The revelation of the Holy Qur'an commences with a command to read:

﴿اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ﴾

[93] Ayoub, M., (2000), Op. Cit., p. 292.
[94] Zarabozo, (1999). *How to Approach and Understand the Quran*. Boulder, CO: Al-Basheer Publications and Translations., p. 71.
[95] Yahya, H., (2001), Op. Cit., p. 11.
[96] Gätje, H., (1976), Op. Cit., p. 30.

"Proclaim! (or Read!) In the name of thy Lord and Cherisher, Who created." [97]

Also, there are several verses encouraging people to contemplate God's creation, for example (29: 20), (67: 3, 4), (15: 14-16), (23: 21), (50: 6-10), (71: 15-16), (21: 30-33).

In addition, the Prophet of Islam (ﷺ) has declared that seeking knowledge is compulsory for every Muslim.[98] Early Muslims, having responded to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet (ﷺ), recognised the value of knowledge and made a remarkable contribution to the development of knowledge and science. Translation played an important role in this regard. Nida himself highlights the important role played by Arabic in translating the major works of the Greeks into Latin. He explains, "In the 9th and 10th centuries...Baghdad became an important center for the translation of the Greek classics into Arabic. By the 12th century, Toledo, Spain, had become a center of learning and for the translating of Greek classics into Latin, but generally by way of intermediate languages such as Syriac and Arabic."[99] Dhanani (2000)[100] explains that during the Abbasid era, scientific knowledge as well as religious knowledge reached a remarkable level that was to become the hallmark of Islamic civilization. This was particularly so during the reign of Haru:n al Rashi:d (ruled 786-809) and al-Ma'mu:n (ruled 813-33), who established and generously funded *Bayt al-Hikma* (the House of Wisdom), an institution with translators, copyists, and binders, as well as scientists. The main task of this institution was to translate into Arabic the major Greek, Syriac, Pahlavi, and even Sanskrit scientific as well as philosophical works. Among such major works that were translated into Arabic were Ptolemy's (second century A.D.) *Almagest*, and Aristotle's (384-322 B.C.) *Metaphysics*. The result of translation efforts carried out in this period was seen in the fact that "from Spain to the borders of China, scientific activity was conducted in Arabic, utilizing a

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[97] The Holy Qur'an (96: 1).
[98] Ibn Ma:jah, (1940). *Sunan Ibn Ma:jah*. Beirut: Da:r Al-Fikr., Hadi:th No. 29821, vol.1, p.81.
[99] Nida, E. A., (1964), Op. Cit., p. 13.
[100] Dhanani, A., (2000). *Islam*. In: Ferngren, Gary B., Larson, Edward J., and Amundsen, Darrel W., ed. The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition: An Encyclopedia. [vol. 1833.], 248-258. New York: Garland Pub., p. 249.

vocabulary coined by the translators but naturalized in subsequent scientific works."[101] Among the Muslim scientists and philosophers who appeared during that era were Abu-Ya'qu:b al-Kindi: (800-870), Ibn Si:na: (980-1037), known in Latin as Avicenna, and the well-known mathematician and astronomer al-Khwa:rizmi: (d. c. 847), founder of algebra.[102]

[101] Dhanani, A., (2000), Op. Cit., p. 250.
[102] Ibid., p. 251.

2.3 Socio-historical Background to the Rise of Scientific Exegesis

It has been argued that the modern trend of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an became manifest in the writings of some Muslim scholars in the second half of the nineteenth century[103]. This phenomenon has been analysed mainly as a reaction towards the scientific development of the West which was dominant over the Muslim world. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many Muslim writers, noting how far the Muslim world had fallen behind the West in scientific knowledge, tried to prove that the sciences of the West were completely compatible with the Qur'an. In this regard, Jansen (1974) writes, "Obviously there is a connection between the rise of modem scientific exegesis and the beginning of the impact of the West on the Arab and Islamic world."[104] This trend flourished particularly in Egypt under the British occupation which started in 1882. "This European rule was made possible only by the superior European technology. To many devout Moslems it must have been a consolation to read in a commentary that sciences and techniques which enabled Europeans to rule over the Moslems were based on principles and sciences mentioned in or foretold in Koran".[105] Among the writers of this period is Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Iskandara:ni:, an Egyptian physician, who in 1880 published a book entitled *Kashf al-Asra:r al-Nu:ra:niyyah al-Qur'a:niyyah* 'The unveiling of the luminous secrets of the Qur'an'. This book discusses celestial bodies, the earth, animals, plants and minerals. A second book by the same author was published in 1883. It is entitled *Tibya:n al-Asra:r al-Rabba:niyyah* 'The demonstration of the divine secrets'. Other representatives were scholars like Ahmad Mukhta:r al-Gha:zi, Abdallah Fikri: Ba:sha, and Muhammad Tawfi:q Sidqi:[106]. Many publications by a number of Egyptian scholars appeared at this time. The first general Qur'an commentary with occurrences of scientific exegesis is Farid Wagdi's *Safwat al-'Irfa:n* 'The best part of cognition', now commonly known as *al-Mushaf al-Mufassar* 'The Qur'an interpreted'. There appeared also other works which were devoted exclusively to scientific exegesis, such as the works by Dr.

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[103] Ansari, Z. I., (2001). *Scientific Exegesis of the Qur'an.* Journal of Qur'anic Stdies III[1], 91-104. 93.
[104] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974). *The interpretation of the Koran in modern Egypt.* Leiden: E. J. Brill. p.41.
[105] Ibid.
[106] Ibid., p.43.

'Abd al-'Azi:z Isma'i:l, 'Abd Al-Rahma:n al-Kawa:kibi:, Mustafa: Sa:diq Al-Ra:fi'i:, and Hanafi: Ahmad.[107]

In a similar vein, Robinson (1997)[108] explains that the origins of the movement of scientific exegesis in the modern era may be traced back to two Egyptians: a physician by the name of Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Iskandara:ni: and a Minister of Education called Abdallah Fikri: Ba:sha. They published books on the subject in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Robinson[109] argues that this movement came as a "response to the shock produced by contact with the technologically superior Europeans."

The most famous figure whose name is immediately remembered when one mentions scientific exegesis of the Qur'an is Tanta:wi: al-Ju:hari: (1870-1940).[110] Jansen[111] explains that the link between modern scientific exegesis of the Qur'an and the Western domination of large parts of the Muslim world becomes most evident in his works. In his introduction, he refers to the British occupation of Egypt.[112] His scientific commentary on the Qur'an consists of 26 volumes, illustrated with drawings, photographs and tables. Al-Ju:hari:'s work was criticized by many Muslims. It was forbidden in Saudi Arabia. Baljon (1961: 6) criticizes Al-Ju:hari:'s work as having nothing to do with true interpretation. Similarly, Al-Ru:mi:[113], having reviewed Al-Ju:hari:'s work, concludes that it is indeed true that this work has everything in it except exegesis! Even some supporters like Hanafi: Ahmad said that Al-Ju:hari: 'went too far' in his scientific exegesis.[114]

Referring to the relationship betweens Islam in general and science in the colonial era, Iqbal writes:

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[107] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.47.
[108] Robinson, N., (1997). *Sectarian and Ideological Bias in Muslim Translations of the Qur'an*. Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 8[3], 261-78. p.271.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.565.
[111] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.44.
[112] Quoted in Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, p. 640.
[113] Ibid., p. 651.
[114] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.45.

> It was during the colonial era that the Islam and science discourse accumulated a heavy overlay of extraneous issues which had never been part of the traditional discourse. There are three important facets of this new discourse that keep it hostage to the legacy of the colonial era: it is inextricably linked to a feverish demand for the acquisition of Western science—which, in turn, is laden with a whole range of issues in the realms of education and modernity; its apologetics; and a deep layer that is the product of the cultural schizophrenia which characterizes the post-colonial Muslim world.[115]

Although this trend had an earlier start in the works of Al-Ghaza:li: (d. 505 A.H.), Al-Ra:zi: (d. 606 A.H.), Al-Zarkashi: (d. 794 A.H.), Al-Suyu:ṭi: (d. 911 A.H.), and Al-Mursi:, there is a big difference between the traditional and modern approaches. Al-Ru:mi:[116] in his review of the approaches of the earlier scholars and modern writers on the acceptability of using science to explain the verses of the Qur'an noted a significant difference between the two groups' approaches. The earlier scholars, in general, would take the Qur'an as the foundation and would mention the scientific facts as understood at their time which they believed to support the Qur'an. On the other hand, many of the modern day writers took science as the foundation and tried to interpret the Qur'an in ways that would support these scientific theories although, in reality, the verses did not point to them at all. Also Jansen[117] summarizes the difference between the earlier Muslim theologians' and modern scientific exegetes' approach in relation to the verses pointing to God's signs in His creation as follows. The first group took the signs of the greatness of the universe as a proof of God's existence and implication of His qualities. The second group's view, on the other hard, is that it is not the impressiveness of the universe itself which is convincing, but the human discovery of some of the laws which the universe obeys, or rather, the coincidence between these laws and, what are in Jansen's opinion the artificial and far-fetched interpretations noted down in their scientific Qur'an commentaries.

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[115] Iqbal, M., (2002). *Islam and science*. Aldershot: Ashgate. p.241.
[116] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, pp.562-3.
[117] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.52.

2.4 Different Views on the Scientific Explanation of the Qur'an

The topic of modern interpretations of the Holy Books in general is centred on the theme that:

> Every Holy Book is loaded with the ambivalence both of being originated in a given space of time (its 'earthly' character) and of pretending to offer transcendent information and everlasting values for the believer of whatever age (its 'heavenly' aspect). The ineluctable consequence of this contradictory datum for the interpreter who wants to keep pace with the times, is to engage in apologetics in order to prove that the Holy Scripture adequately meets the needs of the present, both materially and spiritually. Consequently, the transcendent has to be made actual![118]

Baljon (1961) believes that both "Muslim commentators of the Koran and Christian exegetes of the Bible are faced with the same awkward problem, and both of them sometimes cut queer capers."[119] He gives the example of the Protestant Dutch economist W. J. van de Woestijne who claims that Jesus *paraenesis* in Matth. 6: 26 not to worry about the day of tomorrow does not preclude the possibility of keeping a savings-bank book. Within Muslim context, he cites analogous elucidations of some Muslim modernists with regard to the Qur'anic text finding telegraph, telephone, tramway and microbes recorded in the Qur'an. Indeed going too far in this approach and forcing the meaning of a certain verse to bring it into line with science, or twisting a scientific fact to reflect what a certain verse says is condemned by many Muslim scholars, even those who have taken an intermediate position regarding this issue. For example, this is the approach suggested by Al-Mara:ghi:[120], who maintains that if a certain well-established scientific fact happened to coincide with the meaning of a certain verse, then we can safely explain the meaning of such a verse in the light of this scientific fact.

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[118] Baljon, J. M. S., (1961). *Modern Muslim Koran interpretation (1880-1960)*. Leiden: E. J. Brill. p.88.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Quoted in Shaha:tah, A., (1980). *Tafsi:r Al-'A:ya:t Al-Kawniyyah*. Cairo: Da:r Al-'i'tis̲a:m., p. 8., and in Al-Dhahabi:, M., (1995), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.558.

Khir[121] explains that, "the use of modern science in the interpretation of the Qur'an, whether in the field of exegesis (*tafsir*), or in proving the miraculous nature the Qur'an (*i'jaz*) has produced profound debate among contemporary scholars." He classifies the tendencies within the debate into four main groups: the modernists, the advocates, the rejectionists, and the moderates. His classification will be borrowed here, and a survey of literature according to this classification will be attempted.

[121] Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.24.

2.4.1 The modernists

Khir[122] explains that Modernism aims at the revision and reinterpretation of religious ideas to bring them into line with modem knowledge, values and science. In Qur'an interpretation, it is exhibited in verses that seem to contradict modern, especially Western, values whether social, legal or scientific. This trend is pioneered by the famous Indian thinker Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan (d.1315/ 1898). A number of writers who produced translations of the Qur'an were influenced by this trend. For example, Muhammad Asad, a Muslim thinker of Austrian origin, produced a full translation of and commentary on the Qur'an under the title, The Message of the Qur'an, which reflects in some passages this trend. Followers of this approach tend to take great liberalities with the Qur'anic text in order to make it coincide with modern knowledge seen from the Western material outlook. They justify their radical interpretations by claiming that the classical exegeses were perhaps valid in their time in terms of the knowledge available then, but are no longer valid in the present age due to the development of human knowledge. For example, they maintain that the story of the creation is a metaphorical rendering of the evolution of humans and explain it in the light of Darwinism. Moreover, according to this approach, all the miracles recorded in the Qur'an are rejected and explained away. For example, Solomon did not speak the language of birds and ants, but simply was a good linguist who knew the language of a tribe called (Tair) and the language of another tribe called 'Naml'. Robinson (1999)[123] comments on the work of some translators from this school of thought. He points out that this trend sometimes "manifests itself in their attempt to make the legal material more palatable to readers who have had a European education, an approach pioneered by Sayyid Ahmad Khan in nineteenth-century India." He explains that Ahmed Ali, a translator influenced by this trend, goes to extremes and frequently distorts the meaning of the text, "for example by replacing wife-beating with love-making (4.34), as well as eliminating amputation as the punishment for theft (5.38) and introducing an allusion to family planning (2.223)!" On the scientific aspect of modernism, Robinson (1999) writes,

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[122] Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.24.
[123] Robinson, N., (1999). *Islam: A Concise Introduction.* Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press. p.73.

> Modernism may also take the form of scientific rationalism. This too, may be traced to the influence of Sayyid Ahmad Khan. Its exponents seek to minimise the miraculous and folkloric elements. Asad does this occasionally but the prime culprits are Zafrulla Khan and Ahmed Ali. In their translations, Jesus does not create living birds from clay (3.49); rather, he shapes people's destiny and breathes new life into them so that they rise like birds. Nor does Solomon have supernatural powers which enable him to understand the speech of birds and ants (27.16- 44); he is simply a good linguist who has mastered the languages of tribes called Tayr (Birds) and Naml (Ants).[124]

Advocates of this trend find other solutions to solve the puzzle of issues mentioned in the Qur'an that are not in agreement with material science. For example, *jinn* are explained away as "certain legends deeply embedded in the consciousness of the people to whom the Qur'an was addressed", and the references made to them, in every case, intended not recall the legend as such but the illustration of a moral or spiritual truth. [125] Another solution is to explain *jinn* as microbes.[126]

[124] Robinson, N., (1999), Op. Cit. p.73-4.
[125] Asad, M. quoted in Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.25.
[126] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit.p.34, 43.

2.4.2 The advocates

The second group with regard to scientific exegesis of the Qur'an is the advocates. This trend is supported by a great number of contemporary Muslim scholars of different schools of thought – *sunni:*, *shi:'i:*, and *su:fi:*, and finds significant support among ordinary Muslims[127]. Many books have been published reflecting this trend, TV interviews made with scholars supporting it, and TV series discussing these issues have been broadcast on many Arabic TV channels. Many conferences have also been held in different parts of the world to highlight this issue. Shaha:tah (1980)[128] explains that many contemporary Muslim scholars are strong enthusiasts for approaching the Holy Qur'an from the scientific point of view. Explaining some Muslim scholars' views on the scientific content of the Holy Qur'an, Ayoub (2000) writes:

> In the early decades of this century, the well known Egyptian exegete, Ṭanṭāwī Jawharī (d. 1940), included pictures of various minerals, plants, and constellations in his commentary to corroborate modern scientific discoveries with what he considered to be allusions to such discoveries in the Qur'ān. Likewise, Aḥmad Muṣṭafā al-Marāghī (d. 1945), the *Shaykh al-Azhar* and foremost authority on the Qur'ān of his time, presented in his rationalistic Qur'ān commentary long medical and scientific excursuses on Qur'ānic verses dealing with the formation of the human embryo and other natural phenomena. There is at present a proliferation of centers in Muslim countries dedicated to the study of modern science in light of the Qur'ān.[129]

Also, Abdul-Raof (2001) maintains that "Muslim scholars believe that the Qur'an is also a scientific miracle; a number of scientific findings have been verified by modern scientific developments...It will be of great significance and value to the target language audience that Qur'anic structures with such scientific facts are explained in a footnote"[130].

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[127] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.577.
[128] Shaha:tah, A., (1980), Op. Cit., p. 7.
[129] Ayoub, M., (2000), Op. Cit., p. 293.
[130] Abdul-Raof, H., (2001), Op. Cit. p.166.

Jansen[131] explains that in defence of the legitimacy of their endeavour, advocates of this trend often cite two verses of the Qur'an: ''We have sent down to thee the Book as an explanation of everything'', and ''We have not let slip anything in the Book.''[132] "If the Koran contains everything, so they argue, modern science should be included." However, Jansen goes on to explain that different exegetes differ on the nature of the Book mentioned in the two verses quoted above. For example, Al-Zamakhshari: and others assume that it is not the Qur'an, as we humans know it that is meant here, but a heavenly Book. Advocates of the legitimacy of scientific exegesis, on the contrary, believe that the Book referred to in these two verses is indeed the Qur'an, as we humans know it. Consequently, they took these two verses as a proof that the Qur'an does indeed contain everything that can be known, and that "all sciences, skills and techniques have their roots in the Koran. Given sufficient insight, as many supporters of scientific exegesis maintain, one might be able to deduce from the text of the Koran the laws and techniques brought to light by man's scientific efforts."[133]

Some people suggest that another reason for the appearance of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an was as an invitation and encouragement to Muslims to acquire scientific knowledge, especially to the conservatries who were sceptical about Western knowledge.[134] However, with the passage of time and the involvement of many participants in the field regardless of their academic qualifications, different sub-trends have developed. Sometimes this topic is used to prove the Divine origin of the Qur'an or to increase people's faith by listing a number of the findings which are believed to reflect its scientific miracles.

To shed light on the position of this group, Khir[135] quotes, Mahmu:d Ahmad Mahdi:, an advocate of this trend who says:

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[131] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.35.
[132] The Qur'an (16: 89), (6: 38).
[133] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.36.
[134] Ibid., p.43, Ansari, Z. I., (2001), Op. Cit., p.92, Iqbal, M., (2002), Op. Cit., p.280.
[135] Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.26.

> There are 750 scientific verses in the Qur'an that briefly explain the material composition that God has embedded in the natural world with an accuracy that astounds the reader ... As we are now approaching the end of the twentieth century, which is claimed by scientists to have reached a high climax in obtaining knowledge, it is important that we persist in providing evidences of conformity of the Qur'anic verses with modern scientific discoveries, until science would be compelled to accept the greatness of the holy Qur'an.

Sometimes extreme supporters for this trend exaggerate in their claims without adequate understanding, leading to contradictions between these claims. For example, referring to the word *'alaqah*, which describes one stage of embryological development, Ibrahim[136] stresses that:

> The third meaning of the word *'alaqah* is 'blood clot.' We find that the external appearance of the embryo and its sacs during the *'alaqah* stage is similar to that of a blood clot. This is due to the presence of relatively large amounts of blood present in the embryo during this stage. Also during this stage, the blood in the embryo does not circulate until the end of the third week. Thus, the embryo at this stage is like a clot of blood.

Bucaille[137], on the other hand, referring to the same word, asserts, "A meaning derived from it, 'blood clot', often figures in translation; it is a mistake against which one should guard: man has never passed through the stage of being a 'blood clot'".

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[136] Ibrahim, I. A., (1997). *A Brief Illustrated Guide to Understanding Islam.* 2nd ed. Houston: Darussalam. p.8.
[137] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p.204.

2.4.3 The rejectionists

The third group with regard to approaching the Qur'an from the scientific perspective is the rejectionists. This group is considered the majority among the four groups. Shaḥa:tah (1980)[138] explain that a great number of Muslim scholars have taken a more cautious attitude towards scientific exegesis. They propose that the Holy Qur'an is only a book of guidance and should be understood as such, as was understood by its first recipients. Among such scholars is Al-Imam Al-Sha:ṭibi:. Similarly, Khir[139] points out that a great many scholars expressed their dismay and unhappiness at the use of science in the interpretation of the Qur'an as practiced in present times. He includes well-known names in the field of Qur'anic studies among the rejectionists, such as Muhammad Husayn al-Dhahabi, Muhammad 'Izah Dru:za, Bint al-Sha:ṭi', Ṣubḥi: al-Ṣa:liḥ, and Maḥmud Shaltu:t. Sometimes severe criticism is addressed towards this trend which has been described as a 'lunatic innovation'[140].

On the problems arising from associating the Qur'an with science, Denffer[141] points out that scientific truths are not ultimate but change continuously. This continuous development of scientific research and discovery means that the scientific truth of today may be seen in a different light tomorrow, as new elements of knowledge become available.

Denffer[142] cites some of the suggestions made by proponents of this line of thought about the information contained in the Qur'an which are in agreement with the findings of man's scientific pursuits. For example,

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[138] Shaha:tah, A., (1980), Op. Cit. p. 7.
[139] Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.28.
[140] Muhammad Kamil Husayn, *al-Dhikr al-ḥaki:m* (Cairo: Al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah), quoted in Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.564, and in Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.7.
[141] Denffer, A. v., (1983), Op. Cit. p.155.
[142] Ibid., p.156.

— That the earth was previously part of the sun and only after separation from did it become a habitable place for mankind (21:30).

— That all life originated from water (21: 30).

— That the universe was in the shape of a fiery gas (which the Qur'an calls *dukhan*) (41:11).

— That the oxygen content of the air is reduced at higher altitudes (6: 125).

— That in nature everything consists of complementary elements, not only man and animals, but also plants and even inorganic matter (36: 36).

— That the embryo in the womb is enclosed by three coverings (39: 6).

— That fertilization of certain plants is done by the wind (15: 22).

— That each human being has permanent individual finger prints. (75: 4).

However, he criticizes this approach and warns that there are some important questions that need to be raised here despite the very attractive arguments of the exponents of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an:

> If a scientific fact which is held to be valid, since it presents the latest result of scientific research, is in agreement with the Qur'an today and if one is convinced solely by this argument of the heavenly origin of the Qur'an, what will be one's attitude, when or if, after more intensive research, the very same scientific fact is seen in a new light and perhaps differs from what one previously accepted as the Qur'an's position on the matter? Should this discrepancy then convince us of the human origin of the Qur'an, and so refute its heavenly origin? In other words, until very recently, very many scientific facts were in utter disagreement with today's scientific truths — and if today's scientific truths are in agreement with the Qur'an, this means that perhaps a few decades or a century ago no believer in science could have been convinced of the heavenly origin of the Qur'an. Similarly, a few decades or a century from now, science, which is after all the human perspective on the true nature of things, might describe its findings entirely differently from the way it presents its 'truths' today.[143]

Many Muslim scholars warn that there are a number of pitfalls surrounding this approach. For example, on many occasions proponents of scientific exegesis represent scientific theory as scientific fact and then force the Qur'an to comply with that theory. If that theory

[143] Denffer, A. v., (1983), Op. Cit. p.157.

is later proven to be false, it would either mean that the meaning of the Qur'an is false or its meaning must now somehow change. Furthermore, they frequently force interpretations upon the Qur'anic verse that are simply not acceptable in view of the context of the verse or the language of the Qur'an. For example, concerning the verse, "It is He Who created you from a single person [*nafs*], and made his mate of like nature" (7: 189), and some other verses referring to the same issue (4: 1), (6: 98), Al-Ru:mi:[144] criticizes Abdul Razaaq Naufal who explains the notion of *nafs* and its spouse *zauj* as being the electron and the neutron! Naufal claims that over 1400 years ago, the Qur'an pointed to the existence of the electron and the neutron and its role in creation. Al-Ru:mi: argues that Naufal's suggestion can be refuted on a number of points. However, a brief look at the remainder of the verse should be sufficient to demonstrate that his interpretation is completely unacceptable. The verse states, "It is He Who created you from a single person, and made his mate of like nature, in order that he might dwell with her (in love). When they are united, she bears a light burden and carries it about (unnoticed). When she grows heavy, they both pray to Allah their Lord, (saying): "If Thou givest us a goodly child, we vow we shall (ever) be grateful."" (7: 189). Al-Ru:mi:[145] wonders how this could apply to the claimed reference to the electron and neutron.

Even if the practice of scientific exegesis is assumed legitimate, recognizing the scientific miracles and delving into them in detail should not be one's main purpose in studying the Qur'an. "Indeed", Zarabozo stresses, "recognizing the scientific miracles of the Qur'an is not necessary for attaining the proper guidance of the Qur'an. This is why the Companions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), who were known for implementing the Qur'an in the proper way, did not give much consideration to this miraculous aspect of the Qur'an yet, at the same time, they understood the Qur'an and knew how it is to be applied."[146]

Another problem with regard to this approach is that being preoccupied with noticing these aspects, a reader who is reading a verse of this nature for the sole purpose of revealing its

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[144] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, pp. 633-34.
[145] Ibid., vol.2, p. 634.
[146] Zarabozo, (1999), Op. Cit. p.73.

scientific wonders may be missing the more fundamental message of the verse that he is reading. This is because he may become involved in details that are not necessary for his guidance while missing the bigger picture of what the verse is describing[147]. To give an example, Zarabozo quotes the following verse:

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ وَلَوْ شَاءَ لَجَعَلَهُ سَاكِنًا ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيلًا﴾

"Hast thou not turned thy vision to thy Lord? How He doth prolong the Shadow! If He willed, He could make it stationary! Then do We make the sun its guide;"[148]

He goes on to explain that one is tempted to scrutinize the words of this verse and attempt to relate them to some scientific notions regarding the nature of shadows and their relationship with the sun. However, he quotes Muhammad Qutb who has a revealing discussion of what the main purpose of verses of this nature seems to be. Qutb points out that there is nothing necessarily new or fascinating with respect to scientific knowledge in the words of this verse. "However, after reading this verse, one's perspective on the shadows that he sees should change. Everyday a person witnesses shadows and how they become larger or smaller throughout the day. Usually, not much thought is given to the shadows and one is only really concerned with them when he needs a place to cool off on a hot day."[149] But this verse introduces a new dimension to the picture of shadows. It makes it clear that shadows are not moving on their own, or simply according to what is called 'the laws of nature.' Instead, it is Allah who is making them move and change on a daily basis and if He wills, He could bring an end to all of this motion and change.

What happens to many humans, including believers, is that they become so used to seeing these signs of Allah around them that they begin to think of them as 'the laws of nature'. They, therefore, begin to lose sight of what is really occurring— that these signs are the work of Allah, Who, therefore, should be remembered and worshiped. This will bring a feeling of Allah's presence and working in nature, and lead to developing a feeling for Allah's greatness and supreme knowledge. Consequently, man begins to realise that Allah

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[147] Zarabozo, (1999), Op. Cit. p.73.
[148] The Holy Qur'an (25: 45). Strangely enough, Al-Kwa:kibi: understands this verse as alluding to the invention of photography which is based on 'holding' the shadow of an object and making it stationary. (Quoted in Al-Dhahabi:, M., (1995), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.537.
[149] Qutb, quoted in Zarabozo, (1999), Op. Cit. p.74.

could not have created all this without a purpose and a reason. At this point, one begins to feel the purpose in this creation and his responsibility to his Lord. Zarabozo goes on to quote a group of verses that show this process of witnessing nature and realizing Allah's greatness and wisdom with its obvious and necessary conclusion:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ(190)الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَى جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ(191)رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَنْ تُدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْزَيْتَهُ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ أَنْصَارٍ(192)رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ آمِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَفَّنَا مَعَ الْأَبْرَارِ(193)رَبَّنَا وَآتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَى رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ(194)

Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of Night and Day, there are indeed Signs for men of understanding.

Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth, (with the thought): "Our Lord! not for naught hast thou created (all) this! Glory to Thee! Give us salvation from the Penalty of the Fire.

"Our Lord! any whom Thou dost admit to the Fire, truly Thou coverest with shame, and never will wrong-doers find any helpers!

"Our Lord! we have heard the call of one calling (us) to Faith, `Believe ye in the Lord', and we have believed. Our Lord! forgive us our sins, blot out from us our iniquities, and take to Thyself our souls in the company of the righteous.

"Our Lord! Grant us what Thou didst promise unto us through Thy Messengers, and save us from shame on the Day of Judgment; for Thou never breakest Thy promise."

The purpose of such verses, Zarabozo[150] concludes, is to remind man of God and teach him a very important lesson: This world is not simply made up of a set of scientific laws that were the result of nothing or chance explosions of energy, with no purpose or goal to them. Rather, it is the working of a willing Lord who created people for a very important purpose and designed the universe and subjected it to their benefit.

Verses of this type and their functions have also been discussed by other scholars, but not from the scientific perspective. For example, in a number of his books and articles, Robinson discusses some of these verses under the heading of 'signs passages'. This will be considered later.[151] It may be possible to draw some similarities between this approach

[150] Zarabozo, (1999), Op. Cit. p.76.
[151] See section 6.3.3.

and some of the suggestions put forward by some scholars of the moderate group, as will be shown below.

Khir[152] quotes Mahmud Shaltu:t, who sums up the arguments of the rejectionists against the use of science in interpreting the Qur'an. These include:

1. The Qur'an has not been revealed as a book where God speaks to people about scientific theories and secrets of various disciplines and types of knowledge.

2. There was a familiarity with the scientific knowledge of the day among the first generations of Muslims, the companions (*al-sahabah*) and successors (*al-ta:bi'u:n*). Yet, they never applied that knowledge to the interpretations of the Qur'an. Undoubtedly, if using science in interpretation was desirable, they would have utilised it.

3 In most cases, the use of science in Qur'anic interpretation incites those who advocate it to overstep the boundaries and stretch the senses of the verses in a way unacceptable to any sound mind.

4. The scientific exegesis approach relates the Qur'an to ever-changing scientific knowledge, which often contradicts what it has proposed earlier. Science is always dynamic, inconstant and indefinite. Therefore, any scientific interpretations of the Qur'an might eventually lead to assigning errors to it and that, indeed, is a dangerous route.

Al-Ru:mi:[153] explains that Ami:n Al-Khu:li: is the most famous figure among the rejectionists of this approach. Jansen also maintains that Ami:n al-Khu:li:'s arguments against scientific exegesis are usually copied by those who want to attack modern scientific exegesis. The arguments he puts forward against this trend may be summed up as fallows.

> Firstly, its lexicological unsoundness. The meanings of the words of the Koran do not bear a shift into the field of modern science. Secondly, scientific exegesis is philologically unsound. The Koran addressed the Arab contemporaries of the Prophet Mohammed, and consequently cannot contain anything they would be unable to understand. Thirdly, it is theologically unsound. The Koran preaches a religion. It brings a religious and ethical message. It is concerned with man's view of life, not with his cosmological views. Lastly, Ami:n al-Khu:li: emphasizes that it is a logical impossibility that the Koran, a static

[152] Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.28.
[153] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.580.

> unchanging limited quantity of texts, should contain the ever-changing views of nineteenth and twentieth century scientists.[154]

Some Western writers have also criticised the approach of scientific exegesis. Discussing the relevance of the Qur'an to the present age and the role of *Tafsi:r* in this regard, Cragg writes:

> But how, and by what quality of *tafsi:r*, is the Qur'an effectively present to interpret and to guide where history has now arrived? It will be no answer to pretend, as some several writers and populists have done, that the Qur'an is shown to be abreast of modern scientific findings and inventions though the fact was not perceptible to the *mufassiri:n* until the techniques came about. Thus radio, photography, explosives, electricity, nuclear fission, and much else, were all 'there' in the Qur'an, waiting to be identified, like a picture 'developing' in chemical solution from its film, as readings, hitherto unrealized, found their clue.[155]

He goes on to argue that this approach is flawed on two counts. "It flouts the very identity of *wahy* as 'guidance' and it violates the cumulative nature of history, taking the Qur'an out of its given context instead of accepting it. Further, it implies that the Qur'an is made relevant by pure artifice when its authority is integral and spiritual."[156]

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[154] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.54.
[155] Cragg, K., (1997). *Tafsi:r and Istifsa:r in the Qur'an*. Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 8[3], 309-321. 318.
[156] Ibid.

2.4.4 The moderates

The fourth group with regard to this issue is the moderates. Shaḥa:tah (1980)[157] maintains that some scholars have taken an intermediate position in this debate. They accept the view that the Holy Qur'an is first and foremost a book of guidance; however it may contain references to some scientific facts, but with certain limitations. For example, Al-Mara:ghi:[158], one of the Sheikhs of Al-Azhar, points out that we should neither force the meaning of a certain verse of the Holy Qur'an to bring it in line with science, nor should we twist the scientific facts to reflect what a certain verse says. However, if a certain well-established scientific fact happens to coincide with the meaning of a certain verse, then we can safely explain the meaning of this verse in the light of this scientific fact. Other contemporary Muslim scholars who can be said to have taken a similar position, according to Shaḥa:tah (1980)[159], are Muhammad Dra:z, Muhammad Al-Madani:, Muhammad Al-Bahi:, Ḥasan Al-Banna, and Sayyid Quṭb.

Khir[160] also explains that a number of writers have preferred to take a middle course in the debate. They maintain that there are a number of conditions that should be fulfilled before any attempt is made to use science in expanding our understanding of certain verses of the Qur'an. "Any interpretation has to agree with the general principles of exegesis that take into consideration the context of the passage, its linguistic meanings and the immediate senses rendered in the traditions."[161] There should also be a differentiation between scientific theories and generally accepted scientific facts; the use of the former is to be rejected while the use of the latter is possible to a certain degree. Thus, their position may be understood as respecting the linguistic meaning and the traditional interpretations which derive from it. However, they are not against expanding the meaning of a certain verse in the light of more advanced knowledge. This expansion should be made possible by the linguistic system itself, though. In other words, they do not aim to replace the traditional

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[157] Shaha:tah, A., (1980), Op. Cit., p. 7.
[158] Quoted in Shaha:tah, A., (1980), Op. Cit., p. 8, and in Al-Dhahabi:, M., (1995), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.558.
[159] Shaha:tah, A., (1980), Op. Cit., p. 9.
[160] Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.28.
[161] Ibid., p.29.

interpretation with a new scientific interpretation. Their position is intrinsically different from that of the extreme advocates who force interpretations upon the Qur'anic verses that are simply not acceptable in view of the context of the verse or the language of the Qur'an. For example, interpreting *nafs* and its spouse *zauj* in verse (7: 189) as being the electron and the neutron, or interpreting (25: 45) as referring to the invention of photography which is based on holding the shadow of an object and making it stationary! [162] Khir[163] names some of the supporters of this intermediate position. For example, Hasan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, Muhammad 'Abd Allah Dra:z, a famous writer on Qur'anic studies, and the well-known exegete of the Qur'an Sayyid Qutb. The latter is taken as a representative of the stance of the moderates. Khir gives a full analysis of Qutb's opinion, which is summarized below.

Qutb[164] maintains that the Qur'an is not meant to be a book of science and, therefore, he denounces the attempts to use it as such. In his opinion, endeavours to show that the Qur'an either conforms or conflicts with science are mistaken for the simple reason that science is not the subject matter of the book. He writes:

> The Qur'an's principal objective was the creation and promotion of a new conception of life in a new social, political and economic order. It was never intended to be a book on astronomy, chemistry or medicine, as some of its admirers and detractors try, each for their own different purposes, to demonstrate.
>
> These attempts betray a lack of understanding of the nature of the Qur'an, and of its function and scope. It is mainly concerned with the human soul and the state and direction of the human condition. Its purpose is to establish a broad view of the world in which we exist and its relationship with the Creator, and a general, outline of man's position in this world and his relationship with the Creator. On the basis of these broad concepts, the Qur'an goes on to establish a way of life which enables man to apply all his skills and abilities, not least his intellectual faculties. Once these are properly and correctly developed, they are given full freedom, through observation, experiment and scientific research, to probe the mysteries of life and the Universe and to make the appropriate conclusions — which could never, in any case be said to be final or absolute.

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[162] See above.
[163] Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.29.
[164] Quoted in Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.29.

> The basic raw material with which the Qur'an is concerned is man himself, the way he views things around him, his beliefs, emotions and ideas, his behaviour and activity, and the ties and relationships that govern his life. The conduct and development of material science and innovation are left to man's mental and intellectual capabilities and his diligent endeavour to know and understand. It is this knowledge and understanding that are the essential prerequisites for man to fulfil his Divinely-ordained mission in the world, for which he is naturally fitted and qualified.[165]

Like many of those who reject the scientific exegesis approach, Qutb[166] also points to the risk of interpreting the Qur'an, which Muslims believe to be ultimate and final, in the light of ever-changing scientific knowledge.

Khir, however, points out that Qutb is not altogether a rejectionist. In a number of his comments on some verses that are usually discussed from the scientific perspective, he suggests that it is possible to expand one's awareness and appreciation of the signs God created in the universe and in one own self through the help of modern science. In other words, he seems to suggest that "any developments in human knowledge that unveil the 'Signs' of God in nature and humans will be helpful to confirm the truths of the Qur'an."[167] His approach is significantly different from that of the enthusiastic advocates who on many occasions obscure the meaning of the Qur'anic text to bring it into line with modern science. Al-Ru:mi:[168] also argues that to say that Qutb supports the view that it is possible to use modern science in expanding the meanings of some verses of the Qur'an does not mean that he completely supports scientific exegesis of the Qur'an. Looking at this topic from the view point of translation, it may be argued that to be able to reflect this possible expansion in the target text, the translation should not fix the meaning according to the traditionally understood implications and commentaries nor according to a scientific interpretation. To see how Qutb's approach differs from that of the enthusiastic advocates, some examples of the verses he comments on will be discussed below. First, two examples showing the positive aspect of relating science to the Qur'an will be discussed, followed by two examples showing the negative aspect.

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[165] Qutb, quoted in Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.29.
[166] Ibid., p.30.
[167] Ibid., p.31.
[168] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol. 2, p.600.

In his commentary on verse (25: 2), which reads, ﴿...وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهُ تَقْدِيرًا﴾, "He Who created all things, and ordered them in due proportions", Quṭb writes:

> Scientific observation also has led to the conclusion that there exist inherent harmony, very intricate interactions and consonances within the structure of the universe. The earth's shape and distance from both the sun and the moon, its size relative to theirs, its speed and axis of rotation, and countless other factors combine to make life on Earth possible and sustainable. None of this may be attributed to chance or coincidence, neither can it be said to be without purpose.[169]

Quṭb goes on to evaluate such a use of science to expand people's understanding of this verse: "These observations no doubt are useful in gaining a better understanding of the Qur'anic statement. This is quite legitimate and should be encouraged."[170]

With regard to verse (36: 38), which reads ﴿...وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا﴾, 'And the sun – it runs to a fixed resting-place'[171], he writes, "This is a statement of fact. Science has shown that the sun is indeed moving relative to other stars nearby and is part of a galaxy which itself is moving. Such measurements, relative and inconclusive as they are do not affect the truth of the Qur'anic statement, which is final." [172] To discuss this from the perspective of translation, it is noted that the translation quoted here is that of Arberry. Yusuf Ali, for example, translates this verse as "And the Sun runs his course for a period determined for him". As is clear, there is a difference in the translation of مستقر in the two translations. This is discussed in detail in chapter seven.

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[169] Quṭb, quoted in Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.31.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Arberry's translation. See the discussion of this example in chapter seven.
[172] Quṭb, quoted in Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.32.

On the negative aspect of relating the Qur'an to modern science, Quṭb goes on to comment on verse (23: 12), which reads, ﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ﴾, 'Man We did create from a quintessence (of clay)', as follows:

> Centuries later, scientists such as Charles Darwin proposed a theory of evolution which purports that life began in water as a single cell, and that human beings are the result of millions of years of evolution. Now, it would be pointless, indeed wrong, to attempt to show that this is precisely what the Qur'an said.
>
> To begin with, the theory is not conclusive and, within a century, it has undergone several amendments and changes that have made it almost unrecognisable. There were flaws in the original theory, which was conceived at a time when nothing was known of the genes which carry hereditary properties and distinguish one species from another. Several aspects of Darwin's theory have since been disproved, and many others are still a matter of debate.
>
> The Qur'anic statement establishes the origin of man without giving any details of the process itself. It does not aim at more than that and carries no other connotations or meaning.

On the problems arising from relating the Qur'an to theories that have not yet reached the status of being well-established scientific facts, he cites verse (21: 30) as an example. This verse reads, ﴿أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا...﴾, 'Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of Creation), before We clove them asunder?'. He comments: "Some have tried to reconcile this statement with the so- called 'Big Bang' theory, which claims that the universe exploded from a single point. It is futile to try and limit Qur'anic statements by human scientific theory. The Big Bang theory is not the only one in its field and it is contested by many scientists, while the Qur'anic statement is complete and conclusive. It merely states a fact without telling us what is meant by 'heavens' or how the fragmentation occurred."

To further illustrate Quṭb's views in relation to the possible difference in different ages in peoples' understanding and appreciation of some of God's signs, his comments on other verses will be consulted. Commenting on verses (78: 6-7) which describe the earth as a

cradle and the mountains as pegs, Sayyid Qutb[173] explains that in all different stages of human civilization people might have differed in their understanding and appreciation of these signs. For example, perhaps even the primitive people were able to see the mountains look like pegs and recognize that the earth is suitable for living. However, as man's knowledge of this universe advances and he acquires better insight, his appreciation and understanding of these signs will also develop. He will be able to recognize the accurate balance maintained between the individual kinds of creation and their respective needs. All this contributes to elaborating our understanding of how the earth has been prepared for human life. With regard to describing the mountains as pegs, he explains that perhaps people earlier were able to see the mountains as looking like pegs, but now we can understand the mountains' important role in keeping the earth balanced and stable. He explains that they probably keep the earth stable by counterbalancing areas of less density, or by increasing the weight of the earth in certain areas so that it does not shake because of earthquakes and volcanoes. There may be any other explanation not yet known to man. He goes on to explain that the Qur'an mentions general statements conceivable by people with various levels of knowledge and understandings at different ages, and then leaves it for man to seek knowledge and increase his understanding and appreciation of these signs. Similarly, in his commentary on verse (35: 13), which refers to the movements of celestial bodies in space[174], and the continuous succession of day and night and the variation in their lengths with the alternation of the seasons[175], Qutb[176]points out that these signs have been exhibited before the eyes of people since the time of Qur'an revelation up to the present time. He goes on to explain that people in the present age may have a more advanced knowledge of these signs than that of the first recipients of the Qur'an.

Thus, Sayyid Qutb does not exclude the possible expansion of people's understanding of certain verses in the Qur'an referring to some natural phenomena with the advancements in human knowledge. However, this expansion was made possible thanks to the linguistic structure of the verses concerned. This is probably how the moderate scholars were able to

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[173] Qutb, S., (1993). *Fi: Zila:l Al-Qur'an*. 21st ed. Beirut: Da:r Al-Shuru:q., vol.6, p.3804.
[174] See examples 7.2.10 and 7.2.11.
[175] See example 7.2.7.
[176] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.5, p.2935.

suggest new insights in expanding people's understanding of the meanings of certain verses. The extent to which their suggestions are legitimate will depend on the level of their observation of the set of rules discussed above and in section 2.4.5 below.

2.4.5 Conclusion

The ongoing debate on the relationship between the Qur'an and science, which started in the second half of the nineteenth century, is likely to continue for more many years without decisive victory for one group over the other. Although the majority of Muslim scholars still oppose such a trend, it has significant support amongst many scholars and lay people. This approach continues to gain increasing support and popularity[177]. However, as has been shown in discussing the different trends above, a distinction has to be made between extreme advocates who on many occasions obscure the meaning of the Qur'anic text to justify their claims, and moderates who have attempted to establish a reasonable set of rules to accept using science in expanding the meanings of some verses of the Qur'an. The International Commission of Scientific Signs of Qur'an and Sunnah[178] established by *Ra:biṭaṭ Al-ʿA:lam Al-Islami:* (Muslim World League), at Makkah Al-Mukarrama has attempted to establish some rules. They are stated as follows:

- Scientific exegesis should be rejected if it is based on scientific theories which have not yet reached the status of well-established facts.
- It should be rejected as well if it does not respect Arabic language.
- It should also be rejected if it is based on the premise that the Qur'an is subservient to science.
- It should also be rejected if it contradicts what the Qur'an states elsewhere, or if it contradicts the authentic *Sunnah* of the Prophet.
- In is to be accepted only if it confirms to the general well-known rules and systematic methods of exegesis, which respect the linguistic rules, and *Shari'ah* teachings.
- It is accepted only from those scholars who have adequate knowledge of both the Qur'an and the relevant fields of scientific knowledge.[179]

Although this approach is supported by this organization, the work of Ṭanṭa:wi: Al-Ju:hari:, who is one of the most famous figures of scientific exegesis, is forbidden in Saudi Arabia.[180] Despite all the criticism directed at the advocates, one cannot overlook

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[177] See Al-Sharqa:wi:, I., (1976). *Al-Fikr Al-Di:ni: fi: Muwa:jahat Al-'aṣr*. Cairo: Maktabat Al-Shaba:b. p.442.
[178] Web site: http://www.aleijaz.net/

[179] Translated from the organisation's website: http://www.aleijaz.net/ .
[180] Al-Dhahabi:, M., (1995), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.546. Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol. 2, p.675.

their role in bringing to light such an interesting topic as the scientific content of a religious book, which has given rise to much controversial debate and attracted the attention of Western scholarship. In this regard, Jansen remarks in the conclusion of his review and evaluation of this trend that,

> In spite of all this [arguments against and criticism of scientific exegesis], one cannot help admiring the courage of certain scientific exegetes of the Koran. Whereas in Christianity it took centuries before the Churches "admitted" certain scientific truths, often after bloody struggles, many modern Moslem scientific exegetes of the Koran boldly claim that the Koran, the backbone of Islam, already contains the modern sciences and their principles, and all this with a courage and vigour that deserves a nobler aim.[181]

As has been discussed above, the ongoing debate in the Muslim world over scientific exegesis includes four distinct approaches: the modernists, the advocates, the rejectionists and the moderates. "The modernists appear to be welcomed by those who are influenced most by Western ideas, whereas most traditional groups seem likely to be in support of the inclinations of the rejectionists. However, the advocates are very popular among lay people, while the elite tend to favour the moderates."[182] Using scientific exegesis excessively without valid and sound evidence to support such claims is criticized. On the other hand, rejecting the suggestions put forward by some moderate scholars on the possible scientific expansion of the meanings of some verses, which are strengthened by linguistic analysis according to certain rules as those quoted above, does not do justice to this issue either. It may be possible to draw some similarities between some of the suggestions put forward by some scholars of this group and the view of these verses as signs verses, as discussed above. After reviewing the opinions of both advocates and rejectionists, Al-Ru:mi:[183] chooses the moderates' approach towards scientific exegesis, and argues that many Muslim scholars have chosen this approach as well. However, he maintains that this should not be presented as the only possible interpretation of the Qur'anic text, but as one possible way of expanding the meaning of a certain verse.[184]

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[181] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.54.
[182] Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.33.
[183] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol. 2, p.601.
[184] Ibid., vol. 2, p.604.

Al-Ru:mi:[185] explains that a distinction has to be made between 'scientific exegesis' and 'scientific inimitability' (*al-'i'ja:z al-'ilmi:*) of the Qur'an. He goes on to clarify that although there is a very serious debate among Muslim scholars concerning the legitimacy of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an, as discussed above, they agree that the Qur'an is scientifically inimitable. This results from the fact that, according to Islamic belief, the Qur'an does not and will not contradict a well-established scientific fact. Thus, they believe that the Qur'an, which was revealed fourteen centuries ago, talks about many natural phenomena regarding the heavens and the earth, and man's creation without contradicting the findings of modern science. For example, it talks about different kinds of clouds, rainfall, movements of celestial bodies, stages of embryological development, plants and seas, and many other topics. However, such proposals have some logical challenges, as discussed in section 2.4.6.

After a detailed discussion of the origin of scientific exegesis, its different trends, and the views of its advocates and rejectionists, Al-Sharqa:wi:[186], a well-known modern scholar who has written on scientific exegesis, presents his own judgement of this approach. He concludes that the fact that this approach continues to gain increasing support has two indications. First, it may be that the agreement between Qur'an and science continues to increase, which proves its Divine origin. For example it states that the foetus is engulfed by three layers of darkness, which has been proven by modern science. Secondly, this growing interest in scientific exegesis can be understood as a reaction towards the scientific development of the West. This is because it has been a consolation for Muslims who have seen how far the Muslim world had fallen behind the West in scientific knowledge to learn that the Qur'an is in agreement with the scientific findings of the West. However, he warns that it is a mistake to attempt to prove the inimitability of the Qur'an by relating it to ever-changing scientific findings. He does not altogether exclude the possibility that there could be other aspects of the meanings of a certain verse that can be understood better in light of modern science. He nevertheless stresses that this should be based on scholarly efforts without unjustifiable exaggeration and reading into the Qur'anic

[185] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol. 2, pp. 600-01.
[186] Al-Sharqa:wi:, I., (1976), Op. Cit. pp. 442-4.

text what is not originally there. This will result, he explains, in skewing the Qur'anic meaning and purpose. He goes on to explain that some moderate scholars who refer to some scientific issues in their commentaries may probably be justified on the grounds that they do not want to exclude such references, which may incur a feeling among common Muslims that the Qur'an will clash with science.

This research is not solely concerned with scientific exegesis of the Qur'an as such. Nor does it aim to legitimatise this form of exegesis. Rather, it approaches this issue from the perspective of translation. It aims to suggest a method for translating these verses in a way that gives an English-speaking reader a chance to evaluate these proposals and arguments for or against the scientific content of the Qur'an. This research claims to be the first attempt to such an endeavour. It analyses a number of the most widely used translations of the Qur'an, regardless of the school of thought to which their producers belong, in relation to the claimed possible scientific extensions of the meanings of some verses in the Qur'an.

As pointed out above, some people argue that the trend of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an began as an attempt to encourage Muslims to seek knowledge and achieve scientific development[187]. However, with the overemphasis of the scientific content of the Qur'an, and the involvement of many participants in the field regardless of their academic qualifications, there is a growing danger that this trend has become mainly an apologetic practice; and that Muslims in general will become complacent about the claims made by some of the proponents of this trend concerning scientific knowledge in the Qur'an. When Muslims achieved their remarkable progress in different fields of scientific knowledge, this approach was not apparent. In this regard, Iqbal (2002) writes:

> ...during the entire period of Islamic scientific activity which lasted well into the fifteenth century, we see no evidence of any scientific research program directly motivated by the desire to 'prove' the scientific verses of the Qur'an through science. There is no record of such profane uses of the Divine Book...the birth of the scientific exegesis (*al-tafsi:r al-'ilmi:*) of the Qur'an is a purely twentieth century phenomena. No one thought of writing such an exegesis during the time when scientific activity was at its peak in the Islamic

[187] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.43, Ansari, Z. I., (2001), Op. Cit. p.92, Iqbal, M., (2002), Op. Cit. p.280.

> civilization; the roots of scientific *tafsi:r* should be traced in the Muslim encounter with the modern West.[188]

It was only in the nineteenth and twentieth century that this trend gained prominence. It is important, therefore, to deal with this issue carefully and neutrally, and not to let personal belief cause one to support far-fetched claims regarding the scientific content of the Holy Book of Islam.

[188] Iqbal, M., (2002), Op. Cit. p.38.

2.4.6 The presence of Apparently Unscientific Statements

Since the Qur'an was first addressed to a particular audience at a particular time and place, it may be argued that it describes the universe and some natural phenomena according to the common view held then, even if this contradicts modern scientific knowledge[189]. For example:

1. It refers to the 'swimming' of the celestial bodies[190], which may suggest the existence of some kind of water – a belief which some people had in ancient times.
2. It repeatedly refers to the 'seven heavens'.
3. It describes the earth as 'spread out like a carpet', which suggests that the shape of the earth is flat.
4. It refers to the sun setting in a muddy pool[191].
5. There are also references to other phenomena apparently contradicting science such as jinn and the language of birds and ants.

In this section, I will discuss the last two points mentioned above, leaving the first three points to the relevant sections in chapter seven when I analyse the verses concerned.

In fact such arguments regarding how to deal with verses that seem anything but scientific have been addressed to apologists who support scientific exegesis. Referring to Sardar's[192] observation that for Muslims, the Qur'an is *a priori* the Word of God and therefore the belief is not contingent upon anything, Aijaz[193] comments that this is "akin to the belief that 1 + 1 = 2, or that married bachelors do not exist – statements which do not require proof, for the mere understanding of the propositions suffices as proof...The fact of the

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[189] See for example Ahmad, A., (1978). *Naqd Al-Fahm Al-'aṣri: li Al-Qur'an*. 2nd. ed. Beirut: Da:r Al-Tali:'ah. pp.52ff.
[190] The Qur'an (21: 33), (36: 40).
[191] The Qur'an (18: 86).
[192] Ziauddin Sardar, *Explorations in Islamic Science*, (Mansell: 1989), pp. 29-37.
[193] Imran Aijaz, *Evidentialist Apologetics in Islam*, http://www.geocities.com/critical_discourse/aplgtcs.htm#science.

matter is that for the vast majority of Muslims, belief in the Qur'an is *fideistic*." Aijaz goes on to remark that this is acceptable, as long as one remains a fideist consistently. But the problem arises when apologists want to have their cake and eat it too. He explains this:

> On one hand, they argue that their belief is scientifically unfalsifiable, because belief in the Qur'an for them is supra-rational, and it is the ultimate yardstick. On the other hand, they are reasoning with the unbeliever that it would be irrational for him or her to reject the scientific evidence for the Qur'an which has been put on the table, proving once and for all that it is God's Word. And yet, this sort of contingency is *precisely* which the apologist rejects. For if negative scientific evidence was put on the table, attempting to refute the Qur'an (say, for example, the impossibility of virgin births, non-existence of jinn, etc.) he would simply shift the goal-post and argue that it is a category mistake to judge the Qur'an using science.[194]

This is a real logical problem for the proponents of scientific exegesis. This has caused some modernists to attempt to solve the dilemma that the Qur'an contains material which seems to reflect antiquated conceptions contradicting modern science by finding some ways to explain away the difficulty concerning them if viewed from a modern perspective. For example, one explanation of the Qur'an's reference to the sun setting in a muddy pool reads "at that time Dhul Qarnai:n reached a point in the west where civilization ended, it seemed to him as if the sun was setting in a well, though it did not happen in reality"[195]. Another suggestion is that "in the story of Dhul Qarnain views of the Arabs of Mohammed's days concerning sunset are reflected."[196] When the Qur'an mentions such issues, Khalaf Allah argues, "It is not on account of considering them to be right, but merely out of the desire to nullify them little by little."[197] In other words, this can be understood as saying that the Qur'an reports what people believed then, but not necessarily confirms it. This is encountered in many examples in the Qur'an. For example, in Joseph's story (12: 28), we read فَلَمَّا رَأَى قَمِيصَهُ قُدَّ مِنْ دُبُرٍ قَالَ إِنَّهُ مِنْ كَيْدِكُنَّ إِنَّ كَيْدَكُنَّ عَظِيمٌ, "When he saw his shirt was torn from behind he said, 'That is of your women's guile; surely your guile is great." Someone may argue that the Qur'an describes women as having great guile.

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[194] Imran Aijaz, *Evidentialist Apologetics in Islam*, http://www.geocities.com/critical_discourse/aplgtcs.htm#science.
[195] Ahmad Khan, quoted in Baljon, J. M. S., (1961), Op. Cit. p.22.
[196] Khalaf Allah, quoted in Baljon, J. M. S., (1961), Op. Cit. p.90.
[197] Ibid.

However this is not a statement made by God Himself but the reported speech of a certain individual. Regarding verse (18: 86), ﴿حَتَّى إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِي عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ...﴾[198] "Until, when he reached the setting of the sun, he found it setting in a muddy spring..." many commentators explain that the Qur'an reports the story of Dhul Qarnai:n, who reached the furthest west of the earth and saw the sun as if it was setting in a muddy pool. It did not really set in the pool, because it is far larger than the whole earth; this was mere an optical allusion.[199] Others go on to explain that this is an optical allusion similar to seeing the sun rising from the sea, or from the flat land. This is why in the next verse it is stated that Dhu Al-Qurnai:n saw the sun rising on a people who did not have any protection from it. Similarly, this does not mean that it actually touched them, but only that they were the first people to see it rising in that part of the earth.[200] The Qur'an reports what that man experienced; it does not confirm it as a scientific fact. Another traditional explanation is that the sun did set in a muddy or hot pool. It is reported that Ibn 'Abbas holds that the sun set in black mud. Others understood that it set in a hot pool.[201] Both explanations can be grouped in that it set in a hot pool, full of black mud.[202]

Regarding the references to other phenomena contradicting science such as jinn and the language of birds and ants, some modernists attempted to find explanations that go in line with a modern material outlook. For example, jinn are explained away as microbes[203], or as "certain legends deeply embedded in the consciousness of the people to whom the Qur'an was addressed", and the references made to them, in every case, are intended not to recall

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[198] The Holy Qur'an (18: 86).
[199] See, for example, Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 520, Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 11, p. 50, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 103, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 5, p. 242, Al-Jala:lai:n's Commentary, p.393, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:ḥ Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 16, p. 32.
[200] Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 11, p. 50.
[201] Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol.16, p.11., Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol.5, p.242., Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol.3, p. 179., Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol.3, p.25, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:ḥ Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 16, p. 31.
[202] Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol.16, p.12.. Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol.5, p.242, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol.3, p.25, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:ḥ Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 16, p. 32.
[203] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit.p.34, 43.

the legend as such but the illustration of a moral or spiritual truth. [204] References to the languages of birds and ants are explained away in that these are the names of two tribes whose languages were known to Solomon, who was a good linguist. [205]

On the other hand, some proponents of scientific exegesis who use this approach to argue for the Divine origin of the Qur'an, but who are against the modernists' proposals, have another way of tackling this issue. They may find rational explanations for some issues. Some of the rational explanations regarding the first three points mentioned above are discussed in the relevant sections in chapter seven when I analyse the verses concerned. When no rational explanation is available, they argue that not everything can be explained scientifically. They maintain that there are issues which defy scientific explanation such as jinn, miracles, and even God Himself. No matter what is the result of all these discussions, for them:

> It must be clarified ... that the faith of Muslims is not conditioned upon whether or not scientific fact coincides with what is found in the Qur'an or in authentic statements (*hadi:th*) of the Prophet Muhammad (*sallallahu 'alai:hi wa sallam*). If scientific discoveries coincide with what has already been uncovered or mentioned in the Qur'an, it is then viewed as a confirmation of what was already held as true and it may also be a clarification of those matters which may have been beyond the scope of human knowledge at any given time. The case may arise however, where the views held by scientific circles may conflict with assertions made in the Qur'an and the authentic *hadi:th*. In such a case, Muslims are duty bound to accept what is evident in the religious texts and should scrutinize what is held to be the scientific view. This is the general rule with regards to understanding religious texts from the Qur'an and the *hadi:th*.[206]

This proposal has been criticized as shown above. Therefore, many reputable Muslim scholars argue that it would be better for Muslims to refrain from engaging in this approach altogether. The Qur'an cannot be scientifically proven to be Divine. Counter-arguments will be readily available, as has been shown above. The noble aim which caused some scholars to use the proposed scientific content of the Qur'an to call others to Islam

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[204] Asad, M. quoted in Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.25.
[205] Robinson, N., (1999), Op. Cit. pp.73-4.
[206] It Is Truth, Preface, http://www.it-is-truth.org/chapters/wwwpreface.htm. , quoted in Imran Aijaz, *Evidentialist Apologetics in Islam*, http://www.geocities.com/critical_discourse/aplgtcs.htm#science#science

can be appreciated. But, as some other scholars have noted, this is not the best way to achieve this aim[207]. The Qur'an itself states that it is ﴿ ذَلِكَ الْكِتَابُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ هُدًى لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴾ "This is the book; in it is guidance, sure, without doubt, to those who fear Allah" (2: 2); ﴿ وَيَزِيدُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى ﴾ ""And Allah doth advance in guidance those who seek guidance" (19: 76); ﴿ وَالَّذِينَ اهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى ﴾ "But to those who receive guidance, He increases the (light of) Guidance" (47: 17); ﴿ وَنُنَزِّلُ مِنَ الْقُرْآنِ مَا هُوَ شِفَاءٌ وَرَحْمَةٌ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴾ "We send down (stage by stage) in the Qur'an that which is a healing and a mercy to those who believe: to the unjust it causes nothing but loss after loss." (17: 82); ﴿ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا أَعْجَمِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ أَأَعْجَمِيٌّ وَعَرَبِيٌّ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءٌ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى ﴾ "Had We sent this as a Qur'an (in a language) other than Arabic, they would have said: "Why are not its verses explained in detail? What! (a Book) not in Arabic? And (a Messenger) an Arab?" Say: "It is a guide and a healing to those who believe; and for those who believe not, there is a deafness in their ears, and it is blindness in their (eyes) " (41: 44). Thus, the Qur'an itself tells us that it can offer guidance only to those who seek guidance, without necessarily being scientifically miraculous and convincing. One may argue that religion cannot be scientifically proven to be true, because one cannot reasonably deny a well-established scientific fact, while the choice of a religion has to be according to one's own free will. Thus, what is presented are arguments and signs that leave the door open for counter arguments and different ways of considering and interpreting the signs. Even the verse that is often quoted in relation to the use of what some scholars believe to be scientific facts in the Qur'an refers to these as signs:

(سَنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْآفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ)

"Soon will We show them Our Signs in the (furthest) regions (of the earth), and in their own souls, until it becomes manifest to them that this is the Truth." It is interesting to note that this verse comes in the context of arguing with the disbelievers about the Divine origin of the Qur'an. The verse immediately preceding it says,

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[207] Al-Dhahabi:, M., (1995), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.530.

(قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ مَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ)

"Say: "See ye if the (Revelation) is (really) from Allah, and yet do ye reject it? Who is more astray than one who is in a schism far (from any purpose)?"" (41: 52, 53).

To put what has been discussed above in the framework of the main topic of this thesis, it can be said that all such discussions do not really reach to the heart of this research. This thesis does not attempt to prove that the Qur'an is the word of God, or that it is scientifically miraculous. It is true that the Qur'an reports that the sun was seen setting in a muddy pool, and refers to the seven heavens and to the earth spread out. What is important from the point of view of translation is that when translating the verse about the sun setting in a muddy pool, for example, a translator should not translate it in a way that suggests that the Qur'an or God in the Qur'an states that the sun does set in a muddy pool. It should reflect that this is the personal observation of a certain individual. Similarly, translating سبع سموات should be 'seven heavens', regardless of the meaning of this. The translation of the verses about the spreading out of the earth should neither state that the earth is flat nor spherical. Indeed, such remarks are not exclusive to the verses discussed in this research. Similarly, it is also true that the Qur'an states that the hands of a thief, whether male or female should be cut off, but it does not specify which hand is intended, the right or the left, or both, and whether all the hand should be cut off or only up to the wrist joint. Such details are added to the translation, for example, in the work of Al-Hilali and Khan, who translate the relevant verse as: "Cut off (from the wrist joint) the (right) hand of the thief, male or female". Commenting on their translation, Robinson (1999) regards Al-Hilali and Khan as ultra-traditionalists. "Their translation contains numerous glosses which are printed in brackets and which give an accurate picture of how the Qur'an was interpreted in the Middle Ages by scholars like Ibn Kathir, but which are misleading if they are taken as determining its meaning for all time."[208] What this thesis is concerned with is how to produce a semantically oriented translation of the discussed verses which is as literal as possible with respect to the linguistic meaning, thus to produce a TT which is capable of

[208] Robinson, N., (1999), Op. Cit. p.73.

various interpretations where the original is also, and of only one interpretation where the original is also. Agreed, the result will also be one possible interpretation; what is suggested here cannot claim to account for all the possible interpretations and produce the 'perfect' translation. This is too much of a claim to make. Instead, it can be looked at as an attempt to see how the translation of the relevant verses could possibly reflect the way in which those who suggest scientific expansions of meaning were able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of specific linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned. It can be thought of as a more flexible interpretation. This can be achieved by sticking as closely as possible to the literal meaning, which is responsible for this claimed flexibility of meaning in the original text. The notion of 'literal meaning' has been explained in a specific way.[209] Thus, the claimed extended meanings should share some of the main characteristics with the core meaning of the lexical item concerned. For example, الرجع was understood traditionally to main 'rain' only because it returns many times in the sky. Some modern scientific 'extenders' of the meaning explain that there are other possible forms of رجع; echo, heat, radio waves, etc. (e.g. El-Naggar). Others, for example Al-Sha'ra:wi:, although they limit the interpretation to 'rain' also, explain this in terms of the water cycle, which was perhaps unknown to some of the traditional commentators, although it could have been known in advanced pre-Islamic civilizations. Still others understand this verse in another way which may be related to science. That is, this verse talks about the sky as a whole returning to the point from which it started its movement in each course. Perhaps this is the interpretation that Yusuf Ali adopts in his translation: "By the Firmament which returns (in its round)". Yusuf Ali's comment[210] on this verse suggests that his translation means that the sky itself moves and returns. He adds a figurative dimension as well. He comments, "The Firmament above is always the same, and yet it performs its diurnal round, smoothly and punctually. So does God's Revelation show forth the Truth, which like a circle is ever true to its center, which is ever the same, though it revolves through the changing circumstances of our present life." All these extensions of meanings share the main property of 'returning in the sky'. By this mechanism, unreasonable extreme

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[209] See section 5.6.

[210] Ali, A. Y., (1983). *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and Commentary.* Beirut: Da:r Al-Qur'an Al-Kari:m., p. 1720.

extensions of meaning or scientific exegesis will be excluded; for example, explaining وما تحت الثرى as the ancient Egyptian Civilization[211], or the verse about shadows as referring to photography[212], or *nafs* and *zaw:j* as electron and neutron[213].

Aijaz[214], referring to Moore's comments in his paper on embryology in the Qur'an, verses (39:6), and (23:14), notes that Moore frequently uses such clauses, as "may refer", "may be", "seems to indicate", "seems to imply". Aijaz goes on to explain that some scientists such as Moore are not philologists, nor do they take care in exegetical matters. Therefore, they imply that their exegeses are not definitive. He goes on to explain that for his comments, Moore depends on the interpretations of the meanings of the words as provided by Al-Zinda:ni:. For example, Al-Zinda:ni: interprets the word *ʿalaqah* as being a "leech-like structure". According to this, Moore states: *"This is an appropriate description of the human embryo from days 7-24 when it clings to the endometrium of the uterus, in the same way that a leech clings to the skin."* Aijaz points out that had Al-Zinda:ni: interpreted *ʿalaqah* as simply a "blood clot" as indeed, many of the translators of the Qur'an before had, then Moore's exegesis melts away. This shows the important role translation plays with regard to possible scientific extensions of the meanings of some verses. An English-speaking reader who does not understand Arabic cannot evaluate the extent to which such a suggested scientific explanation of the meaning is legitimate. It is precisely the accurate translation of the lexical items concerned which gives him the chance to judge this. This is the main thread that runs through this thesis.

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[211] Al-Ju:hari:, quoted in Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit., vol.2, p.669.
[212] Al-Kwa:kibi:, quoted in Al-Dhahabi:, M., (1995), Op. Cit.vol.2, p.537.
[213] Naufal, quoted in Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, pp. 633-34.
[214] Imran Aijaz, *Evidentialist Apologetics in Islam*, http://www.geocities.com/critical_discourse/aplgtcs.htm#science#science

2.5 Scientifically Advanced Pre-Islamic Civilizations

In this section, a brief discussion of the existence of scientifically advanced civilisations outside Arabia in pre-Islamic times and the possible channels by which scientific knowledge might have entered Arabia will be attempted.

It could be reasonably argued that there existed scientifically advanced civilizations outside Arabia in pre-Islamic times which had an adequate understanding of many of the issues mentioned in these verses. Khir[215] writes, "the history of science is as old as history itself. The civilization of the ancient world, including the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Greek, Indian and Chinese, made great scientific advancements. Islamic civilisation inherited this ancient scientific heritage and made great efforts to further it." Hoodbhoy[216] explains that Al-Biruni believed that the peoples of the ancient world (Byzantines, Egyptians, Greeks) possessed more knowledge than the peoples of his own time, and wrote that 'what we have of our own sciences is nothing but the scanty remains of bygone times'. As many of the verses under study in this research talk about some celestial bodies and refer to some astronomical phenomena, astronomy in different civilizations, especially the Greek civilization, will be discussed first. Then, a discussion of scientific development in the ancient civilizations of China, Indian, and Persia will be attempted.

Astronomy had its early start in astrology of the ancient world. As old as the Sumerian and Babylonian cultures, astrology developed and was used to predict national or public events by observing the movements of the heavenly objects. Astrology reached Greece "about the beginning of the fourth century B.C., and within a hundred years it had penetrated almost all fields of thought; it provided a principle, cosmic necessity, which tended to unify Greek science, religion, and ethics."[217] In China, "every emperor kept a court astrologer along

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[215] Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.20.
[216] Hoodbhoy, P., (1991). *Islam and science :religious orthodoxy and the battle for rationality.* London: Zed Books. p.72.
[217] White, L. A., (1959). *The evolution of culture :the development of civilization to the fall of Rome.* New York: McGraw-Hill. p.357.

with other diviners. He observed winds and clouds as well as heavenly bodies...".[218] In Egypt also, astronomy flourished. "The Egyptians mapped the heavens, drew up lists of stars, and grouped stars into constellations. They identified the polestar and oriented some of their structures with reference to it, apparently. The two sides of the Great Pyramid, for example, deviate but slightly from true north. The movements of the heavenly bodies were systematically observed and recorded. The Egyptian priest-astronomers had worked out a calendar based upon the sun's movements as early as 4226 B.C. The year consisted of 360 days, plus added at the end of the year."[219]

In ancient Greece, Pythagoras (c. 570-? BC) argued that the Earth was a sphere; and that the Moon shone by reflected light.[220] Referring to this issue, Sarton writes:

> The idea that the earth is a sphere is probably as old as Pythagoras. How did he reach such a bold conclusion, one may wonder? He may have observed that the surface of the sea is not flat but curved, for as a distant ship approaches one first sees the top of its mast and sail and the rest appears gradually. The circular edge of the shadow cast in an eclipse of the Moon would also suggest the spherical shape of the Earth, but that is a more sophisticated kind of observation, implying an understanding of eclipses that had not yet been attained in the sixth century. It is more probable that as soon as the hypothesis of a flat earth had been rejected, the sphericity of the earth was postulated rather wildly, on insufficient experimental grounds. The earth cannot be flat; therefore it ought to be spherical. Was not the starry heaven visibly part of a sphere? Were not the disks of Sun and Moon circular?[221]

In the 4th century B.C., Heracleides, a follower of Pythagoras, believed that the spherical Earth rotated freely in space and that Mercury and Venus revolved about the Sun.[222]

Referring to the level of Greek astronomical knowledge in the sixth and fifth centuries, Lloyd[223] points out that "various authors are credited with knowing — or themselves

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[218] White, L. A., (1959), Op. Cit. p.357.
[219] Ibid., p.363.
[220] *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* (2001). Deluxe ed. CD. Windows version. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.
[221] Sarton, G., (1953). *A history of science.* London: Oxford University Press. P.212.
[222] Ibid., p.507.
[223] Lloyd, G. E. R., (1979). *Magic, reason, and experience :studies in the origin and development of Greek science.* Cambridge Eng.: Cambridge University Press. P.170.

indicate that they know — that the moon shines with reflected light". Lloyd[224] explains that this is stated in the fragments of Parmenides (Fr. 14), Empedocles (Frr. 43, 45) and Anaxagoras (Fr. 18). He goes on to point out that knowledge of this is also ascribed to Thales (Aet. II 28.5, DK 11 A 17b) and to Anaximenes (Theon of Smyra, 198.19— 199.2, DK 13 A 16). He maintains also that many authors knew that "the Morning Star and the Evening Star are one and the same body, and that the interposition of the moon and of the earth causes eclipses of the sun and moon respectively."[225]

The Roman Empire inherited ancient Greek science and philosophy. It eventually split into Eastern and Western Empires. Much of ancient Greek science and philosophy was lost with the fall of the Western Roman Empire around 500 AD. However, the Eastern Empire (the Byzantine Empire) survived much longer and had better relations with the surrounding cultures. In this regard Haussig writes, "A good deal of late antique civilization persisted in the East Roman Empire and this is due to its urban economy. It was because of this continuity that Byzantine civilization in the East Roman Empire was able to develop from that of late antiquity."[226]

Ancient China also witnessed scientific progress, especially in the fields of astronomy and medicine. In the 2nd millennium B.C., Chinese savants devised a calendar and methods of plotting the positions of stellar constellations. Astronomy and astrology were incorporated into the system of government from the very dawn of the Chinese state. For the Chinese, "The regulation of the calendar was not just a matter of practical concern, for instance for agriculture, but one with far-ranging implications for the order of the state."[227] It was believed that "the ruling dynasty remained fit to rule because of the accord the emperor maintained with the cosmic order"[228]. A system of astronomical observations and records

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[224] Lloyd, G. E. R., (1979), Op. Cit. p.170.
[225] Ibid.
[226] Haussig, H. W., (1971). *A history of Byzantine civilization*. London: Thames & Hudson. p.99.
[227] Lloyd, G. E. R., (1996). *Adversaries and authorities :investigations into ancient Greek and Chinese science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.167.
[228] Sivin, N., (1990). *Science and Medicine in Chinese History*. In: Ropp, Paul S. and Barrett, Timothy Hugh, eds. Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization. 164-196. Berkeley: University of California Press. p.173.

was also developed. Among the great Chinese astronomical achievements is the maintenance of accurate, dated records of such phenomena as eclipses, novae, comets, and sunspots. They also produced star catalogues embodying quantitative positional data as old as the fourth century B.C.[229] Many important inventions such as gunpowder and the first crude firearms, paper and printing, and the magnetic compass were produced by Chinese civilisation.[230] China was also a technologically advanced society. Among the Chinese technological achievements one can list agriculture, irrigation systems, means of harnessing animals, and bridges – segmented arch and suspension types. They were masters of producing porcelain.[231] The Chinese were also well-known for their ancient medicine.[232]

Scientific progress was also present in ancient Indian culture. During the Gupta Era (320 AD - 520 AD), astronomy saw spectacular progress. "In AD 499, Aryabhatta calculated ... the length of the solar year as 365.358 days. He also postulated that the Earth was a sphere rotating on it's own axis and revolving around the Sun as well as the exact cause of eclipses."[233]

Ancient Persia witnessed also scientific progress. Chosroes (Khosrow) Anushirvan, the Persian king who ruled the Sassanian Empire from 531 to 579, was a great patron of arts and scholarship. During his reign, he welcomed many Greek philosophers and scientists who migrated to the Sassanian Empire in 529 when the ancient academy of Athens was closed by Justinian[234]. He had many medical doctors and sages at his court, for example the famous physician Burzoe. Many works were translated into Middle Persian from Greek, Syriac and Sanskrit.[235] His reign witnessed many scientific achievements. For example, Astronomy and astrology flourished and one star table (called the *zij-i*

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[229] Sivin, N., (1990), Op. Cit. p.174.
[230] Ibid., p.165.
[231] Ibid., p.166.
[232] Ibid., p.183.
[233] *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* (2001). Op. Cit.
[234] Frye, (1984). *The history of ancient Iran.* [7. Teil]. München: C.H. Beck. p.330, Wiesehofer, J., (1996). *Ancient Persia :from 550 BC to 650 AD.* London: I.B. Tauris. p.217.
[235] Frye, (1984), Op. Cit. p.330.

Shahriyar), which was the basis of many later Islamic tables, is said to have originated during the reign of Khosrow.[236]

Thus, as these great scientifically advanced civilisations existed outside Arabia in pre-Islamic times, it could be argued that some of the scientific knowledge they possessed might have entered Arabia through many channels. This is to be discussed next.

[236] *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* (2001). Op. Cit.

2.5.1 Possible Channels through which Scientific Knowledge might have entered Arabia

The interaction between different cultures and civilizations can take place through various ways. One can name four main interrelated channels for the interaction between different cultures and civilizations through which knowledge may pass from one civilization to another. These are trade, missionary activities, warfare, and population movement. Sometimes more than one channel can be involved. For example, population movement may involve also trade practice. Similarly, different merchants may be involved in missionary activities. Because of its central geographical position between the East and the West, Arabia had many trade routes in different ages passing through it. It had contact along its borders with different civilizations and cultures such as the Egyptian, Greco-Roman, Indian and Persian civilizations. Missionary expeditions were sent to different parts of Arabia in different times. Christianity was spread in North-western and South-western Arabia. To illustrate this, a brief historical account is needed.

Arabia had a central geographical position between the East and the West. Hoyland[237] points out, "Its position between the Mediterranean world, Mesopotamia, Africa and India meant that a certain amount of commercial traffic was bound to pass through or round Arabia on its way to and from these regions." Referring to the trade activity of Arabia since ancient times, O'Leary writes, "Besides sending its own produce of sweet spices to the West, it [Arabia] was the medium through which merchandise from India commonly passed. The sea route between India and the Persian Gulf was opened up at an early date, probably by the Babylonians, perhaps by Indians in Babylonian days."[238] O'Leary explains that besides the sea rout there is another land route through which trade passed between Arabia and India. "India can also be reached by land, and this we have to take into account as a possible explanation of trade which we might otherwise assume had come by sea to

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[237] Hoyland, R. G., (2001), Op. Cit. p.107.
[238] O'Leary, D. L., (1927). *Arabia before Muhammad.* London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & co., ltd. p.59.

the Persian Gulf and so reached the west through Arabia."[239] He explains that the land routes possibly passed along the base of the Elburz mountains or went across Turkistan further north. In both cases they passed through the passes of the Hindu Kush, entering India from the north-west, the way by which India has been invaded time after time.[240] Arabia had also trade contact with Egypt: "Sinai is in close contact with the North Hijâz and through it passes the trade route to Egypt."[241]

Since the age of the ancient South Arabian kingdoms (6th century BC to the end of the 3rd century AD), Ma'in, Saba', Qataban and Awsan, a caravan trade route extended through Yemen towards the north, running through the oases of the Hija:z (on the Red Sea coast of the Arabian Peninsula). It reached Egypt, Syria, central Arabia, the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia.[242] Referring to the trade activity of the kingdom of Saba', which had its centre in the valley system of Wadi Kharid, Salibi writes, "The various caravan routes from the towns of the Arabian Sea coast joined in a main course at Wadi Kharid, to proceed northwards from there through the Hijaz, and ultimately to branch off to Mesopotamia or to Syria. It was as the starting point of the main caravan route from the South Arabia that the old kingdom of Saba' had flourished."[243] In relation to this, Hoyland refers to historical evidence on trade contacts between south Arabia and the outside world. He writes, "...an incense altar from Moab (modern central west Jordan) and a storage jar inscribed with south Arabian letters from Muweilah (in the modern Emirates) have been discovered in securely dated contexts of c.800 and c.700 BC respectively, suggesting that south Arabia already had trade contacts with the outside world by this time." [244] Hoyland goes on to refer to another historical incident which proves that trade relations between south Arabia and the Mediterranean had already been established as early as the mid-eighth century BC. It is recorded that "a governor of Suhu in the area of the Middle Euphrates launched a punitive raid upon a caravan belonging to the people of Tayma and Saba..."[245]

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[239] O'Leary, D. L., (1927), Op. Cit. p.65.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ibid., p.142.
[242] Ibid., pp.103-06.
[243] Salibi, K. S., (1980). *A history of Arabia.* Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan Books. p.31.
[244] Hoyland, R. G., (2001), Op. Cit. p.38.
[245] Ibid., p.39.

Hoyland points out that the Minaeans, one of the major kingdoms of South Arabia, "traded far and wide, sending out caravans to Egypt, Gaza, Syria, Mesopotamia and Tyre."[246] In a similar vein, Simon writes, " The roots of trade between the Mediterranean world and China, India, Yemen, and the Eastern coast of Africa go back antiquity when the main receiving market was, since the time of Augustus, Rome and later Rome's heir, Byzantium."[247]

These trade activities contributed to the cultural interaction between Arabia and the neighbouring civilizations. O'Leary explains that Arabia was not secluded from the cultural influence of other civilisations. It had external contact with other civilizations "mainly by the development of trade routes by which the merchandise from South Arabia, and imports from India and East Africa, were conveyed to the western world and more particularly to the Byzantine Empire. We have seen scattered references to Byzantines and others who passed down into Arabia, as missionaries, colonists, or commercial agents, and so find indirect suggestions of intercourse with Arabia"[248]

One of the most influential tribes in Arabia was Quraysh who controlled Makkah and were involved in trade. Prophet Muhammad comes from this tribe and he was involved in trade as well. In the 6th century, Quraysh, who were in control of Makkah at that time, had agreements with the northern and southern tribes opening Arabia to commerce. Quraysh's superior position among the tribes as the people who had the custody of the sacred shrine in Makkah (the Ka'ba) enabled them to establish agreements securing trade routes for caravans from the southern Yemen coast to Makkah and thence northward to Byzantium and eastward to Iraq. Trade with Axum (in present-day Ethiopia) was secured by another agreement which opened trade routes along the African and Arabian coasts. Furthermore, there were also pacts with Byzantium, Persia, and rulers of Yemen and Ethiopia, promoting commerce outside Arabia. This commercial activity is referred to in the Holy Qur'an in chapter 106 (Quraish). On the role Makkah played in trade, Hodgson writes:

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[246] Hoyland, R. G., (2001), Op. Cit. p.41.
[247] Simon, R. ó., (1989). *Meccan trade and Islam :problems of origin and structure*. [v. 32]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó. p.24.
[248] O'Leary, D. L., (1927), Op. Cit. p.190.

> The most important trading centre of western and central Arabia was Mecca in the Hij:az. It was at the junction of two major routes. One went south and north, through the mountainous Hija:z from the Yemen and the Indian Ocean lands to Syria and the Mediterranean lands; the other, of less importance, went east and west from the Iraq, Iran, and the central Eurasian lands to Abyssinia and eastern Africa.[249]

It may seem unusual that an inland town like Makkah which had no great oasis could have been a centre for trade. Hodgson[250] seems to refer to this when he explains that, Makkah, compared to Ta:if and other localities in the same area, had no great oasis. However, he explains that it had sufficient water for trade caravans and it was protected by hills from Red Sea pirates. Moreover, it had a respected shrine to which pilgrimage was made. The question concerning Makkan trade is also posed by some other scholars, as will be mentioned shortly. Hodgson goes on to explain, "When Muhammad was growing up, much of the transit trade between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean basin was passing through Arabian overland routes."[251]

Referring to the role trade played in pre-Islamic times, Simon writes "Long-distance trade played an important role in the foreign policy of the two great powers, Iran and Byzantium. On the other hand, this trade, through the production of luxury and prestige goods, the vicinity of the trade routes, mediation and transport, and through some other factors affected quite a large number of primitive, archaic societies situated between the two great powers."[252] He goes on to explain that these two powers, in order to organize and secure long-distance trade, entered into alliance with these societies. In the course of this process, a great variety of (ideological, military, etc.) links came into being between these two powers and the primitive societies.[253] He explains that Quraysh, the Makkan tribe which at the time of Muhammad's appearance controlled transit trade across the Arabian Peninsula, was involved in this long-distance trade.[254] Hourani[255] refers also to the involvement of the

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[249] Hodgson, M. G. S., (1974). *The venture of Islam :conscience and history in a world civilization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. p.154.
[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid., p.153.
[252] Simon, R. ó., (1989), Op. Cit. p.9.
[253] Ibid.
[254] Ibid.

Prophet's tribe in trade, "Members of the tribe were traders, who had agreements with pastoral tribes around Mecca and also relations with Syria as well as south-western Arabia." Even the Prophet himself was involved in trade before his prophethood. He married a wealthy widow from Quraish (Khadi:jah), and looked after her business for her.[256]

Referring to the relationship between trade and struggle for power, and the involvement of Makkah in this, Simon point out that "Meccan intermediary trade had been part of the famous East—West trade circuit and therefore Mecca's trade was closely bound to the struggle for power of the neighbouring great empires and their allies of buffer states (Abyssinia, Yemen, the Ghassanids and Lakhmids)."[257] However, he admits that Meccan trade has been a problematic issue in that "Mecca existed on primitive, traditionally tribal foundations, but its life was ensured by the mediation of trade between archaic societies with highly developed state structure"[258]. This is also posed by some Western scholars who believe that no great trade existed in Makkah.[259] However, although Crone doubts the status of Meccan trade, she agrees that there have been commercial centres in Aden and other coastal cities of south Arabia[260].

Another channel for communicating knowledge and cultural influence is **missionary activities**, which is also related to trade activities, as mentioned above. In north-western Arabia, Al-Hirah (near modern Kufah) was a considerable centre of Nestorian Christianity in the 6th century. Referring to the Nestorian Christians influence in this area, O'Leary writes, "In southern Mesopotamia about Hira they were especially strong and at the time of the Muslim invasion in the seventh century Hira was almost entirely Christian and

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[255] Hourani, A. H., (1991). *A history of the Arab peoples*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. p.15.
[256] Ibn Hisham, 'Abd-Almalik. et. al., (1955). *The life of Muhammad*. London: Oxford University Press. p.82, Hourani, A. H., (1991), Op. Cit. p.15, Hodgson, M. G. S., (1974), Op. Cit. p.158.
[257] Simon, R. ó., (1989), Op. Cit. p.10.
[258] Ibid., p.11.
[259] Crone, P., (1987). *Meccan trade and the rise of Islam*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press..
[260] Ibid., p.4.

Nestorian."[261] O'Leary mentions a link through which pre-Islamic scientific knowledge might have passed on to the Arabs of Hira who were an integral part of the Arab community:

> No Arabic version of the scriptures or Arabic liturgy was produced, for Arabic had not yet attained the status of a literary language, but the Christian Aramaic known as Syriac was employed for ecclesiastical purposes, just as the Arabs of Petra used Aramaic for inscriptions though talking Arabic. As a result the Arabs of Hira were bi-lingual, and through the medium of Syriac a considerable mass of Hellenistic scientific, philosophical, and theological material was accessible to them.[262]

From there, "Nestorian missions penetrated Arabia itself. A trade route connected Hira with Nejran and Ibn Hisham reports the tradition that the Christian Church of Nejran was founded by a Syrian named Faymiyun (Phemion), strongly suggesting a Nestorian mission along that trade route to South Arabia."[263] It is related that the Prophet paid a visit to Syria when he was young (before his prophethood). There, a Christian hermit whose name was Bahira, but who is also called Nestor, recognized him as a prophet.[264]

Referring also to the cultural contact the Arab population of this area were exposed to, which also passed into Arabia via trade routes, Hourani writes, "The people of these states acquired political and military knowledge, and were open to ideas and beliefs coming from the imperial lands; Hira was a Christian centre. From these states, from Yemen, and also by the passage of traders along the trade-routes, there came into Arabia some knowledge of the outside world and its culture, and some settlers from it. There were Jewish craftsmen, merchants and cultivators in the oases of Hijaz in western Arabia, and Christian monks and converts in central Arabia."[265]

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[261] O'Leary, D. L., (1927), Op. Cit. p.136.
[262] Ibid., p.136, 7.
[263] Ibid., p.137.
[264] Ibn Hisham, 'Abd-Almalik. et. al., (1955), Op. Cit. p.80, O'Leary, D. L., (1927), Op. Cit. p.142.
[265] Hourani, A. H., (1991), Op. Cit. p.12.

There was Byzantine presence and influence in Sudan and Abyssinia in the sixth century through Byzantine merchants, soldiers and missionaries. Political and economic advances in this region were followed by conversion to Christianity in its Monophysite form.[266] The Greek language was used in this region:

> The Byzantine authors of the sixth century, especially those who wrote in Syriac, were very well informed about this region. They knew the kings of the two most important tribes of the Sudan, the Noba and the Blemmi. Inscriptions of the kings of the Noba written in the Greek language witness to the fact that Greek was used alongside Nubian as the administrative language. The kings of the other Sudanese tribe, the Blemmi, also made use of Greek and some of their sixth-century documents have survived in this language.[267]

Greek was used as the language of the court and the administration. "Abyssinian coins used the Greek script for the name of the ruler who minted them. Ge'ez, the oldest language of the Abyssinians, is full of Greek loan-words, thus revealing the strength of Byzantine influence...Many translations were made from Greek into Ge'ez. Even the old script in which Ge'ez is written is probably the work of East Roman missionaries."[268]

Quraish was involved in trade with Abyssinia. At the early stages of Islam while the Qur'an was still being revealed, the Prophet ﷺ ordered some Muslims headed by Ja'far bin Abi-Talib رضي الله عنه to migrate to Abyssinia because of the hardship they encountered in Makkah after embracing Islam. He told them that the Negus of Abyssinia was a fair king, and that they will be safe there. They stayed there for a few years, and returned eventually to Makkah.[269] This was another possible link through which some aspects of the Byzantine civilization might have entered Arabia.

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[266] Haussig, H. W., (1971), Op. Cit. p.101.
[267] Ibid., p.102.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Al-Tabari:, M. J., (1985). *Ja:mi' Al-Baya:n 'an Ta'wi:l 'A:y Al- Qur'an.* Beirut: Da:r Al-Fikr., vol.9, p.249, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 1, p. 313.

Byzantino-Greek culture and Christian churches existed also in South Arabia. "As in the case of Abyssinia, it was economic developments which introduced South Arabia to Romano-Byzantine culture...Byzantine culture penetrated into the South Arabian world."[270]

Warfare is the third channel through which knowledge may pass from one civilization to another. Arabia was surrounded by military conflicts between Byzantium and Persia. Of particular importance is the Abyssinians (and, by extension, the Byzantines) involvement in south-western Arabia following the massacre of Christian community there at the hands of a Himyarite Jewish king. As mentioned above, there was Byzantine presence and influence in Sudan and Abyssinia in the sixth century. The Greek language was used in this region, and many documents in Greek existed there. About AD 522 Dhu Nuwas persecuted and killed numerous Christians and Byzantine merchants in Najran (in present-day Saudi Arabia to the north of Yemen) and elsewhere in his kingdom.[271] "Dhu Nuwas gave the Christians the choice between apostacy and death, and dug a trench in which fire was lighted and there he burned those who remained steadfast in their faith."[272] This outraged the Christian Negus of Ethiopia (Abyssinia), who landed with troops in Yemen. Having killed the Himyarite king in battle, the Abyssinians established a colony on the coast.[273] Another explanation for this conflict is that it was not because of religious reasons, but mainly for economic interest. It occurred in the course of the competing desire for political and military hegemony between Byzantium and Persia. It aimed at controlling the major trade route from the ports on the Indian Ocean via Makkah and Madinah to the Mediterranean port of Gaza.[274] Later on Abraha seized power in south-western Arabia. He built a great church in San'a and turned it into a centre for Arabian Christian pilgrimage, to rival Makkah as centre for Arabian pagan pilgrimage.[275] He invaded Makkah with a great

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[270] Haussig, H. W., (1971), Op. Cit. p.102
[271] O'Leary, D. L., (1927), Op. Cit.pp. 119, 145, Hoyland, R. G., (2001), Op. Cit. p.52.
[272] O'Leary, D. L., (1927), Op. Cit. p.145. This is referred to in the Qur'an (85: 4 – 8).
[273] O'Leary, D. L., (1927), Op. Cit. p.146.
[274] Haussig, H. W., (1971), Op. Cit. p.105.
[275] Salibi, K. S., (1980), Op. Cit. p.72.

army supported by elephants to destroy the House of God in Makkah[276]. This is recorded by Muslim tradition as having taken place in the same year in which Prophet Muhammad was born, which is referred to as the year of the elephant[277]. Other resources report that this unsuccessful invasion took place in 552[278]. Abyssinian rule ended in 575 when the Persian Sasanians invaded the region[279] and ruled it until the early Muslim state took charge.[280]

Population movement is another channel for transforming knowledge from one place to another. At different times in history, people in Arabia would move from one place to another for various reasons. For example, according to the changes in climate, searching for more fertile places where water was abundant. Another reason could be in search for a more peaceful place at times of war. To give an example of such movements, Hoyland[281] explains that during the first century AD., a number of Arab groups in the central Arabia began to migrate from their homeland. He points out that there is literary and epigraphic evidence indicating that they moved northward towards Syrian Desert, eastwards towards Bahrain and Oman, and southward towards Yemen. He goes on to explain that there is no definite reason for such movements, but it is probably connected with upheavals in the kingdoms of Yemen. Another possible explanation could be population growth, which places a strain on limited resources and so necessities the departure of a part of the population to seek out new pastures.

Another major movement of people in South Arabia took place after the collapse of the Ma'rib Dam, which was regarded for many centuries as a regional wonder. It is reported that the Ma'rib Dam was destructed by floods and reconstructed again at various times in

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[276] O'Leary, D. L., (1927), Op. Cit. p.147, Hoyland, R. G., (2001), Op. Cit. p.55. This is alluded to in the title, "the Elephant," of chapter 105 of the Qur'an. See Al-Tabari:, M. J., (1985), Op. Cit., vol.30, p.300, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 9, p. 200.
[277] See Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 9, p. 235, Salibi, K. S., (1980), Op. Cit. p.72.
[278] Hoyland, R. G., (2001), Op. Cit. p.55.
[279] O'Leary, D. L., (1927), Op. Cit. p.146.
[280] Hoyland, R. G., (2001), Op. Cit. p.57.
[281] Ibid., p.231.

history[282]. One incident took place in the second century AD., and several Yemeni tribes emigrated northward.[283]

What is important from the above historical account is to show how the different cultures and civilizations interacted through various channels. These channels include trade, missionary activities, warfare, and population movement. Trade routes acted as channels for communicating knowledge between different cultures and sending missionaries. For example, Southern Arabia, as explained above, was in contact with different parts of the world through trade and missionary activity from the Byzantine Empire, which led to the spread of Christianity in that age. The Byzantine civilization was influential in the North-western Arabia, where Nestorian Christianity also flourished. The Silk Road is "an ancient trade route that, linking China with the West, carried goods and ideas between the two great civilizations of Rome and China. Silk came westward, while wools, gold, and silver went east. China also received Nestorian Christianity and Buddhism (from India) via the road."[284] Many important inventions of the Chinese civilization such as gunpowder, printing, and the magnetic compass made their way to the West along the silk trading routes. Referring to some characteristics of the earliest Chinese civilization, Sivin[285] explains that "things and ideas have flowed between China, Europe, and the other great civilizations regularly since the New Stone Age... Science was part of the flow between East and West from early times. The Greek medical doctrine of the four elements reached China via India by about A.D. 500. Physicians from Byzantium or Syria, possibly Christians, are said to have cured a Chinese emperor in the mid seventh century."

In the sixth century B.C., i.e. twelve centuries before the revelation of the Qur'an , Thales, who was the first Greek mathematician and astronomer[286], concluded that water was the original substance in all living creatures. Sarton comments that it is interesting to note that "a similar conclusion was reached more than twelve centuries later by the Muslim Prophet.

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[282] Salibi, K. S., (1980), Op. Cit. p.33.
[283] Hoyland, R. G., (2001), Op. Cit. p.233.
[284] *Encyclopaedia Britannica,* (2001). Op. Cit.
[285] Sivin, N., (1990), Op. Cit. p.191.
[286] Sarton, G., (1953), Op. Cit. p.171.

Indeed God revealed to him, 'We have made of water everything living.'"[287] Then, on the possibility that this information might have passed to the Prophet, he explains, "It is not impossible that the Thalesian conceit had percolated into Muhammad's head, but it is not at all necessary to assume such a transmission. The Prophet had had at least as many opportunities as Thales of witnessing desert sterility on one day, and life abundant after a rain on the morrow."[288] Thus, although it might be argued that the information contained in these verses might have entered Arabia before the revelation of the Qur'an, and that the scientifically advanced pre-Islamic civilizations might have been a possible source for such knowledge, this does not necessarily change the fact that these verses have linguistic meaning that should be reflected in the translation. But what is found in the analysed translations of most of these examples, as will be discussed in chapter seven, are the traditionally understood implications and commentaries being read back into these translations, although this does not always respect the more obvious linguistic meaning. Reading the published and widely used translations of the Qur'an, which are analysed in this thesis, an English-speaking reader who does not understand Arabic will not be able to see how the suggested extensions were ever possible. On the other hand, reading the translations which are already based on the scientific interpretation will also incur another problem. This will not give him the chance to judge this issue neutrally. This thesis comes as an attempt to fill this gap and provide the missing link. In each example, the arguments of those who suggest scientific expansions of meaning are presented, and a linguistic analyse of the structures they claim to be responsible for their suggested expansions is attempted. Other alternative explanations that do not rely on scientific exegesis are also discussed in each example. A certain translation is then selected or suggested according to the standards discussed above.

Moreover, as explained in the introduction, even if someone questions its divine origin and authority, the Holy Qur'an should still have meaning: "The question of authorship certainly does not affect the fact that the Qur'an has meaning."[289] It is with the issue of meaning of these verses that this thesis is concerned. It is not the purpose of this thesis to

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[287] Sarton, G., (1953), Op. Cit. p.172. This is mentioned in verse (21: 30) in the Qur'an.
[288] Sarton, G., (1953), Op. Cit. p.172.
[289] Zubir, B. N., (1999), Op. Cit., p. 17.

argue for the Divine origin of the Holy Qur'an, or to argue that it is scientifically miraculous. Its central concern is, rather, the issue of translating these verses, which some Muslim scholars believe refer to some scientific issues and attest to the miraculous nature of the Holy Book of Islam. Regardless of the extent to which such a claim is legitimate, these verses do have meaning and can be identified as a distinct group characterised by certain characteristic. They can be subsumed, for example, under what Robinson calls 'Signs verses'[290], which list some of the signs of the Creator's power and beneficence. They point to the signs of God's creation in the universe, e.g. the heaven, the stars, the sun, the moon, the earth, the mountains, etc. to draw man's attention to such signs and invite him to be grateful to his Creator.

[290] See section 6.3.3.

3 CHAPTER THREE: BACKGROUND OF THE HOLY QUR'AN AND THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE QUR'ANIC MESSAGE

3.1 Layout

This chapter provides some background on the Holy Qur'an. However, it is not intended here to provide a full account of the historical background. The discussion in this chapter will be limited to issues directly related to the topic of the present work. For more details on this issue it is worth looking at Al-Malik (1995)[291], Al-Sahli (1996)[292], Ali (1998)[293], and Almisned (2001)[294]. El Shiekh (1990)[295] also devotes a whole chapter in his PhD thesis to a historical account of the translations of the Holy Qur'an. Other aspects of the Holy Qur'an are dealt with in the relevant chapters in the present work. For example, the issue of translatability vs. untranslatability of the Holy Qur'an is referred to in the introduction.[296] The relationship between science and the Divine texts, the Bible and the Holy Qur'an, and the different views on approaching the Holy Qur'an from the scientific perspective are considered in chapter two.[297] The division of the Holy Qur'an chapters and verses into Makkan and Madinan is discussed in relation to text typology in chapter six.[298]

In this chapter, I will discuss the issue of the purported universality of the Qur'anic message in terms of: (1) stable vs. developing meaning, (2) occasions of revelation, and (3) the Qur'an and cultural difference. This is to shed some light on issues which will be important for the discussion in the next chapter of translation theories and the choice of an appropriate approach for translating the verses under investigation in this study.

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[291] Al-Malik, F. M., (1995). *Performative Utterances: Their Basic and Secondary Meanings With Reference to Five English Translations of the Meanings of The Qur'an.* Ph.D. thesis. University of Durham..
[292] Al-Sahli, A. S., (1996). *Non-Canonical Word Order: Its Types and Rhetorical Purposes With Reference to Five English Translations of the Meaning of the Holy Qur'an.* Ph.D. thesis. University of Durham..
[293] Ali, A. A. F. M., (1998), Op. Cit..
[294] Almisned, O., (2001), Op. Cit..
[295] El Shiekh, A., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 41.
[296] See section 1.2.
[297] See section 2.2 and section 2.4.
[298] See section 6.4.1 page 242 and section 6.4.2 page 250.

3.2 The Universality of the Qur'anic Message: Stable vs. Developing Meaning

Islamic belief holds that the Holy Qur'an is meant for all peoples at all times and places[299], and that, according to a saying of the Prophet (ﷺ), "its wonders never end"[300]. This leads some proponents of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an to argue that there can be new meanings and new interpretations of the Holy Qur'an to suit the modern age. When they discuss this issue, they propose that the Qur'an is divided into two parts: one part containing the verses whose meanings and functions are fairly stable until today. These verses are mainly those dealing with issues of faith, the *shari:'ah* limits, and the practices of worship. The second part may be open to new interpretations. It consists of those verses that can acquire new meanings and functions to suit the age in which they are received. These are mainly the verses talking about some aspects of the creation of the universe and the creation of man.[301] Some other advocates of this trend argue that science can promote some verses from what is called *mutasha:biha:t* verses into *muḥkama:t* ones. For example, al-Mashriqi deems it a special duty of scientists to make *muḥkama:t* of the *mutasha:biha:t*. He cites verse (36: 38) as an example, "And the sun runs on to a resting-place for it". He goes on to explain "Not until the Western scholar F. M. Herschel (1738-1822) had proved a spheric motion of the sun could this verse be added to the *muḥkamat*."[302]

This leads us to shed some light on the issue of *a:ya:t muḥkama:t* and *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* in the Qur'an in relation to the interpretation of verses which are believed to contain allusions to scientific issues from the perspective of translation. This is to be discussed next.

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[299] The Holy Qur'an (21: 107), (34: 28). See also Hoyland, R. G., (2001), Op. Cit. p.243.
[300] Quoted in Ali, A. A. F. M., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 198.
[301] See, for example, Al-Sha'ra:wi:, M. M., (1988), Op. Cit., p. 21.
[302] Quoted in Baljon, J. M. S., (1961), Op. Cit. p.53.

3.2.1 *Muḥkama:t* and *Mutasha:biha:t* Verses in the Qur'an

There is a verse in the Holy Qur'an that explains this classification:

﴿ هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخَرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ﴾

"He it is Who has sent down to thee the Book; in it are verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning); they are the foundation of the Book: others are allegorical. But those in whose hearts is perversity follow the part thereof that is allegorical, seeking discord, and searching for its hidden meanings, but no one knows its hidden meanings except God. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord:" and none will grasp the Message except men of understanding."[303]

In their commentaries on verse (3: 7) quoted above, different Commentators and scholars who have written on the sciences of the Qur'an present a great variety of definitions of the terms *muḥkama:t* and *mutasha:biha:t*. In this verse, the two terms are mentioned together in contrast. According to this verse, the Holy Qur'an consists partly of *muḥkama:t* verses and partly of *mutasha:biha:t* verses. There are, however, two other verses that mention these terms separately. In verse (11: 1), it is mentioned that all the verses of the Qur'an are characterized as *muḥkama:t*, while verse (39: 23) describes the whole Qur'an as *mutasha:bih*.

To make plain that there is no contradiction between these three verses, scholars usually explain *muḥkam* in verse (11: 1) to mean that the Holy Qur'an as a whole is at the pinnacle of eloquence, excellence, and stylistic beauty, and that no contradiction is to be found in

[303] The Holy Qur'an (3: 7), Yusuf Ali's translation.

it.[304] *Mutasha:bih* in verse (39: 23) means that the verses of the Holy Qur'an repeat, resemble and confirm each other in truthfulness and inimitability[305]. It is in verse (3: 7) that a great variety of definitions is to be found.

There are various interpretations of this verse according to the definition of *mutasha:biha:t*. In his seminal article *Muḥkama:t and Mutasha:biha:t (Koran 3/7): Implication of a Koranic Pair of Terms in Medieval Exegesis* which is based on selected works from among Sunni:, Shi'i:, Su:fi: and Mu'tazili: commentaries, Kinberg[306] explains that there are two main meanings for this term deriving from its root *sh.b.h*: 'similar' and 'ambiguous'. These will be discussed respectively.

According to the meaning 'similar', it is explained that the similarity or resemblance between different verses in the Holy Qur'an is manifested, through the repetition of these verses, in one of two ways:

(i) wording (*lafẓ*, *naẓm*)
(ii) meaning (*ma'na*)

Consequently, the definitions of *mutasha:biha:t* verses, according to this meaning, may be divided into two. *Mutasha:biha:t* verses are those:

(i) in which the same words are used to mean different things.
(ii) in which similar meanings are expressed in different ways.

Muḥkama:t verses, on the other hand, are defined in contrast to the above mentioned definition of *mutasha:biha:t* verses. Thus, they are defined as those verses the words of which are not repeated elsewhere in the Qur'an.

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[304] Al-Baida:wi:, A., (1996). *Tafsi:r Al-Baiḍa:wi: : 'Anwa:r Al-Tanzi:l wa 'Asra:r Al-Ta'wi:l.* Beirut: Da:r Al-Fikr., vol. 2, p.7.
[305] Al-Suyu:ti:, A., (1996). *Al-'Itqa:n fi: 'Ulu:m Al-Qur'an.* Beirut: Da:r al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah. vol.2, p.5.
[306] Kinberg, L., (1999). *Muḥkama:t and Mutasha:biha:t (Koran 3/7): Implication of a Koranic Pair of Terms in Medieval Exegesis.* In: Rippin, Andrew, ed. The Qur'an :formative interpretation. [v. 25.], 283-312. Aldershot, Hampshire: Ashgate.,pp. 285ff.

According to the second meaning deriving from the root *sh.b.h:*, *mutasha:bih* can mean 'ambiguous, dubious, unclear'. Hence, *mutasha:biha:t* verses are defined as ambiguous verses. By contrast, *muhkama:t* verses are clear or unambiguous verses. This definition of the term *muḥkama:t* is derived from the meaning inherent in the root *ḥ.k.m.*, 'to be firm and solid'. According to Al-Jurja:ni:'s *Al-Ta'ri:fa:t*, *muḥkama:t* means a passage from the Qur'an the meaning of which is well-established and secured (*uḥkima*) from change and alteration, pecularization and interpretation beyond its obvious meaning, and from abrogation[307]. According to Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s Commentary on the Holy Qur'an, *a:ya:t muḥkama:t* are those verses which are detailed and preserved from being susceptible to different interpretations[308]. These verses are phrased in a very precise way, and bear a clear message that cannot be misunderstood. Distinguishing the two terms according to the contrast between 'clear' and 'ambiguous' is the common approach.

Other definitions of *a:ya:t muḥkama:t* and *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* can be summarised below.

- *a:ya:t muḥkama:t* are abrogating verses (*na:sikha:t*), and *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* are abrogated verses, which are still read but not practiced (*mansu:kha:t*).[309]
- *muḥkam* is that part the meaning of which has been recognised either through its obvious surface meaning, or through interpretation, while *mutasha:bih* is that part the meaning of which is known only to God, such as the appearance of The Day of Resurrection, the appearance of the *Dajja:l*, the appearance of Gog and Magog, the appearance of Christ, the rising of the sun from the West, the duration of the world and its end, the opening letters in some suras of the Qur'an (*fawa:tiḥ*).[310] Al-Qurṭubi:[311] explains that this is the definition suggested by Ja:bir bin 'Abdilla:h, and Sufya:n Al-Thawri: and many others. Al-Qurṭubi: believes that the definition of *mutasha:bih* suggested here is the most accurate one.[312]

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[307] Al-Jurja:ni:, A. M., (1985). *Kita:b Al-Ta'ri:fa:t.* Beirut: Da:r al-Kita:b Al-'Arabi., p. 263.
[308] Al-Baida:wi:, A., (1996), Op. Cit., vol. 2, p.7.
[309] Al-Tabari:, M. J., (1985), Op. Cit., vol.3, p.173.
[310] Al-Zurqa:ni:, M., (1996). *Mana:hil Al-'Irfa:n fi: 'Ulu:m Al-Qur'an.* Beirut: Da:r al-Fikr., vol.2, p.196, Al-Suyu:ti:, A., (1996), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.5.
[311] Al-Qurtubi:, M., (1953). *Al-Ja:mi' li Aḥka:m Al-Qur'an.* In: Al-Bardu:ni, Ahmad, ed. 2nd ed. Cairo: Da:r Al-Sha'b., vol. 4, p.9.
[312] Al-Qurtubi:, M., (1953), Op. Cit., vol. 4, p.10.

- *Muḥkam* is that which has only one possible interpretation, while *mutasha:bih* is that which can be interpreted in more than one way.[313]
- *Muḥkama:t* are independent verses that do not need explanations, nor do they need to be referred back to other verses to clarify their meaning. Conversely, the *mutashabiha:t* are those verses which depend for their explanation on other *muḥkama:t* verses to which they should be referred and compared to be fully understood.[314]
- *a:ya:t muḥkama:t* are those dealing with the obligations and teachings of Islam, promise of reward and threat of punishment (الوعد و الوعيد), while *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* are those containing stories and parables.[315]

Commentators and scholars of the sciences of the Qur'an usually quote the definitions of these two types of verses as explained by some eminent Companions of the Prophet and traditional scholars. For example, according to Ibn 'Abbas, *Muḥkama:t* verses encompass the abrogating verses; those which state what is permissible and what is prohibited (*ḥala:l* and *ḥara:m*); those which state *shari'a* limits; those which describe the teachings and obligations of Islam; and those according to which one should lead one's life. *Mutasha:biha:t*, on the other hand, subsume the abrogated verses; those which do not respect the canonical word order of Arabic (*muqaddam wa mu'akhkhar*); those which contain parables, those containing oaths, and verses which one should believe in, but not practice.[316] According to Muja:hid, *muhkama:t* are verses which state what is permissible and what is prohibited (*ḥala:l* and *ḥara:m*), and *mutasha:biha:t* are the remaining verses, confirming each other with regard to their truthfulness.

Many of the above cited variations in the definitions of *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* and whether they can be interpreted or not result from the ambiguous syntactic structure of the last part of the verse, which reads:

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[313] Al-Zurqa:ni:, M., (1996), Op. Cit., vol.2, p.196, Al-Suyu:ti:, A., (1996), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.5, Al-Tabari:, M. J., (1985), Op. Cit., vol.3, p.173.
[314] Al-Zurqa:ni:, M., (1996), Op. Cit., vol.2, p.196, Al-Suyu:ti:, A., (1996), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.6.
[315] Al-Suyu:ti:, A., (1996), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.6.
[316] Ibid.

وَمَا يَعْلَمُ تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ آمَنَّا بِهِ كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا, "but no one knows its true meanings except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord:" Kinberg[317] explains that according to one reading, God alone can interpret the *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* (the words are read as two coordinate sentences, as in the translation provided). According to the second reading, *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* can also be understood and interpreted by scholars who have gained adequate knowledge (the words are read as one coordinate sentence, to be translated as: "but no one knows its true meanings except Allah and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge, saying: 'We believe in the Book; the whole of it is from our Lord'). Both views are accommodated by this verse. The first is possible if a pause is made after the word 'Allah', so that the section beginning with the particle *wa* is considered a new sentence. The second view is made possible if the particle *wa* is considered a conjunction which joins what precedes it with what follows it as one coordinated sentence. It is noted that the two views are reflected by two different symbols that indicate the type of pause suggested after the word 'Allah' in copies of the Qur'an published by different publishers. The first symbol ⸗ means that the pause is obligatory. It is found, for example, in a copy of the Holy Qur'an published by al-maktabah al-isla:miyyah, Istanbul (1982). The same is found in a copy published by da:r al-fikr, Damascus (1980), and in another copy published by manshu:ra:t da:r al-naṣr, Beirut (1979). The copy published by mu'assasat 'lu:m al-Qur'an, Damascus (1981) also uses the same symbol. The second symbol ۚ indicates that it is recommended, but not obligatory to pause. It is found in the copies produced by King Fahd complex for printing the Holy Qur'an, Madinah. In is also used in a copy published by da:r 'lu:m al-Qur'an, Damascus (1987). Some scholars believe that those who take the first reading in which the pause is obligatory as the correct one have interpreted *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* as that which is known to God alone, such as the appearance of the Day of Resurrection, the appearance of the *Dajja:l*, the appearance of Gog and Magog, the appearance of Christ, the rising of the sun from the West, the duration of the world and its

[317] Kinberg, L., (1999), Op. Cit. p.284.

end, and the opening letters in some suras of the Qur'an (*fawa:tiḥ*).[318] They, thus, assume that certain types of *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* are also accessible to some scholars who have gained deep knowledge of the relevant fields, which enables them to interpret their meanings. Those scholars are praised. Therefore, different types of *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* are recognised.

Some scholars divide *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t* into three main types. The first is known to Allah alone, and concerns the essence of Allah's Self, His Attributes, the time and appearance of The Day of Resurrection, and other issues related to the Unseen. The letters that commence some suras of the Holy Qur'an such as الم ; كهيعص are also included under this type. The second type can be known to anyone who endeavours to discover its meaning by research and contemplation, such as that aspect of being *mutasha:bih*, which results from the preposing and postposing of sentence elements (*taqdi:m wa ta'khi:r*), i.e. those verses which do not respect the canonical word order of Arabic, and that resulting from general reference to certain issues, without specific details. The third type may be known to some people who have gained enough knowledge in the related fields, and endeavored through scholarly research and investigation to discover its meaning. The type which is pursued by those whose hearts are perverse is the first type, but it is legitimate, and even encouraged to pursue an understanding of the second and third types.[319]

According to this argument, there are many benefits deriving from the existence of *a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t*, which stress the edifying purpose of the ambiguity of the *mutasha:biha:t* verses. They stimulate people and make them think about the Qur'an's verses, causing them to try to distinguish between them and use their own judgment in interpreting them[320]. Kinberg[321] sums up these benefits as discussed by different scholars along the following lines:

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[318] See, for example Al-Baida:wi:, A., (1996), Op. Cit., vol. 2, p.7.
[319] Al-Zurqa:ni:, M., (1996), Op. Cit., vol.2, pp.202, 203.
[320] See also Al-Zarkashi:, M. B., (1971). *Al-Burha:n fi: 'Ulu:m Al-Qur'an*. In: Ibrahim, Muhammad Abualfadl, ed. Beirut: Da:r al-Ma'rifah., vol.2, p.75, Al-Zurqa:ni:, M., (1996), Op. Cit., vol.2, p.205, Al-Baida:wi:, A., (1996), Op. Cit., vol. 2, p.7.

(i) Had the Qur'an consisted of *muḥkama:t*, there would have been no need for observation, nor examination, and no science connected with the interpretation of the Koran would have been developed.

(ii) Had every verse been clear to everyone, the different ability of people would not have been shown, the learned (*ʿa:lim*) and the ignorant (*ja:hil*) would have been the same, and intellect would have died.

(iii) The existence of dubious verses that require great knowledge for understanding points out the virtue of the scholars. Their efforts to comprehend these verses and to put them in harmony with the *muḥkama:t*, train them intellectually, strengthen their belief, and eventually lead to a blessed Afterworld.

Other western scholars have also written about this issue. For example, Baljon[322] explains that the question of the *mutashaibha:t* (ambiguous Qur'an verses), indicated in (3: 7)) is a much discussed and disputed topic. He compares the views of the classical commentators with that of the modernists. The first group usually understands by them "verses whose meaning is obscure because they are capable of various interpretations."[323] He maintains that sometimes the abrogated verses, "being neither authoritative for belief nor for morals, are reckoned among them." He goes on to explain that the modernists' view "is by no means inclined to consider the Koran an obscure book, even less to assume that it might contain superfluous parts. At the most it may be acknowledged that verses dealing with subtle subject-matters such as the Essence of God, the Hereafter, might be classed among the ambiguous verses."[324] But even with regard to those subtle subject-matters, some modernists believe that they are not anti-rational. Others believe that although they refer to matters which might still be regarded *mutashabih*, "if more insight is gained, they no longer offer any difficulty".[325]

There is another dimension to the relevance of verse (3: 7) in one interpretation to the alleged references to scientific matters in the Qur'an from the perspective of Modernism.

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[321] Kinberg, L., (1999), Op. Cit., pp. 302,03.
[322] Baljon, J. M. S., (1961), Op. Cit. p.51.
[323] Ibid.
[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid.

As discussed in section 2.4.1, Modernism aims at the revision and reinterpretation of religious ideas to bring them into line with modem knowledge, values and science. With regard to the Qur'an, this trend is manifested in interpreting it in the light of human reason to avoid a clash between Islam and science. This trend is pioneered by the famous Indian thinker Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan (d.1315/ 1898), who sought to dispose of miracles in the Qur'an by interpreting them away allegorically. Robinson (1997)[326] points out that a key text to this end is Q.3:7, which is discussed in this section. Robinson points out that it is clear from the context that *mutasha:biha:t* means 'ambiguous' or 'unclear', but Sayyid Ahmad Khan took it to mean 'allegorical' despite the fact that this interpretation has no basis in traditional exegesis. Robinson goes on to explain that this is how this word was subsequently translated by many translators of the Qur'an including Pickthall, Yusuf Ali, and Muhammad Asad. He points out that Yusuf Ali's revisers replace 'allegorical', the rendering which appears in the quoted translation at the beginning of this section, with 'not of well-established meaning' (1989) and 'not entirely clear' (1990). Understanding *mutasha:biha:t* as 'allegorical' has enabled many translators of this trend such as Muhammad Ali, Asad, Zafrulla Khan, and Ahmed Ali to allegorize many verses in the Qur'an which refer to miracles such as (3: 49) and (27: 16-44).[327]

To consider whether the issue of *muḥkam* vs. *mutasha:bih* is relevant to the discussion of translating the verses under study in this research, an important question should be asked regarding *muḥkama:t* and *mutasha:biha:t* verses in general, and the verses discussed in this research in particular, in relation to translation. To what extent does classifying verses into *muḥkam* or *mutasha:bih* affect translation? Orienting the translation exclusively to reflect the understood implications and commentaries of a particular group at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning of the text, and thus ruling out any other possible interpretation can be found in both types of verses. For example, Al-Hilali and Khan's translation of some verses that may be considered *muḥkam* (if *a:ya:t muhkama:t* are understood as those dealing with what is permissible and what is prohibited '*ḥala:l* and *ḥara:m*'; those which state *shari'a* limits; those which describe the teachings and

[326] Robinson, N., (1997), Op. Cit. p.269.
[327] See Robinson, N., (1997), Op. Cit. p.269-71 and section 2.4.1 for more details.

obligations of Islam; and those according to which one should lead his life[328]) sometimes skews the linguistic meaning in favour of a traditional interpretation, e.g. verse (24: 31)[329]. Commenting on their translation, Robinson (1999) regards Al-Hilali and Khan as ultra-traditionalists. "Their translation contains numerous glosses which are printed in brackets and which give an accurate picture of how the Qur'an was interpreted in the Middle Ages by scholars like Ibn Kathir, but which are misleading if they are taken as determining its meaning for all time."[330] In case of both *muḥkama:t* and *mutasha:biha:t* verses, this results in limiting the possible interpretations to one only. Whether they are *muḥkama:t* or *mutasha:biha:t*, this does not change the fact that the evident linguistic aspect of meaning should be respected in the translation, letting the text speak for itself, whether it is *muḥkam* or *mutasha:bih*. Agreed, any translation, it goes without saying, is the result of an interpretative effort. However, what is emphasized here, particularly in relation to the analysed verses, is that the obvious linguistic meaning should not be skewed beyond what it actually says. This does not, of course, preclude differences of opinion regarding the implications of a particular verse, but these can be discussed in commentaries on the verse concerned, or put in footnotes. But what sometimes actually happens is that these understood implications and commentaries on certain verses are read back into the translation although the original ST does not say this, which results in ruling out any other possible interpretation.

Another example with regard to classifying verses into *muḥkam* and *mutasha:bih* in relation to translation can be found in the verse (4: 171) that says:

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[328] See above.

[329] See Robinson, N., (1999), Op. Cit. p.73. Commenting on verse (24: 31), Robinson argues, "For example 24.31, an aya which deals with female modesty, is glossed to mean that a woman should leave no part of her body exposed except the palms of her hands and one eye — or both if she needs to see where she is going!" This verse reads,

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ،...

Al-Hilali and Khan translates this as, "And tell the believing women to lower their gaze (from looking at forbidden things), and protect their private parts (from illegal sexual acts, etc.) and not show off their adornment except only that which is apparent (like both eyes for necessity to see the way, or outer palms of hands or one eye or dress like veil, gloves, head-cover, apron, etc.), and to draw their veils all over *Juyubihinna* (i.e. their bodies, faces, necks, and bosoms, etc.) and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husband's fathers, their sons, their husband's sons, their brothers or their brother's sons..."

[330] Robinson, N., (1999), Op. Cit. p.73.

﴿...إِنَّمَا الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ...﴾ "Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) A Messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from Him". Kinberg[331] explains that a delegation of Christians argued with the Prophet regarding the nature of Jesus, and claimed that this verse is sufficient evidence to support their belief. The Islamic answer to this argument is that their claim is based on a *mutasha:bih* verse, rather than on a *muḥkam* one, which is (23: 91): ﴿مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ...﴾ "No son did Allah beget".

So, the effect of such arguments relates more to the differences of opinion regarding the implications of this verse, or the commentaries on it than to its surface or linguistic meaning. Whether this verse is interpreted as *muḥkam* or *mutasha:bih*, this does not affect the fact that there is no great difference in the translations of most translators of this verse. Actually the debate with regard to Jesus is centred on وَكَلِمَتُهُ أَلْقَاهَا إِلَى مَرْيَمَ وَرُوحٌ مِنْهُ[332].

Arberry translates this as 'and His Word that He committed to Mary, and a Spirit from Him', Pickthall as 'and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him', Yusuf Ali as 'and His Word which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him'. However, Al-Hilali and Khan tried to read back into the translation the understood implications and commentaries of a certain school thought: 'and His word, ("Be!"- and he was) which He bestowed on Maryam (Mary) and a spirit (*Ruh*) created by Him' with added notes to clarify this, while these details are not present in the original.

Sometimes the same verse is defined as *muḥkam* by a certain school of thought and as *mutasha:bih* by another school of thought in order to support their arguments[333]. There is no clear-cut classification of the verses of the Qur'an into *muḥkam* and *mutasha:bih*. What is found are general statements of the kind discussed above. It may even be argued that some verses may be changed from *mutasha:bih* part to *muḥkam* part. For example,

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[331] Kinberg, L., (1999), Op. Cit. p.299. See also Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 1, p. 346.
[332] See for example Al-Qurtubi:, M., (1953), Op. Cit., vol. 6, p.22, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 2, p. 259.
[333] See Kinberg, L., (1999), Op. Cit. p.300; Abu-Zaid, N. H., (1996). *Al-'ittija:h Al-'aqli: fi: Al-Tafsi:r*. 3rd ed. Beirut: Al-Markaz Al-Thaqa:fi: Al-'arabi. p.164.

someone may argue that traditionally, some of the verses under study here might have been included under the *mutasha:bih* part. This is because according to one definition, a *mutasha:bih* verse is that which requires to be referred to other verses for its interpretation. To give an example, البحر المسجور, was understood traditionally in one sense in terms of another verse referring to a similar situation in the Hereafter. In the present time, however, modern knowledge of the type of sea in which water sets on volcanic fire may suggest interpreting this verse in this sense. In such a case, one may go on to argue that this verse can now be included under *muḥkam* part of the Qur'an and translate it according to the new interpretation. Actually, some modernists suggest that when more insight is gained, such *mutasha:biha:t* verses no longer offer any difficulty, and can be transferred to the *muhkama:t* part. For example, referring to verses (2: 67ff), which relate the story of the man who was killed and had to be struck with part of a sacrificed cow, Parwez[334] is not sure how to explain this, but believes that it concerns a historic event. He groups these verses with the list of *mutashabiha:t*. However, he explains that, "History will turn up a following page; then these verses will be transferred to the list of the *muḥkama:t*"[335]. Another example is presented by al-Mashriqi, who deems it, as quoted above, a special duty of scientists to make *muḥkama:t* of the *mutasha:biha:t*. He cites verse (36: 38) as an example, "And the sun runs on to a resting-place for it". He goes on to explain "Not until the Western scholar F. M. Herschel (1738-1822) had proved a spheric motion of the sun could this verse be added to the *muḥkamat*."[336] However, there will always be cases where no general agreement can be reached on classifying certain verses under *muḥkam* or *mutasha:bih*. Moreover, as far as translation is concerned, reading back into the translation the understood implications of a certain group at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning will result in ruling out any other possible interpretation. To illustrate this further, reference may be made to other types of verses such as legal ones. Some people may consider these as *muḥkama:t* verses with only one possible interpretation as understood traditionally and incorporate this interpretation into the translation. On the other hand, some other people may look at these verses in light of the new developments in the world

[334] Quoted in Baljon, J. M. S., (1961), Op. Cit. p.52.
[335] Ibid.
[336] Ibid., p.53.

in different fields. For example, Robinson (1999)[337] points out that with regard to the punishment of theft in Islam, some non-Muslims may legitimately ask whether amputating the hands of thieves, which may have worked with the rude Arabian bedouins, is still needed today while we now have at our disposal more humane ways of reforming criminals. As is clear, such controversies go beyond the issue of translating the relevant verse. The verse states:﴿وَالسَّارِقُ وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا...﴾, "As to the thief, male or female, cut off his or her hands". A translator cannot reasonably translate this verse in a modernist view by replacing the ruling of cutting the hands off by jailing the thief, for example. This and similar issues may be discussed outside the borders of translation and in the relevant fields of Islamic legal and jurisprudence systems. Regardless of the extent to which such proposals are legitimate within different schools of thought, one cannot reasonably argue that the verses related to such issues should be translated in a way that reflects the new proposals. These verses may be grouped under the *a:ya:t muḥkama:t*, but what is said about the sign verses must also be said here. Translating them according to the traditionally understood implications and commentaries being read back into the translation will rule out any other possible interpretation although the original ST does not linguistically say so. This is demonstrated, for example, in Al-Hilali and Khan's translation of *ḥija:b*[338] and theft punishment verses. However Al-Hilali and Khan clearly explain in their introduction that they depend on certain commentators, but an English speaking reader who does not understand Arabic may be justified to look for a more neutral English translation that reports what the original ST actually says regarding the verses discussed in this research without reading into the translation the understood implications and commentaries of a certain group, which rules out any other possible interpretation. On the verse related to theft punishment, the Qur'an states that the hands of a thief, whether male or female should be cut off, but it does not specify which hand, the right or the left, or both, and whether all the arm should be cut off or only the hand up to the wrist joint. Such details are added to the translation in the work of Al-Hilali and Khan, "Cut off (from the wrist joint) the (right) hand of the thief, male or female". Commenting on this verse, Zarabozo[339]

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[337] Robinson, N., (1999), Op. Cit. p.66.
[338] See above.
[339] Zarabozo, (1999), Op. Cit. p.213-14.

explains that to understand how exactly this verse is to be applied, we should refer to the sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ. This is because both 'thief' and 'hand' are general terms. However, it is not their general meaning that is implied here. The Arabic word *yad*, which is commonly translated as hand in English, can imply anything from the hand itself all the way up to the armpit. However, the Prophet (peace be upon him) has explained that this verse means that the hand to the wrist is all that is to be cut off. He also showed that not every thief will have his hand cut off, as he stated that this punishment is not applicable for a theft of something that is valued at less than a quarter of a *dinar*.

It can be said that the discussion of *muḥkam* vs. *mutasha:bih* goes beyond the linguistic meaning of the text. It is centred on the understood implications and commentaries on this surface linguistic meaning. With regard to the verses discussed in this research, whether they are to be considered 'scientific' or sign verses, *muḥkam* or *mutasha:bih*, this does not change the fact that a semantically oriented translation of them, which is as literal as possible with respect to the linguistic meaning, is the suggested approach. This is to reflect the original text in the target text as open to one or more interpretations in the same way as is the original. For if the verses under study here can be assumed to be open for scientific expansions of meaning, this is a result of the linguistic structure itself. To show how those who suggest the scientific expansion of the meaning of some verses were able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of certain linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned, it is suggested to use this approach. However, it is noted that most translations of these verses, as will be discussed in chapter seven, were typically based on the traditionally understood implications and commentaries, although this does not always respect the literal meaning. This resulted in ruling out the possible scientific expansions which are claimed present in these verses according to specific linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned. This does not mean that the scientifically understood implications should be read back into the translation. This may also be achieved at the expense of the more evident linguistic meaning.

3.3 Occasions of Revelation and the Universality of the Qur'anic Message

Having discussed the issue of the purported universality of the Qur'anic message in terms of stable vs. developing meaning, I will move on now to consider this issue in terms of occasions of revelation.

The discussion of occasions of revelation is important for the present research for the following reasons. First, occasions of revelation can be helpful in translating the Holy Qur'an in general as far as conveying the accurate meaning is concerned. Touching upon the importance of relating the chapters and verses of the Holy Qur'an to their context of situation in order to gain a better understanding of their meaning, Robinson (1996)[340] writes, "... it is generally agreed that knowledge of the circumstances in which they [the *surahs* (chapters) of the Holy Qur'an] were revealed has a bearing on their interpretation." This can be best achieved through studying 'occasions of revelation'. Similarly, Cragg[341], referring to the importance of occasions of revelation, writes, "the situations to which a passage related were seen as vital to an understanding of it."

The revelation of the Holy Qur'an continued over a period of more than twenty years[342]. Al-Qatta:n (1992)[343] points out that the revelation of the Holy Qur'an is divided into two parts: one part was revealed without necessarily being related to special occasions or as answers to certain questions addressed to the Prophet (ﷺ). This contains the universal teachings of Islam and the pillars of Islamic faith. The other part consists of these verses which were revealed following particular questions or incidents. A proper understanding of such verses, therefore, entails knowledge of such occasions. This, in turn, means that a proper understanding of the Holy Qur'an is to be gained through relating the verses to their

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[340] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 27.
[341] Cragg, K., (1997), Op. Cit., p.311.
[342] Cf. Al-Qatta:n, M., (1992). *Maba:hith fi: 'Ulu:m Al-Qur'an*. Beirut: Mu'assasat Al-Risa:lah., p. 101, Al-Ra:fi'i:, M. S., (1990). *I'ja:z Al-Qur'an*. Beirut: Da:r Al-Kita:b Al-'Arabi., p. 33.
[343] Al-Qatta:n, M., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 78.

context of situation. The importance of taking into consideration such extratextual factors has been highlighted in translation studies if accuracy is hoped to be achieved. To give an example, in her text analysis model, Nord[344] (1991) highlights the importance of extratextual factors in establishing a reliable translation quality assessment model. Among these factors is 'motive for communication'. As I understand it, 'motive for communication' answers the question: why was a certain text produced? This, it seems, corresponds to the question: why was a certain verse revealed? This is the case with source texts, but when we move to deal with target texts, things may change. Will the original 'motive for communication' of the ST be kept intact in the TT? Will a new dimension of 'motive for translation' emerge and affect the original 'motive for communication' of the ST? Regarding these issues, Nord (1991)[345] asks the following important questions: "what problems can arise from the difference between the motive for ST production and the motive for translation? Is the text intended to be read or heard more than once or regularly?" She also comments:

> ...the dimension of motive is of as much interest to the translator as that of time, because he has to contrast the motive for ST production with the motive for TT production and find out the impact this contrast has on the transfer decisions.[346]

Realising the situation in which a certain text was produced is an important factor in guiding the translator's decisions. Among other things, this enables a translator to find out whether or not a certain text was intended for particular recipients at a particular time and place. This is vital for translation, for example, in choosing the most appropriate translation method. According to Nord (1991)[347]:

> The stronger the orientation of the ST towards a particular SL recipient or a group of recipients, the higher the probability that the ST has to be translated in document function... which means that the target text can only give information about the source text in its situation but not fulfil an analogous function.

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[344] Nord, C., (1991). *Text Analysis in Translation: Theory, Methodology, and Didactic Application of a Model for Translation-oriented Text Analysis.* Amsterdam: Rodopi., p. 39.
[345] Nord, C., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 70.
[346] Ibid., p. 69.
[347] Ibid., p. 55.

It would be interesting to pursue further the kind of interesting questions raised above in relation to translating the Holy Qur'an. However, the scope of the present study prevents such an elaboration. It is hoped that this research succeeds in suggesting some possible further avenues of research.

Secondly, occasions of revelation can also be related to text typology, the subject of chapter six, because, following a question regarding the Islamic **regulation** on a certain issue (e.g. الأنفال، الخمر، المحيض, etc.) a certain (group of) verse(s) was revealed. In this case, we have what might be called the **instructive** text type, resulting in an accurate and stable meaning, as these verses are usually associated with particular occasions (*asba:b al-nuzu:l*), which help clarify the meaning. Similarly, a question on, for example, the **story** of some ancient people, for example, would be followed by some verses telling the story in question, the **story** of (for example أصحاب الكهف 'the People of the Cave', ذو القرنين '*Dhul-Qarnai:n*', etc.); i.e. we have here the **Narrative** text type. On other occasions, a questioner would ask a question regarding some aspects of the creation of the universe (for example the phases of the moon). In this case, such a question would be followed by some verses that do not provide an ultimate answer, but answers that suit the needs, the knowledge, and the expectations of the questioner at that time, for example

﴿يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْأَهِلَّةِ قُلْ هِيَ مَوَاقِيتُ لِلنَّاسِ وَالْحَجِّ﴾

"They ask thee concerning the New Moons. Say: They are but signs to mark fixed periods of time in (the affairs of) men, and for pilgrimage."[348]

So, the answer to the question regarding the various phases of the moon did not provide detailed, scientific explanation on the subject, because such an explanation would not fit the state of knowledge of the questioner, and the other recipients at that time. Therefore, the answer was confined to what was relevant and important for the questioner and his contemporary recipients. Thus, a text (a verse or a group of verses) was *intended* (**reason of revelation**) to tell a story (NARRATIVE), set regulations (INSTRUCTIVE), or to provide some information regarding some aspects of the creation of the universe, or the

[348] The Holy Qur'an (2: 189).

creation of man, for example يسألونك عن الساعة... ؛ يسألونك عن الأهلة...؛ يسألونك عن الروح...

that suited man's temporal state of knowledge (EXPOSITORY).[349] Of the latter type, the present research is particularly interested in verses talking about some aspects of the creation of the universe. It would be interesting if this issue were investigated further to see whether or not different translation methods may be called for in dealing with different text types in the Holy Qur'an (argumentative, narrative, instructive, etc.) (cf. House's (1981) overt vs. covert translations, and Nord's (1991) documentary vs. instrumental translation.) Unfortunately, the scope of this thesis and the constraints of space prevent me from going into detail on this issue. However, I will need to briefly discuss the issue of text typology in the Holy Qur'an in order to see if studying the type of text under investigation in this research in contrast with other types may help in determining some specific characteristics, and hence guide the translator's decisions. This leads us to shed some light on the issue of text typology in the Holy Qur'an compared with modern text typology. This issue will be considered in chapter six. It is anticipated that this research will open the door for further studies to explore the areas of research that have not been dealt with here.

Occasions of revelation – such as the questions addressed to the prophet (ﷺ) regarding the Islamic regulation on certain issues – may be understood as tokens for similar possible situations in the future.. For instance, ﴿وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الْمَحِيضِ...﴾[350] 'They ask thee concerning women's courses…' was revealed following a particular question regarding this particular issue. Thus, it has its own occasion of revelation, but the regulation explained in it is not limited to that particular occasion; it still applies today and in the future. Referring to Muqa:til's and other traditional *Mufassiri:n*'s use of *asba:b al-nuzu:l* to identify some individuals by names who are addressed in (25: 4, 21, 32, 31, 42, 55, 27, 28), Johns (2000) explains, "…they [identifications of certain individuals by name] serve to concretize the situations, and so make possible the superimposition on them of a universalistic dimension." Thus, the purpose of such identifications is not to limit the message in time and place; on the contrary, it is to " highlight the humanity of the Prophet. He is shown as a

[349] See the discussion of text types in chapter six.
[350] The Holy Qur'an (2: 222).

person. Those accepting or rejecting his Message are persons. The exchanges between them occurred in a place, Mecca, and at a particular time. And this knowledge of them as persons serves to generate dramatic vignettes packed with tension."[351] Referring to some elements exhibited in the same Sura (25), such as the "interlocking of relationships between the dramatis personae, of theme words, motifs and images and which have their power through their relationship with each other, enhanced by echoes from elsewhere in the Qur'an", Johns (2000) explains that:

> Together they present the universalistic, timeless message that goes beyond the individuals who serve as the circumstances for the revelation of the divine logia. And they have a prime goal: to draw the hearer into the events and the situations the sūra portrays; to make him or her an eyewitness of them; to share the pain the Prophet feels at his rejection and to feel indignation at the scorn he endures; in fact, to participate in this intense drama of the confrontation between the evildoers and the Prophet.[352]

[351] Johns, A. H., (2000). *Reflections on the Dynamics and Spirituality of Surat al-Furqan.* In: Boullata, Issa J., ed. Literary Structures of Religious Meaning in the Qur'an. 188-227. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon., p. 223.
[352] Ibid., p. 224.

3.4 The Holy Qur'an and Cultural Difference

The Holy Qur'an was first addressed to a certain people at a certain time and place. As a result, it should naturally contain many references to such cultural and natural settings immediately related to the life and history of the first recipients. This is expected in different text types in the Qur'an, for example narrative, instructive, signs verses, etc. In this regard, Robinson (1999)[353] writes:

> It is obvious that in both Mecca and Medina the revelations were couched in terms which would appeal in the first instance to Muhammad's contempories [sic][354]: Hell is depicted as worse than a tropical desert in the heat of summer, with neither water nor shade, whereas Paradise sounds more enticing and refreshing than any earthly oasis; the narratives are about legendary Arab Peoples or biblical characters with whom the Arabs were probably familiar through their contacts with Jews and Christians; and God's signs include date-palms and camels — the flora and fauna on which the Arabs depended most.

On the clues found in the Qur'an that help to determine the provenance of the revelations as originated somewhere in the Arabian Peninsula, Robinson (1996) explains that "references to camels, bedouin, sand dunes, desert storms and date-palms, as well as to deities worshipped by the pagan Arabs seem to bear this out..."[355]. He goes on to explain that there are also references to places by name such as Yathrib (33.13), Bakkah (3.96), Makkah (48.24), ʿArafa:t (2.198), Badr (3.123), Hunayn (9.25) and al-Hijr (15.80). There are other references to al-Madinah (9.101, 120; 33.60; 63.8) and Umm al Qura (6.92; 42.7). Robinson (1996) refers to a map produced by Ptolemy, the celebrated astronomer and geographer who lived in Alexandria in the second century CE, which shows Yathrippa and Macoraba[356]. Robinson (1996) concludes that Yathrippa and Macoraba can be identified with al-Madinah and Makkah in contemporary Saudi Arabia.[357] After reviewing

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[353] Robinson, N., (1999), Op. Cit. p.65.
[354] This must be 'contemporaries' mistyped.
[355] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.30.
[356] Ibid., p.32.
[357] Ibid., p.45.

some Qur'anic clues to the time of its revelation which include references to some historical events, Robinson concludes that it is a reasonable inference that the Qur'an was revealed towards the end of the sixth century or in the first half of the seventh.[358]

The natural world of the inhabitants of seventh-century Arabia is reflected in many statements in the Holy Qur'an. For examples, references to animals and plants are made to things with which people then were familiar. Among the animals[359] mentioned in the Qur'an one can list camels, cows, calves, sheep, goats, cattle (in general), dogs, horses, donkeys, monkeys, wolves, mules, lions, and elephants. Most of the species concerned live naturally in Arabia, and people there are familiar with them. Perhaps elephants do not exist naturally in Arabia, but the Arabs were familiar with the famous story of Abraha who invaded Makkah with a great army supported by elephants[360] to destroy the House of God in Makkah. Mention is also made of other insects and animals. For example, the bee; the spider; the hoopoe; the raven; the ant; the fly; the frogs, lice, and locusts; and the mosquito.[361] There is no mention of other animals which do not live naturally in Arabia or are not immediately related to the life of its people. For example, bears, seals, crocodiles, rhinoceroses, etc. are not mentioned in the Qur'an. Similarly, the plants[362] referred to in the Qur'an are typically those with which the inhabitants of seventh-century Arabia were familiar. For example, date-palms, wheat, grapes, pomegranates, and grass. References are also made to olives which are found in areas close to Northern Arabia, for example Palestine and the surrounding areas. They also exist on Mount Sinai with which the Arabs were familiar through the story of Moses. Qutb[363] points out that Mount Sinai is the nearest place to Arabia where olives grow. Iqbal points out that "Among the plants and fruits mentioned by the Qur'an are the olive tree, which is blessed (Q. 95:1), dates, grapes, and pomegranate (Q. 55:68)."[364] Plants that do not exist naturally in Arabia such as

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[358] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.34.
[359] I did the research using the *Sakhr* Holy Qur'an software.
[360] This is alluded to in the title, "the Elephant," of chapter 105 of the Qur'an. See Al-Tabari:, M. J., (1985), Op. Cit., vol.30, p.300, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 9, p. 200.
[361] Iqbal, M., (2002), Op. Cit. p.33.
[362] I did the research using the *Sakhr* Holy Qur'an software.
[363] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit.vol.4, p.2519.
[364] Iqbal, M., (2002), Op. Cit. p.33.

strawberries, apples, oranges, etc. are not referred to in the Qur'an, but references are made to fruits and plants in general.

Even when reference is made to universal signs, one can see how they were particularly appealing to the original audience. Referring to the Signs section of surah 78, Robinson (1996)[365] beautifully relates the references to universal Signs that are shared by all men at all times to the immediate culture of the first recipients of the Qur'an:

> For a fuller appreciation of the signs controversy...it is necessary to recognize that the way in which God describes the creation makes the process resemble the pitching of a bedouin tent. He spread out the earth as a carpeted floor and pegged it in place with the mountains. Above it, instead of the usual double roof, he erected the seven-fold firmament, from which he suspended the sun, figuratively referred to as a lamp...The point of this extended metaphor is that a bedouin tent is a provisional habitation, a temporary residence which can be folded up. So too can the world around us, when the Creator wills.

When the Qur'an talks about other cultural and geographical settings, examples from the immediate culture are used to create familiarity with what is referred to. For example, referring to the story of Noah in the Qur'an, particularly to verse (5: 13), Robinson (1996)[366] explains, "Noah's ark is depicted as having been constructed out of planks and palm fibres...like boats in seventh-century Arabia."

References to other religions do not include Hinduism, or Buddhism, for example. Although there was some contact with India through trade, as is discussed in section 2.5.1, this was particularly practiced by merchants. Moreover, all such religions can be subsumed under the references to pagan practices in the Qur'an. Other natural phenomena with which the Arabs at that time were not familiar such as snow or ice are not mentioned in the Qur'an. Sometimes references to extreme or excessive cold are made (for example 76: 13).

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[365] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.172.
[366] Ibid., p.156.

Criticizing scientific exegesis of the Qur'an, Al-Sha:ṭibi:[367] argues that the Qur'an "was revealed to the Arabs at the time of Mohammed, and was primarily addressed to the Arabs contemporary with its revelation in their own language. Consequently, the Koran takes for granted the skills and proficiencies known to the Arabs in those days—which misled the scientific exegetes into believing that the Koran contains all sciences."[368]

Nevertheless, as explained in the two previous sections, Muslims believe that the Qur'an carries a universal message[369]. Having explained that the Qur'an, as a book addressed originally to the inhabitants of seventh-century Arabia, contains many references to such cultural setting, Robinson (1999)[370] goes on to argue that "Despite this, the Meccan suras nevertheless convey a message which is of universal significance." Commenting on the signs sections which occur mainly in the Makkan chapters, he goes on to explain that they "affirm that God is the sole Creator and that all around us there are abundant signs of His beneficence and power which should evoke our gratitude and awe."[371] Some of the signs referred to in these verses can be thought of as universal because they point to objects observable by people everywhere such as the sky, the sun, the moon, the earth, the mountains, etc.

According to the above discussion, the cultural issue should not be considered as an obstacle in the way of translating the Holy Qur'an into English for at least the following reasons:

(1) The Qur'anic message claims to be universal, (2) a translation will always remain only a translation, and never claims to be a replacement of the original, (3) the Qur'an is not culture-bound in its entirety, in the sense explained above, (4) realising that he is reading a translation, the reader expects to come across issues that are culturally different from his. Nevertheless, good translation should introduce the target reader to the source culture. This

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[367] Quoted in Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.53.
[368] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.53.
[369] The Holy Qur'an (21: 107), (34: 28).
[370] Robinson, N., (1999), Op. Cit. p.65.
[371] Ibid.

is why, for example, Newmark (1981)[372] argues that Shakespeare's 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" can be semantically translated into a language spoken in a Middle-Eastern country where summers are unpleasant, because the sonnet should provide the reader with a vivid image of the beauty of summer in England, and introduce him to English culture.

Having considered the issues of stable vs. developing meaning in the Holy Qur'an, occasions of revelation, and the Qur'an and cultural difference, it can be concluded that the Holy Qur'an claims to carry a universal message addressed to first and second readers alike who are supposed to be informed in the same way. This is significant for the discussion in the next chapter of translation theories and the choice of an appropriate approach for translating the verses discussed in this research.

[372] Newmark, P., (1981). *Approaches to Translation*. Oxford: Pergamon Press., p. 50.

4 CHAPTER FOUR: TRANSLATION THEORIES: TWO MAIN SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

4.1 Introduction

Snell-Hornby (1995)[373] identifies two main current schools of translation theory, the functional, and the linguistic. Nord (1997) agrees, maintaining that although a considerable number of different approaches in translation theory may be distinguished today – such as the descriptive approach, the feminist approach, the literary criticism approach or the translation-and-power approach– "the fundamental opposition between linguistic and functional approaches does not seem to have been overcome so far"[374]. Thus, for the purposes of this study, all the approaches in translation theory can be roughly grouped into two main schools of thought:

1. The functional: Nida's (1964, and Nida and Taber's 1969) 'dynamic equivalence', 'sense-for-sense' (i.e. free translation cf. Munday 2001: 19), Newmark's (1981) 'communicative translation' (cf. Munday 2001: 44), House's (1981) 'covert translation' (cf. Newmark 1981: 52), Diller and Kornelius's (1978) 'primary translation' (cf. Newmark 1981: 67), Nord's (1991) 'instrumental translation', Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) 'oblique translation' (cf. Munday 2001: 56).

2. The linguistic: Nida's 'formal equivalence', 'word-for-word' (i.e. 'literal' cf. Munday 2001: 19)[375], Newmark's (1981) 'semantic translation' (cf. Munday 2001: 44) *but respecting context* cf. Newmark 1981: 63), House's (1981) 'overt translation' (cf. Newmark 1981: 52), Diller and Kornelius's (1978) 'secondary translation' (cf. Newmark 1981: 67), Nord's (1991)[376] 'documentary translation' (cf. Munday 2001: 81), Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) 'direct translation' (cf. Munday 2001: 56).

This chapter aims to review one major approach from each school of thought as outlined above for its applicability in handling the translation of these verses. From the first school

[373] Snell-Hornby, M., (1995), Op. Cit., p. 14.
[374] Nord, C., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 43.
[375] Munday, J., (2001), Op. Cit., p. 44.
[376] Nord, C., (1991), Op. Cit..

of thought, Nida's approach (Nida 1964, and Nida and Taber 1969) will be chosen as the approach most widely used in religious translation, particularly Bible translation. From the second school of thought, Newmark's (1981) semantic translation will be chosen as the approach that pays due attention to the linguistic aspect of language without losing sight of the contextual aspect.

As will be discussed in chapter seven, most of the analysed translations depend on the commentaries of specific commentators, sometimes at the expense of the linguistic meaning. This chapter argues that introducing certain understood implications into the TT, whether traditional or scientific, at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning is in practice similar to the functional approaches, of which the dynamic equivalence approach is taken as a representative. The goal of functional approaches is for the TT to achieve a similar effect on its target audience in its target culture setting to that achieved by the ST on the source audience in its source culture setting. Thus, these verses were understood in a certain way by the companions of the Prophet ﷺ and reported as such by the commentators. The transmitted understood implication is the way in which the verses concerned affected their recipients at that time; this effect being carried over to present-day readers in the target language by translators. This approach does not reflect how the proponents of scientific exegesis have been able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of certain linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned. By contrast, the basic virtue of semantic translation with regard to the verses analysed in this study is that it first respects the linguistic meaning, which is responsible for achieving the claimed scientific expansions of the meaning of certain verses. This approach is outlined in the second part of this chapter and recommended for translating these verses.

4.2 Nida's Dynamic Equivalence

Before I begin discussing Nida's approach, I will present brief definitions of the approaches usually grouped with Nida's approach, as mentioned above, to show that they are closely related.

Communicative translation "attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original."[377] This means that the translator should attempt to communicate the meaning of the ST, not its language, structure or style, in a style and language suitable for the target reader so that s/he may be affected in a way as close as possible to the original readers. **Functional approaches**, as I understand them, are not very different. They mean that it is the function of the ST that should remain invariant in the translation. They can be divided into two main trends: taking the ST function as the basis of translation, and taking the *intended* TT function as the point of departure. Advocates of the first trend aim at 'discovering' the function of the ST through various means (for example House's (1981) model), and then trying to translate the ST in such a way that the TT will have (a) function(s) similar to the ST in its situation. In the second trend, it is the proposed TT function that is considered the starting point: the translation *skopos* has to determine what the intended TT function should be, and on the basis of this the translation is carried out in such a way that it achieves that function as appropriate to the TR depending on his/her knowledge, expectations, situation, etc. (skopostheorie: cf. Reiss and Vermeer 1984[378]). Thus, "the translation skopos determines the translation procedures."[379] Taking this approach to its extreme may result in abusing the original functions intended by the author of the ST. This is why Nord (1991) modifies this approach by introducing the notion of 'loyalty' to the ST author and ST functions.

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[377] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 39.
[378] Reiss, K. and Vermeer, H. J., (1984). *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie.* Tübingen: Niemeyer.. See also Schäffner, C., (2001). *Skopos Theory.* In: Baker, Mona, ed. Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies. 235-238. London: Routledge., pp. 235-238.
[379] Nord, C., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 47.

Therefore, her proposed model is named 'functionality plus loyalty'[380]. The two trends may converge if the *skopos* of the translation (cf. Nord 1991[381], 1997[382]) states that the ST functions should be reproduced in the TT. In both trends, taking the function as the basis for producing and evaluating translations means that the ST words, text type, etc. may be changed in the process of translation.

One of the approaches used in religious translation, particularly Bible translation, is that of Nida (Nida 1964, and Nida and Taber 1969). As an approach most widely used in Bible translation, one is tempted to apply this approach in handling the translation of the Holy Qur'an in general, and the verses with which this thesis is mainly concerned, viz. verses talking about some aspects of the creation of the universe. So, is this approach suitable for this purpose? The following discussion addresses this issue.

This approach gives priority to dynamic equivalence over formal correspondence. It concentrates on the message of the original ST and aims to convey it in the TT through opting for dynamic equivalence, so that the TT recipients react exactly as the ST recipients did towards the original message even if this is at the expense of semantic accuracy. Nida (1964)[383] explains that in formal equivalence, it is intended that the TT message, both in form primarily and in content if possible, should be similar to the ST message. In dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, the attention is focused not on the message as such, but on the attempt to make the relationship between the TT message and its recipients equivalent to that between the ST message and its recipients; i.e. the ST effect on its audience should be substantially the same as the TT effect on its audience. Thus, formal equivalence aims to reproduce the same message in the TT, although the priority is to form over content, while dynamic equivalence goes beyond that; it aims to force the TT recipients to react exactly as the ST recipients did to the original message even if the message needs to be

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[380] Nord, C., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 28.
[381] Nord, C., (1991), Op. Cit..
[382] Nord, C., (1997). *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained.* Manchester: St. Jerome..
[383] Nida, E. A., (1964), Op. Cit., p. 159.

changed. Actually, it seems that even in the original ST environment, different recipients will have various reactions to the same message, let alone the TT. Although Nida builds his theory of dynamic equivalence on achieving the same response in the TT on its audience, he is not yet sure about such a response in the ST setting, "...one is not always sure how the original audience responded or were supposed to respond."[384]

Reviewing Nida's approach to translation, Gentzler (1993)[385] writes:

> ... Nida came to understand that meaning cannot be divorced from the personal experience and the conceptual framework of the person receiving the message. He concluded that ideas "must be modified" to fit with the conceptual map of experience of the different context...
>
> Nida's primary concern is not with the meaning any sign carries with it, but with how the sign functions in any given society... Nida argues that the deep structure of the language – composed of the sign in context – can be inferred through study of the language and culture and through exegesis of these signs over the years. Only then can the appropriate response to that structure be determined and universalized. Nida builds his theory on the premise that the message of the original text not only can be determined, but also that it can be translated so that its reception will be the *same* as *that perceived by the original receptors.* In addition, since the source is clearly unitary – being God – the intention of the communication can also be counted upon as being stable. Nida's theory emphasizes not formal correspondence, but functional equivalence; not literal meaning but dynamic equivalence; not "what" language communicates, but "how" it communicates.
>
> (emphasis in the original)

Gentzler (1993)[386], continues his review of Nida's approach, explaining that in Nida's theory, "'The message in context' or the 'message and its reception' is pulled out of history, understood as unified and an essence of itself, and made into a timeless concept. The translated text, according to Nida, should produce a response in a reader in today's culture that is 'essentially like' the response of the 'original' receptors; if it does not, he suggests *making changes in the text* in order to solicit that initial response" Gentzler goes on to explain that in Nida's theory, "contemporary translations are always compared to a

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[384] Nida, E. A., (1964), Op. Cit., p. 170.
[385] Gentzler, E., (1993). *Contemporary Translation Theories.* London: Routledge., pp. 52-54.
[386] Ibid., p. 54.

timeless *a priori* model in which meaning and response have been completely identified by the translator or, to be more precise, by the theologian. They are then pulled out of history, translated into a new context, and made to work in the *same manner.*"[387] Thus, the surface manifestation of the text does not really matter to Nida. It is completely acceptable to make changes in the text, the words, the metaphors as long as the target language text functions in the same manner as the source text. Concluding his review of Nida's approach, Gentzler (1993)[388] provides the following criticism:

> In fact, Nida does not give us a general theory of translation; instead he suggests that we trust the theologian and pray that God will provide the answer. I suggest that the center, the deep structure, the text's meaning, may always be absent. The text, as dense as it may be, and the exegesis, as lucid as it may be, are never complete. There will always be gaps, room for differing interpretation, and variable reception. Therein lies the energy of the text. Nida would deny this as a matter of faith, positing instead the opposite viewpoint, i.e., that the original message can be determined and does not change. However, because he is working with words, even in this case the Word of God, and because of the very fact that he is working with language, there will always be present metaphoric indeterminacy and historical change. No text ever explicates its own reception.

Nida thus denies the possibilities of different interpretations and variable reception of the ST, the Bible in his theory, and insists that the original message can be determined and does not, and should not change, even if we have to make changes in the text. Perhaps Nida's position corresponds to the mystical kind of views on Biblical translation as expressed by Philo Judaeus of Alexandria in the first century A.D. When describing the translation of the *Septuagint*, Philo emphasizes divine inspiration in the interpreting of God's message.[389] In this way, translators were no longer translators but had become prophets and priests of the mysteries who were under inspiration by God, and "were able to produce a translation so exact in meaning as the original that it seemed to be the result of dictation 'by an invisible prompter'"[390] who dictates the one and only 'perfect translation', which should have necessarily resulted from the 'one single reading' of the ST. Referring to the functional approaches in general, to which Nida's dynamic equivalence is closely

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[387] Gentzler, E., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 54, emphasis in the original.
[388] Ibid., p. 58.
[389] Zaixi, T., (1997). *Reflections on the Science of Translation*. Babel 43[4], 331-352. , p. 335.
[390] Ibid.

related, Newmark (1991)[391] – quoted in Schäffner (2001)[392] – also "criticizes the oversimplification that is inherent in functionalism, the emphasis on the message at the expense of richness of meaning and to the detriment of the authority of the source-language text." By contrast, I would argue, along with Gentzler as quoted above, that the energy of the text, the Qur'an in my research, lies in its potential to achieve various responses. The Qur'an itself tells us that it is a healing and a mercy to those who believe, but it causes nothing but loss after loss to those who do not believe.[393]

So, orienting the translation exclusively to reflect the understood implications and commentaries of a particular group of people and reading them back into the translation at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning of the text will rule out any other possible interpretation. This may be done through the use of dynamic equivalence, or the use of inserted comments and interpretations into the body of the TT. In the former case, no inserted comments or interpretations are usually used; instead such subjective understood implications are introduced directly through the use of words which are believed to convey the intended message of the ST, even if they are construed as non-counterparts of the corresponding words in the ST, for example 'lamb' was translated as 'seal' and 'pig', and not as the words corresponding to 'lamb' in the relevant languages.[394] In the latter case, the literal meaning may be given in the TT, but an inserted interpretation immediately follows, resulting in interrupting the flow of the translation and limiting other possible interpretations of the meaning. For example, the words corresponding to 'lamb' in other languages may be used with inserted explanatory notes showing that 'lamb' symbolises innocence, etc. In my view a preferable alternative to the insertion of particular comments and interpretations is to keep the translation open for different understandings by opting for a more literally oriented approach rather than adopting the understanding of a particular group of people at the expense of the linguistic meaning of the text. Commentaries may be presented in footnotes when necessary. Inserting such

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[391] Newmark, P., (1991). *The Curse of Dogma in Translation Studies*. Lebende Sprachen 36[3], 105-108. , p. 106.
[392] Schäffner, C., (2001), Op. Cit., p. 237.
[393] See the Qur'an (17: 82) and (41: 44).
[394] See Gentzler, E., (1993), Op. Cit., pp. 59-60.

interpretations excessively into the body of the TT as comments and notes between parentheses will hinder its perception, and interrupt the flow of the translation. It may also lead ultimately to crossing the border-line between translation and exegesis. In fact, this danger is present also in Nida's approach. As Gentzler (1993)[395] explains, Nida "seems to be conflating the translator's role with that of the missionary. In fact, the difference between exegesis and translation is beginning to disappear in Nida's theory, since how the message is rendered and what remains of the original formulation seem to be less important than the explanation itself." If necessary, such notes and comments may be added in the form of footnotes, as it is impossible to rid oneself of preconceptions and subjective views. I would also argue that dynamic equivalence and the use of inserted interpretations and comments into the body of the TT is similar to a different kind of translation, viz. paraphrasing, on which Linton (1991)[396], reviewing the different methods used in translating the Bible, comments "Those which paraphrase the original (such as Moffatt's in 1935; Goodspeed's New Testament in 1923; and Phillips's New Testament in 1958) help the non-scholar reader to grasp basic ideas...". Here the similarity between dynamic equivalence and paraphrasing is evident in that in both "there is the lively hazard that the translator's own interpretations may colour the text, or even misrepresent it"[397].

TT recipients should be given the chance to receive the text in their own way, and to infer its message for themselves, while Nida's translation theory:

> wants to decipher the text and prepare it for consumption. He wants to explain the text as well as describe it. ... Nida does not trust readers to decode texts for themselves, thus he posits an omnipotent reader, preferably the ideal missionary/translator, who will do the work for the reader. His goal, even with the Bible, is to dispel the mystery, solve the ambiguities, and reduce the complexities for simple consumption.[398]

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[395] Gentzler, E., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 57.
[396] Linton, C. D., (1987). *The Importance of Literary Style In Bible Translation Today*. In: Barker, Kenneth L., ed. The Making of a Contemporary Translation: New International Version. 19-43. London: Hodder and Stoughton., p. 21.
[397] Ibid.
[398] Gentzler, E., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 58.

Newmark (1981) also criticises Nida's approach as it aims to explain everything to the TT readers so that they are 'handed everything on a plate'.[399]

Orienting the translation towards exegesis rather than presenting the ST in such a way that TT recipients be entrusted to interpret the message for themselves may result in hindering appropriate communication. In this respect, Gentzler explains that:

> Nida's prescriptive translation theory, while intended to elucidate the original message and response, invariably results in a distortion of the very sense he claims to wish to preserve, as his translation as exegesis obscures the original text to such a degree that it becomes unavailable to the contemporary reader.[400]

By contrast, adopting an approach which attempts to linguistically report as accurately as possible what the source text says without orienting the translation towards exegesis and reading into the translation particular understood implications will not incur such problems. This is to be discussed in the second part of this chapter.

Nida (1960) believes that "words are essentially labels... if they need to be changed or replaced in order to effect communication, then they should be adjusted accordingly"[401]. This is why, for example, as mentioned above, 'lamb' was translated as 'seal' and 'pig', and not as the words corresponding to 'lamb' in the relevant languages. Islamic belief, by contrast, holds that in the Holy Qur'an, not only every word but also every letter is determined by God, and can never be changed or replaced. Therefore, Qur'an translations do not resort to such cultural adaptation, and no translator has attempted to substitute such words as نعجة (ewe), for instance, as in ﴿إِنَّ هَٰذَا أَخِي لَهُ تِسْعٌ وَتِسْعُونَ نَعْجَةً﴾ "This man is my brother: he has nine and ninety ewes"[402] "to either 'seal', 'pig', or any thing other than the word 'ewe' regardless of the socio-cultural background and expectations of the target language

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[399] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 51.
[400] Gentzler, E., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 59.
[401] Quoted in Gentzler, E., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 59.
[402] The Qur'an (38: 23), Yusuf Ali's translation.

audience"[403]. When the Qur'an refers, for example, to the movements of the sun and the moon, the word *yasbaḫu:n* is used, which literally means 'to swim'. Al-Ṯabari:[404], among other exegetes, glossed this word simply as *yajru:n* (to move). However, what is actually meant by *yasbaḫu:n*, according to Al-Radi[405], is the precision in the movement of the sun and the moon, because swimming is such an activity that requires the swimmer to be in full control of his movements. This example will be discussed in detail in chapter seven.[406]

Another example that shows the accuracy of the choice on the level of single lexical items in the Qur'anic text can be found in (12:17) (فأكله الذئب – 'so the wolf *ate* him'). Al-Khaṭṭabi:[407] points out that it had been suggested that *iftarasa* (to prey on) is the more appropriate word to be used here because it indicates an attribute specific to a beast rather than 'eat', which is an attribute common to both humans and beasts. Arguing against this suggestion, Al-Khaṭṭabi: says that "'*akala*' is indeed the more appropriate word because Joseph's brothers were anxious to make their father concede that there was nothing left of Joseph's body (since he was *eaten* by the fox![sic[408]]), so that they would be relieved from being asked by their father to bring back the remains. *iftarasa* on the other hand would simply indicate that Joseph had been killed and therefore is not good enough [sic[409]] to suggest that there was nothing left of his body."[410]

Gentzler (1993)[411] concludes his evaluation of Nida's approach, explaining that for him,

> Verbal symbols are only labels of human origin, and the "message" is from a higher source. Texts are equally pliable, adapting themselves to multiple forms without altering the original intention. "Lamb" has been translated into "seal" and "pig" and many other "forms" or "labels" in order to spread the word of God. ... The assumption that this higher, originary message not only exists, but that it is eternal and *precedes* language is always

[403] Abdul-Raof, H., (2001), Op. Cit. p.25.
[404] Quoted in Zubir, B. N., (1999), Op. Cit., p. 203.
[405] Ibid., p. 204.
[406] See examples 7.2.5, and 7.2.6 page 283.
[407] Quoted in Zubir, B. N., (1999), Op. Cit., p. 130.
[408] The translation provided for الذئب here is 'the fox', which is الثعلب in Arabic. The correct word Is 'the wolf'.
[409] sufficient.
[410] Zubir, B. N., (1999), Op. Cit., p. 130.
[411] Gentzler, E., (1993), Op. Cit., pp. 59-60.

> already presupposed by Nida, and it affects his science. He "knows" the message from this higher source, and knows how people are supposed to respond. He does not trust the readers to make up their own minds; in order to achieve the intended response, he has license to change, streamline, and simplify. All potential differences – ambiguities, mysteries, Freudian slips – are elided in order to solicit a unified response that transcends history.
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> (emphasis in the original)

Addressing the same issue, i.e. the applicability of Nida's theory to the translation of the Bible, Prickett (1993)[412] writes:

> Coming from a background of missionary translation, Nida is understandably committed to the principle of dynamic equivalence, involving, in his words, the 'interpretation of a passage in terms of relevance to the present-day world, not to the Biblical culture'. Where there is conflict between meaning and style, 'the meaning must have priority over the stylistic forms'. The task of the translator, he writes, is essentially one of 'exegesis', not of 'hermeneutics'. Now, it is understandable why someone coming from Nida's professional concerns should be more interested in exegesis than hermeneutics, but such a translation philosophy, attractive as it may appear in its simple overriding priorities, is, of course ... profoundly simplistic in its assumption of the uncomplicated nature of the 'message' to be conveyed...

Stamps (1993)[413] explains that Bible translations throughout history, "produced texts which attempted to remove the Bible from the dominical confines of the Church and place it into the hands of the layperson by translating it into a readable, stylistic vernacular" [414]. William Tyndale called in the 16th century for a 'modern' English translation that can be accessible even to the "plough-boy."[415] Thus, one purpose of translating religious books, particularly of Divine origin such as the Bible, is to make the message available to the layperson, but the question is how to achieve this. Transmitting the message has to go through the channel of meaning, which has been an issue of much debate in translation

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[412] Prickett, S., (1993). *The Changing of the Host: Translation and Linguistic History*. In: Jasper, David, ed. Translating Religious Texts: Translation, Transgression, and Interpretation. 4-20. New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press., p. 8.
[413] Quoting Bassnett-McGuire, S., (1980). *Translation Studies*. London: Methuen., p. 49.
[414] Stamps, D. L., (1993). *Interpreting the Language of St Paul*. In: Jasper, David, ed. Translating Religious Texts: Translation, Transgression, and Interpretation. 21-43. New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press., p. 33.
[415] According to Linton, C. D., (1987), Op. Cit., p. 29.

studies. Can the translator determine the meaning intended by God and present it simplified and ready for easy consumption by the most un-educated person, perhaps through dynamic equivalence? The following discussion will address this issue.

Evaluating the notion of dynamic equivalence in E. A. Nida and C. R. Taber's book, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Stamps (1993)[416] points out that it is the priority of the meaning of the message rather than its form which is the prime concern of Nida and Taber's theory. However, 'meaning' is problematic in Nida and Taber' theory. As Stamps (1993)[417] goes on to explain "...much of the problem with Nida and Taber's theory is its understanding of meaning and equivalence". Achieving dynamic equivalence will lead ultimately to erasing the original text, and replacing it by the version authorised by the translator according to his/her own interpretation of the meaning. In this respect, Stamps (1993)[418] states that "In effect, dynamic equivalence erases the original text...". The TT recipient's role is underestimated:

> Perhaps a greater problem is that by securing a foolproof meaning transference, Nida and Taber's theory eliminates the reader also. Meaning equivalence provides a final interpretation by attempting to determine the exact impact and effect the text creates in the receptor. A good translator working according to dynamic equivalence does all the reading for the reader.[419]

So, does dynamic equivalence solve the problem of 'meaning'? One answer comes from Stamps (1993)[420]: "Someone should tell the United Bible Societies that despite dynamic equivalence, readers still manage to miss the meaning of texts...". One may even wonder if it is at all the job of translation to solve the problem of meaning, as Stamps puts it: "...does translation have to solve the meaning problem to provide an 'adequate and functional translation'?"[421] Actually, this question may be asked in another way: Is it the business of the

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[416] Stamps, D. L., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 34.
[417] Ibid., p. 35.
[418] *Ibid.*
[419] Ibid.
[420] Ibid., p. 36.
[421] Ibid.

translator to explain the 'meaning' intended by the author? In this respect, Longfellow writes, "The business of a translator is to report what the author says, not to explain what he means; that is the work of the commentator. What an author says and how he says it, that is the problem of translator."[422] The issue of explaining what others mean evokes the issue of authority. When one is dealing with a religious text such as the Bible, or the Holy Qur'an, this problem becomes even more complicated. In this regard, Stamps writes:

> Bible translation presents a thorny theological problem, where to locate the authority of the text: in the text, in the author, in the reader, or above the text in the realm of truth, spelled G-O-D? By the very presumption that one is translating the Bible, a decision on the authority of the text has already been made, the issues come in translating, cum interpreting, the biblical/source text so that that authority is conveyed in the target text. Dynamic equivalence of the Nida and Taber brand so invests the text with authority that the text is erased for the sake of meaning, for the sake of its divine 'truth'. The problem of authority is the problem that is also raised by translation versus interpretation. The emphasis on meaning as significance or impact or effect tilts any translation into the category of an authoritative interpretation.[423]

To suggest a solution for this problem one may favour an approach which takes care to linguistically report what the source text says without imposing on the translation particular understood implications at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning. In this way, as Stamps (1993) puts it, every person is considered a reader and translator, decoding or translating the same text, "so the idea of one correct reading is dissolved."[424] Bell (1991)[425] also agrees with Stamps. He explains that "the notion of there being a single 'correct' reading for a text becomes most unlikely and the possibility of 'preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences' in the course of translation – one of the generally expected duties of the translator – less and less plausible as a realistic goal to aim at" because the boundaries between words and their meanings are fuzzy; this applies at both the denotative and the connotative levels. In fact, assuming the existence of one perfect single reading leads to believing in the existence of one perfect idealized translation, which is a mere myth. In this regard, Bassnett (1997) writes:

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[422] Quoted in Bassnett, S., (1996). *Translation Studies*. London: Routledge., p. 70.
[423] Stamps, D. L., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 36.
[424] Ibid., p. 39.
[425] Bell, R. T., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 98.

> It has often been argued that there is no such thing as a 'perfect' translation. Exact reproduction across linguistic boundaries is never possible, and experiments, in which a dozen or more people with similar linguistic competence are asked to translate the same text always result in a range of diverse versions. This diversity reflects the different readings of those individuals, and their different writing styles, for translation always involves that double process of reading and writing. It is important to recognize the inevitability of difference between translations, for all too often translators are accused of betraying the original, of diminishing it or distorting it, as though some perfect single reading might exist and result in a perfect idealized translation.[426]

Addressing the issue of Bible translation, Stamps comments on the translation, or rather the interpretation, of St. Paul's writing, saying:

> The efforts to seal in the authority of Paul's writing and seal off the reader from reading the text through authoritative translations and authoritative interpretations are misguided efforts. Good translation should aim to open up the text, 'to preserve, as far as possible, the range of possible responses; in other words, not to reduce the dynamic role of the reader'.[427]

To sum up, whether or not Nida's model is successful in Bible translation remains controversial as discussed above[428], but it seems that it is not suitable for handling Qur'anic translation, or at least the verses under study in the present research. This is for the following reasons.

First, there is a basic difference between the Bible and the Holy Qur'an in this respect. While any reliable translation of the Holy Qur'an has to depend on the available original Arabic text which, according to Islamic belief, was revealed by God to the Prophet

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[426] Bassnett, S., (1997). *Intricate Pathways: Observation on Translation and Literature*. In: Bassnett, Susan, ed. Essays and Studies: Translating Literature. 1-13. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer., p. 2.
[427] Stamps, D. L., (1993), Op. Cit., pp. 39, 40.
[428] See also Lefevere, A., (1992). *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context*. New York: Modern Language Association of America., p. 7, Broeck, R. v. d., (1978). *The Concept of Equivalence in Translation Theory: Some Critical Reflections*. In: Holmes, J. S., Lambert, J., and Broeck, R. van den, eds. Literature and Translation. 29-47. Leuven: Academic., p. 40, and LaRose, R., (1989). *Théories Contemporaines de la Traduction*. 2nd ed.. Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec., p. 78 – all quoted in Munday, J., (2001), Op. Cit., p. 42.

Muhammad (ﷺ) through the Archangel Gabriel, the first English versions of the Bible, through which most modern biblical translations have to go, were themselves already translations of translations. In this regard Nida (1964) explains:

> One might argue that the proper procedure of a Bible translator would be to take the text in Greek and render it directly into the final language, rather than filter it through his own English-language background. Theoretically this is the ideal procedure. In general, however, this is by no means the practice, for few English-speaking persons have so perfect a control of the original source language that they translate directly. Moreover, what is even more important to realize is that almost all the knowledge the average English-speaking translator has acquired of the Greek or Hebrew text has come through dictionaries and grammars written in English. Thus the mediating language is bound to be of great influence, regardless of the translator's wish to avoid such 'linguistic contamination'.[429]

Prickett (1993)[430] also refers to earlier origins of the Hebrew and Greek texts. He writes:

> Though what we now call the Old Testament was mostly written in Hebrew, substantial parts of it are translations or paraphrases from yet other earlier holy books – Canaanite, Mesopotamian or Egyptian, for instance. Indeed, since it seems to have originated as a critical and often hostile commentary on those earlier religious writings, there is a very real sense in which the Bible can be said to owe its very origins to intertextuality. By the time the New Testament came to be written, however, the vernacular language of the Jews was Aramaic, so that even in the Synagogues the Hebrew scriptures had to be read either by means of paraphrases into that language, called *Targums*, or, in Greek-speaking areas, by the Greek translation called the *Septuagint*. If we assume that Jesus and his immediate circle were themselves Aramaic-speakers, we have to note also the astonishing fact that the written accounts of his life and sayings are themselves, even in their earliest-known forms, translations – since the remaining section of our Bible was written in a different language altogether, *Koinē* Greek, a non-literary, low-status form of the language spoken mostly by traders and non-Greeks throughout Asia Minor in the early years of the Christian era. This was a sign of the times, for within only a generation or so the early Christians had lost almost all contact with both Hebrew and Aramaic and were using either the *Septuagint* or the Old Latin and then the *Vulgate* versions. Thus what was in effect the first truly unified monoglot version of the Bible, was already itself not merely a translation, but a translation of translations. Nor was this the end of the long process of textual accommodation. The English King James Authorized Version was, in turn, a political as well as a religious undertaking in which the Protestant appropriation and alteration of the Catholic *Vulgate* paralleled the earlier Christian appropriation and alteration of the Jewish scriptures.

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[429] Nida, E. A., (1964), Op. Cit., p. 148.
[430] Prickett, S., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 5.

Non-Arabic speaking Muslims should recite the Holy Qur'an in their prayers using the original Arabic text, but to understand the meaning, they can resort to translations. In this regard Prickett writes:

> If we compare the Bible with say, the Koran as Holy Books, we find at once that there is one very striking difference... the Koran is mediated to the Islamic world in the same Arabic in which it was written by the prophet Mohammed [sic][431]. A Mohammedan [sic][432], whether in Glasgow, Ankara, Khartoum, or Jakarta, is obliged to pray in the original and therefore sacred language dictated to the founder of his faith, it is said, by the Archangel Gabriel for that purpose – and for that reason there must be no tampering with the word of God. Three quarters of the Christian Bible, by contrast, is acknowledged, even by its most fundamentalist adherents, to be originally the scriptures of another religion. Moreover, it was never linguistically homogenous.[433]

Similarly, Arabic speakers may often resort to the Commentators in their books of exegesis to gain deeper knowledge and understanding of the verses, although they can understand the Arabic text. Although informative interpretations are necessary to illuminate the fog of language[434], within-the-text interpretations are better kept to to a minimum, and the necessary commentaries can be put in footnotes in order not to interrupt the flow of translation. As it is already a translation of translations, Nida and Taber (1969)[435] believe that words in the Bible are not ends in themselves but instruments to communicate the message. It is acceptable, therefore, and even necessary, to make changes in form to convey the message in other languages. Comparing the Holy Qur'an and the Bible in terms of words and message, Nida and Taber (1969)[436] write:

> Some Christians, both national and foreign, tend to adopt a view of the Scriptures which is more in keeping with the tenets of Islam than with the Biblical view of revelation, for they regard the Bible as being essentially a dictated document, rather than one in which the distinct stylistic features and viewpoints of the individual writers are preserved. This is in no way minimizes the doctrine of inspiration, but it does mean that one must look at the words of the Bible as instruments by which the message is communicated and not as ends

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[431] According to Islamic belief, the Qur'an was revealed to Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, not written by him.
[432] According to Islamic belief, a follower of Islam is to be called a Muslim, not a Mohammedan.
[433] Prickett, S., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 5.
[434] Abdul-Raof, H., (2001), Op. Cit. p.139.
[435] Nida, E. A. and Taber, C. R., (1969). *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Leiden: E. J. Brill., p. 101.
[436] Ibid.

> in themselves. It is essentially for this reason that we can emphasize the basic principle that contextual consistency is more important than verbal consistency, and that in order to preserve the content it is necessary to make certain changes in form.

By contrast, in Islam, it is believed that even every single letter and word order[437] in the Holy Qur'an is deliberate; the Qur'an is entirely a dictated document according to Islamic belief. This may suggest that Nida's approach may not be suitable for handling Qur'an translation in general. The problem with Nida's approach as some other scholars of translation quoted above argue, is that Nida wants the translator, or rather the theologian to be entrusted as the only authorized person who knows for sure the message intended by God.

Secondly, Nida's model concentrates on the message and has the primary object of transferring it to other cultures, with all that requires in terms of freedom to change the words, etc. to suit individual cultures. However, as the Holy Qur'an purports to be addressed to all peoples at all times and places, this approach may result in restricting the meaning, in one translation, to the horizon of one generation at one place. As Schogt (1992)[438] points out, "...with Nida and Taber we are already entering the area of specific texts and specific audiences (hearers or readers)...". This may lead, when taken to its extreme, to producing as many translations as there are readers.

Thirdly, according to some proponents of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an, one characteristic of the verses under analysis in this study is that their meanings is believed to suit various levels of backgrounds, and can be accessible and relevant for different generations. Taking Nida's approach to its extreme to produce a translation of such verses to suit our present day state of cultural and scientific development may lead someone to

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[437] See Abdul-Raof, H., (2001), Op. Cit. p.43.
[438] Schogt, H., (1992). *Semantic Theory and Translation Theory*. In: Schulte, Rainer and Biguenet, John, eds. Theories of Translation: An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida. Chicago: University of Chicago Press., p. 202.

suggest, for example, that modern scientific terminology be incorporated in the context of translating such verses as

﴿ ... أَنَّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَاهُمَا... ﴾

Thus the translation might read something like...' that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of Creation)[439], before We clove them asunder (through the Big Bang)...' if we assume that the function of this verse is to tell us scientifically how heavens and earth were created[440]. Others may suggest the use of modern scientific terminology for the various stages of man's creation inside the womb in the verses addressing this issue, etc. In fact, to read back into the translation a scientifically understood implication at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning is what some proponents of scientific exegesis have done in order to reflect the scientific content which they believe to be present in some verses[441]. This, in effect, is also similar to the functional approaches which is represented by the dynamic equivalence approach under discussion here. Ultimately, this also may neglect the literal meaning and the traditional interpretation based on it. It seems that Nida is aware that his approach may lead one to assume such conclusions, i.e. incorporating in the translation modern terminology to reflect the contemporary world view regarding certain phenomena, and perhaps this is why he warns, "...we must not read back into the Genesis account of creation our own 'world views' and translate the days as 'geological ages' or the 'dome of the sky' (wrongly translated in English as 'firmament') as 'the ionosphere.'"[442] Perhaps also this is why he explains that the language of the Scripture is not technical:

> For the Bible translator it is very important to realize that the terminology in the Holy Scriptures is not primarily technical. That is to say, it is not the result of any systematic theological analysis. Therefore, it is most important that the translator not attempt to import

[439] Or even to use the scientific term used to refer to this single unit of creation before it explodes, if there is such a term.
[440] See Lyons, J., (1977). *Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., pp. 592-593 example as he explains that 'It is cold in here!' Can mean: the heating should be turned up. Also, Goddard, C., (1998). *Semantic Analysis: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press., p. 139 comments that the same example can be a hint to close the window.
[441] See chapter seven for more details.
[442] Nida, E. A. and Taber, C. R., (1969), Op. Cit., p. 8.

> into the translation of the Bible technical distinctions known only to systematic theologians or to those who have read into the Bible concepts which come from other systems of thought, e.g., the imposition of Greek canons of thought upon the essentially Semitic viewpoint of the Bible. This approach is particularly important in the selection of terms for human personality and for the cosmological view of ancient times, as represented in the Creation accounts. To restructure such statements to fit modern categories is to be guilty of gross insensitivity to the historical setting.[443]

In another place[444], using contemporary terms which were not known to ancient people to refer to some phenomena, for example translating 'demon possessed' as 'mentally distressed' 'rust' into 'iron oxide', is condemned by Nida as 'anachronism'. Not only this, but also using old-fashioned language in the recipient language will give, according to Nida, an impression of unreality, and is considered also 'anachronism'. So, Nida is against using contemporary terminology which would falsify life at historically different periods, and he is also against using words as employed in the original ST in its situational setting because they will look old-fashioned. Nevertheless, he wants to reproduce exactly the same effect produced by the ST in its recipients by the TT in its recipients even if the original message, not only words and form, needs to be changed.

Although the applicability of Nida's approach to translating these verses may be dubious, this approach has some useful notions that can benefit Qur'anic translation, as will be discussed in chapter five.[445]

Thus, if it is assumed, according to the above discussion, that dynamic equivalence is inappropriate for handling the translation of such verses, will formal correspondence be the solution? A similar question is asked by Stamps (1993)[446] when he discusses the translation of St. Paul, " What has happened to poor St Paul? What has happened to his words, his writing style, his textual self-presentation, his historical referentiality? Is the

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[443] Nida, E. A. and Taber, C. R., (1969), Op. Cit., pp. 69-70.
[444] Nida, E. A., (1964), Op. Cit., p. 169.
[445] See section 5.6 page 174.
[446] Stamps, D. L., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 35.

only option to revert back to a formal equivalence in order to make sure Paul does not get erased?" It seems that neither extreme will do. Formal equivalence in Nida's theory means the mechanical reproduction in the recipient language of the features of the form of the source text which typically results in distorting "the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the recipient language, and hence distorts the message..."[447]. Thus, it is more oriented towards the formal static dictionary-meaning and neglects context. Dynamic equivalence, on the other hand, is the liberal functional approach, which aims at discovering the actual function intended by the author through his ST and translating it into the TT no matter what liberties this may take with the ST. Rather, what we need is something in the middle: an approach which pays due attention to the various shades of meaning suggested in the dictionary, and at the same time does not lose sight of the various factors involved in shaping this meaning such as the context, the function, the text-type. Rigid dichotomies such as 'either instrumental or documentary, covert or overt, dynamic or formal, free or literal' will not do because of many reasons[448], and in the case of the Holy Qur'an simply because of its unique nature as a highly multifunctional and exceptionally hybrid text. It may even be the case that distinguishing what is free from what is literal is not as easy as it seems. Zaixi (1997) explains, "...people have found it difficult to agree with one another on which is the better approach, free or literal. They have even failed to see eye to eye what is literal and what is free translation... the concepts of 'literal' and 'free' are both vague concepts with fussy [sic[449]] boundaries. Except for the two extremes ... it is often difficult to define them exactly, for sometimes the borderline between the two is so vague that one can be called the other."[450] Nevertheless, choosing the dictionary meaning is not as easy as it seems, because there is a list of various possible meanings for a single lexical item; it is through the help of context that we can arrive at the appropriate choice. "The semantic field of any lexical item is always much greater than the meaning which occurs within a specific context. In fact, it is precisely the function of the context to specify the particular 'terminal meaning' intended by the speaker".[451] An approach which pays due

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[447] Nida, E. A. and Taber, C. R., (1969), Op. Cit., p. 202.
[448] Cf. Snell-Hornby, M., (1995), Op. Cit., pp. (for example) 26, 30, 35, 41.
[449] Presumably 'fuzzy' is meant here.
[450] Zaixi, T., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 338.
[451] Nida, E. A., (1964), Op. Cit., p. 40.

attention to the linguistic aspect and does not lose sight of the contextual aspect of language is Newmark's (1981) semantic translation. This approach will be chosen for discussion in the next section.

4.3 Newmark's Semantic Translation

Thus, if Nida's approach has been found inappropriate for handling the translations of these verses, one would be tempted to try another approach from the second school of thought, the linguistic.

Word-for-word translation, which Hervey and Higgins (1992) define as "giving maximally literal rendering to all the words in the ST as far as the grammatical conventions of the TL will allow; that is, literal translation is SL-oriented, and departs from ST sequence of words only where the TL grammar makes this inevitable";[452] and for Newmark (1981), as the type of translation in which "the primary senses of the lexical words of the original are translated as though out of context, but the syntactic structures of the target language respected"[453] will typically not be adequate as far as the meaning is concerned.

One approach that may be chosen is Newmark's semantic translation. This is defined as that translation which "attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original." [454]. This is because it differs from literal translation in that it respects context: "The basic difference between semantic and literal translation is that the former respects context, the latter does not."[455]

In the following section, a comparison between semantic and communicative translation based on Newmark (1981) and in relation to text types will be attempted to find out which method suits better Qur'anic translation in general, and the verses under analysis in this

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[452] Hervey, S. G. J. and Higgins, I., (1992). *Thinking Translation: a Course in Translation Method, French-English*. London: Routledge., p. 251.
[453] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 63.
[454] Ibid., p. 39.
[455] Ibid., p. 63.

thesis in particular. As explained at the beginning of this section, Newmark's communicative translation resembles very closely Nida's dynamic equivalence in particular and the other functional approaches in general. Thus, the results of this comparison can be generally extended to the other approaches within the functional school of translation, particularly Nida's dynamic equivalence. This will be clear when, for example, some of the criticisms addressed to communicative translation are shown to echo similar criticisms addressed to Nida's dynamic equivalence.

4.3.1 Semantic vs. Communicative Translation and Text Types

Referring to the quality of the writing and the authority of the text as an important property of a text to be translated, and one which helps guide the translator's decision in choosing an appropriate method for translation, Newmark (1981)[456] argues "If the text is well written (i.e. the manner is as important as the matter, and all the words a vital component of the ideas), and/or if the SL writer is an acknowledged authority on his subject, the translator has to regard every nuance of the author's meaning (particularly, if it is subtle and difficult) as having precedence over the response of the reader – assuming that the reader is not required to act or react promptly."

Thus, in texts with such qualities priority should be given to the meaning with all its delicate nuances (hence the translator should use semantic translation), rather than the response of the reader (which would lead the translator to choose communicative translation). This can be applied to the case of the Holy Qur'an as the most eloquent Arabic text; its Author being God, as it is, according to Islamic belief, the actual literal Word of God. In the Qur'anic text, nuances of meanings are maximal[457]. Therefore, this suggests that semantic translation is more appropriate for translating the Qur'anic text, especially the verses which are believed to exhibit various layers of meanings, as is the case with the verses under analysis in the present work.

Newmark (1981)[458] explains that semantic translation is related to Bühler's 'expressive' function of language, while communicative translation relates to his 'representational and vocative (appellative)' functions. This also suggests that the verses under discussion here, which have been assigned to the 'expository descriptive' text type[459], are better translated semantically. Understood in this way, semantic and communicative translations can be

[456] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 21.
[457] See page 126.
[458] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 47.
[459] See page 216.

related to text typology. Newmark (1981)[460] points out that some text types and genres prefer communicative translation; others prefer semantic translation. Among the first type are non-literary, informative, performative, directive or instructive texts, propaganda, and publicity texts – where translation is done to meet the reader's demands: inform him, persuade him, to give him advice. Examples of the second type, requiring a semantic translation, include religious, philosophical, scientific, political, and literary texts – where the specific language of the speaker or writer is as important as the content.

Newmark (1981)[461] believes that semantic translation is more appropriate for works of philosophy, religion anthropology, and even politics, "in texts where the manner and the matter are fused, which are therefore well written, then the translation must be more explicit..."

He goes on to explain that in certain texts like the greatest works of drama (Shakespeare, Chekhov) where the author "has made use of his inventive resources to give his language communicative potential; it is now the translator's task to extract the utmost semantic equivalence from the original" since the essence of such works "is that words are packed or charged with meaning, semantic takes precedence over communicative equivalence."[462] Thus, referring to Neubert's suggestion that Shakespeare's 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" cannot be semantically translated into a language spoken in a country where summers are unpleasant, such as the Middle-East, Newmark (1981)[463] argues that this is incorrect, "since the reader should get a vivid impression from the content of the sonnet of the beauty of summer in England, and reading the poem should exercise his imagination as well as introduce him to English culture". He goes on to suggest that "one could assume that all serious poems should be semantically translated and that the more original the metaphor, the more disconnected it is from its culture and therefore the more its originality can be preserved by a literal translation."[464]

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[460] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., pp. 44, 60.
[461] Ibid., p. 53.
[462] Ibid., p. 45.
[463] Ibid., p. 50.
[464] In Arabic, there is a proverb that says, حتى يشيب الغراب, and indicates the impossibility of something taking place. A suggested translation into English may be "Until the raven turns grey", which is almost a literal

So in the case of the Holy Qur'an, it is the religious book of Islam, and its words are packed and charged with meaning to the maximum level, which again suggests that a semantic translation is more appropriate, especially for the verses considered here.

This classification should not necessarily relate to whole texts only; it can be applied to parts of text, or subtexts. Newmark (1981)[465] argues that even in one text type such as a mainly informative text, there can be various sections requiring different translation methods. That is, in sections containing recommendations, instructions, value-judgments, a more communicative translation is better, while in descriptive passages, a more semantic translation is more adequate. The reason why this is so is clear: communicative translation suits better those types of texts which are expected to achieve a more or less stable response, i.e. those characterised by more or less stable meanings, such as recommendations and instructions. Thus, their function can be determined and a functional translation is more adequate here. On the other hand, texts such as descriptive ones, where the author's use of languages is coloured by his feelings, where he "has made use of his inventive resources"[466] to produce this type of emotive language in which "words are packed or charged with meaning"[467] – in such texts semantic translation is more adequate. Thus, it is always a case of approximation and intermediate solutions, depending on the nature of the section involved: "...there are often sections in one text that must be translated communicatively... and other semantically... There is no one communicative nor one semantic method of translating a text – these are in fact widely overlapping bands of methods. A translation can be more, or less, semantic – more, or less, communicative – even a particular section or sentence can be treated more communicatively or less semantically."[468]

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rendering except that it respects context in that 'grey' is suggested rather than 'old' because what is meant in Arabic is not the notion of getting old, but the notion of changing the black colour into white. This proverb does not exist in English in this form, but the suggested translation works in English very well. (A point discussed with James Dickins: personal communication).

[465] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 46.

[466] Ibid., p. 45.

[467] Ibid.

[468] Ibid., p. 40.

This is also suggested by Hatim (1997) [469] when he discusses the issue of literal vs. free translation. He argues that, contrary to the proposition of some translation theorists "who present these two aspects of the translation process as though they were alternative ones, one or the other of which is to be opted for at one time, depending on the translator's own brand of theory or the prevailing orthodoxy", "'literalness' or 'freedom' are intrinsic properties of the relevant part of the text being translated."

Actually, there may be such an overlap that semantic translation will also be communicative in certain texts. Newmark (1981) explains that in works with universal themes, and similar background in SL and TL, semantic translation will also be communicative:

> One would normally expect to translate serious literature (high art) semantically, but one has to bear in mind that all art is to a greater or lesser extent allegorical, figurative, metaphorical and a parable, and therefore has a communicative purpose. Figurative language only becomes meaningful, if it is recreated in the metaphors of the target language and its culture, or, if this is not possible, reduced to its sense. In the case of minor literature that is closely bound to its period and its culture (short stories in particular), semantic translation will attempt to preserve its local flavour – dialect, slang and cultural terms...will present their own problems. In the case of works with universal themes (e.g. love lyrics) and a background that is similar for SL and TL (say, in ecology and living conditions), there is no reason why a basically semantic translation should not also be strongly communicative.[470]

This suggests that translating the Holy Qur'an, which, as has been discussed in chapter three, purports to carry a universal message based on experiences shared by mankind at all times, semantically will also communicate the message, keeping the meanings as wide and open as they are in the ST.

Newmark (1981)[471] goes on to argue that a text may be translated both semantically and communicatively at the same time (i.e. the semantic and the communicative translations will be more or less alike, or in other words, the semantic translation will also be

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[469] Hatim, B., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 105.
[470] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 45.
[471] Ibid., p. 61.

communicative – as is explained in the above quote) if the text is well-written and is extracultural or overlaps with the target language culture.

He[472] also explains that in translating certain text types, semantic and communicative translations may well-coincide, for example in religious, scientific texts where the TR is expected to be informed and is interested as the first reader. Thus, in the case of this research, the Qur'an is a religious text within which are verses which are believed to be alluding to scientific issues. It is, according to Islamic belief, addressed to first and second readers alike.

Although Newmark[473] suggests, as quoted above, that religious and scientific texts prefer semantic translation rather than communicative translation, in other quotations he explains that where the text is well-written, the author is a genius, and the text is universal, addressed to both first and second readers alike, for example scientific and religious texts, semantic translation will also be communicative. In fact, there is no contradiction; he says that religious and scientific texts generally prefer semantic translation, but, by virtue of the nature of these texts as carrying a universal message addressed to first and second readers alike who are supposed to be informed in the same way, semantic translation will also be communicative in the proper sense of the word, i.e. communicating not a single function as understood by the translator, but a range of various functions, open as is the ST.

The Holy Qur'an which carries, according to Islamic belief, a universal message, is not culture- or language-bound. Thus, it is, in Newmark's terms, extracultural and overlaps with the target language culture as regards its universal message. This suggests that it is better to be translated semantically. However, this does not necessarily mean that semantic translation will not be communicative; on the contrary, it will be communicative proper, i.e. not limiting the range of possible meanings.

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[472] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 40.
[473] Ibid., pp. 44, 53.

4.3.2 Shortcomings of Communicative Translation

Newmark (1981)[474] explains that a communicative translation is subjective as it is intended to achieve a certain effect on the TR. It starts as a semantic translation and ends up as a version gradually skewed to the reader's point of view. The translator considers whether this translation is successful in serving the aim and achieving the effect he has in mind on the TR, rather than considering whether or not it actually reflects the ST statement. On the other hand, he holds that semantic translation "is not a rigid procedure", but "more objective than communicative translation".[475] This echoes the criticism addressed to Nida as he assigns the authority to interpret the author's message to the translator[476]. This should inevitably involve introducing the translator's own subjective interpretation of the meaning, or skewing the TT to the requirements of the TRs, rather than letting the text speak out its meaning(s), hence message(s). This also leads to narrowing down the scope of communicative translation to specific recipients. Newmark (1981) points out that communicative translation is for specific readers, while semantic translation is universal: "A communicative translation works on a narrow basis. It is 'tailor-made' for one category of readership, does one job, fulfils a particular function. A semantic translation is wide and universal ... it addresses itself to all readers...".[477]

A similar criticism regarding restricting the translation to specific recipients has been made of Nida and Taber's dynamic equivalence. Schogt (1992)[478], points " ...with Nida and Taber we are already entering the area of specific texts and specific audiences (hearers or readers)...".

By contrast, taking the Islamic premise that the Holy Qur'an carries a universal message addressed to all peoples at all times and places, regardless of their languages, cultures, or

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[474] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 42.
[475] Ibid., p. 66.
[476] See page 129.
[477] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 48.
[478] Schogt, H., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 202.

race, this means that its translation should not be addressed to specific readers, which again indicates that a semantic translation is more adequate.

Newmark (1981)[479] asserts that meaning is complicated, and communicative translation reduces the different possibilities of meaning:

> ... meaning is complicated, many-levelled, a 'network of relations' as devious as the channels of thought in the brain. The more communication, the more generalization, the more simplification – the less meaning. One is most aware of meaning when one is thinking, or, to be more precise, when one is silently talking to oneself, that process of internalized or interiorized language one engages in when one thinks, but for which no language appears to have a word. (It is supplemented by the formation of images.) But as soon as one writes or speaks, one starts losing meaning – the images disappear, the words are constructed into clauses – and when one channels and points one's communication, in order to make it effective, towards one or a group of receptors, one confines one's meaning even more. When the third stage is reached – translating, the communication into another language – there is even further loss of meaning....The contrast can be made most strongly and paradoxically, if I say that the more I savour the meaning of a word in all its richness, relating it to its object and its connotations, the less I am inclined to communicate, being absorbed – whilst if I want to communicate, I deal with meaning at its narrowest, sharpest, most concise...

Newmark (1981)[480] warns that, in certain texts, communicative translation may lose most of the message: "In communicative translation...the only part of the meaning of the original which is rendered is the part (which may even be the opposite of the original, as in *objet trouvés*, 'lost property') which corresponds to the TL reader's understanding of the identical message. If the translator is dealing in standardized terms for both languages, there may be no problems". Otherwise, the translator may have to use his interpretations, in which case "clearly there is a danger here of capturing too small a part of the original message..."

[479] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 51.
[480] Ibid., p. 62.

Newmark (1981)[481] presents some problems associated with communicative translation:

> One of the many problems of communicative translation is to decide to what extent one should simplify and therefore emphasize the basic message. A second is to strike a mean, to decide on the highest common factor of intelligence, knowledge and sensitivity possessed by the total readership — inevitably one thinks of communicative translation as mass communication. A third is precisely not to insult the intelligence of the readership, as the media often do. But the most important problem is the intuitive nature of communicative translation – the fact that its success can be measured only by investigating the reaction of the readers to whom it is addressed.

Criticising the proposition that communicative translation is supposed to produce a perfect translation and sound natural while rendering the complete meaning of a word, a sentence or a text into the TL is dubious, Newmark (1981) remarks, "Communicative translation assumes that exact translation may be possible and may be perfect. It always reads like an original and it must, as Nida stresses, sound 'natural'" [482]. However," complete meaning or significance whether of word, sentence or text, can hardly ever be transferred."[483] This questions the notion of 'equivalence' in translation, which is better replaced by 'approximation': "Since the concept of an ideal or perfect translation is illusory, the concept of translation equivalence can only be an approximation."[484]

Whether one chooses semantic or communicative translation, depending on the type of the text or subtext involved, one should endeavour not to make the translation limit the possible meanings. Newmark (1981)[485] argues that good translation should produce as wide a range of possible meanings as is found in the original: "nothing is now more obvious than that the criterion of a translation, whether communicative or semantic, must be its measure of accuracy, its ability to reproduce the greatest possible degree of the meaning of the original: the heart of the meaning being the message in communicative translation – the significance, the enduring value and importance in semantic translation."

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[481] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 63.
[482] Ibid., p. 68.
[483] Ibid.
[484] Newmark, P., (1991). *About translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. p.101.
[485] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 66.

4.4 Conclusion

Newmark (1981)[486] argues that "a semantic translation attempts to recreate the precise flavour and tone of the original: the words are 'sacred', not because they are more important than the content, but because form and content are one. The thought-processes in the words are as significant as the intention behind the words in a communicative translation. Thus a semantic translation is out of time and local space (but has to be done again every generation, if still 'valid'), where a communicative translation is ephemeral and rooted in its context."

Thus communicative translation is more restricted by time and place and 'ephemeral', while semantic translation is not fixed; it is out of time and local space. As for the Holy Qur'an, Muslims believe that it is not restricted by time or local place; not 'ephemeral' and rooted in its context as far as its universal message is concerned. Regarding the verses under discussion in this research, proponents of scientific exegesis believe that they are universal and relevant in the present age. This is because they express simple ideas that were applicable to some phenomena and comprehensible by people in the past and contain nuanced meanings that can lead a more knowledgeable audience of a different time and place to a better understanding in light of more advanced knowledge. They may be also approached as sign verses of universal significance.[487] Thus, it can be assumed that semantic translation is more suitable than communicative translation for translating these particular verses.

On the other hand, the communicative/functional approaches which aim at achieving an effect on the TT reader as close as possible to that achieved on the ST reader may be assumed unsuitable for handling the translation of these verses because:

(1) achieving a similar effect is dubious because effect is inaccessible and cannot be measured : "how is the 'effect' to be measured and on whom? how can a text possibly have the same effect and elicit the same response in two different cultures

[486] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 47.
[487] See page 114 and 236.

and times?" (cf. van den Broeck (1978: 40) and Larose (1989: 78))[488]. Abdul-Raof (2001) stresses, "the response which the target text, i.e., the translated Qur'an, achieves in its target audience cannot match the response which the source text, i.e., the Qur'an, has achieved in its source audience."[489]

(2) These verses may be approached as universal material not meant exclusively for the inhabitants of seventh-century Arabia, because they point to objects observable by people everywhere such as the sky, the sun, the moon, the earth, the mountains, etc. This suggests that people's understanding of these verses may develop in the present age and differ from that of the earlier audience. So the ST effect is not fixed, and hence the TT effect cannot be fixed either.

The semantic approach respects context, i.e. the meanings of the words should be explained according to the original ST context and translated accordingly. Perhaps this is why Newmark says that a semantic translation has to be done again every generation because the original text was relevant to its original context, which could be a remote past that is no longer relevant for today's generation, i.e. 'no longer valid'. In these verses (which are believed to contain allusions to scientific issues), the relation of these words' meanings to the original context is supposedly flexible; i.e. it is not to be interpreted solely according to the original situation, for example الرجع → مطر → 'rain'.[490] These verses are supposedly relevant for the past and present generations. It can be said that the real intended communicative function of the ST in this case is supposedly to achieve a range of different functions with the passage of time. Achieving this kind of proposed functionality can be done through semantic translation because it respects context, which in this case, as explained above, is believed to encompass past and present situations. This means that, to reflect the way in which the proponents of scientific exegesis have been able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of certain linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned, the key lexical items should be translated in such a way that respects their linguistic meaning, which is responsible for the (claimed) flexibility of meaning in the original text.

[488] Quoted in Munday, J., (2001), Op. Cit., p. 42.
[489] Abdul-Raof, H., (2001), Op. Cit. p.13.
[490] See example 7.2.23 page 343.

In other words, semantic translation does not necessarily mean limiting the meaning of words to a single context. Communicative translation, on the other hand would result in reading into the translation the traditionally understood implications, or the scientifically understood implications. In the first case, the translation will not reflect how the proponents of scientific exegesis have been able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of specific linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned, and may also in the second case ultimately neglect the literal meaning and the traditional interpretation based on it.

This chapter concludes that semantic translation is more appropriate than functional/communicative translation for translating these verses. It is based on the literal meaning that respects context. To clearly define the concept of 'meaning' in general and 'literal meaning' in particular, a review of theories of meaning and types of meaning will be conducted in the next chapter.

5 CHAPTER FIVE: GENERAL ISSUES

5.1 Layout

In this chapter, general issues in language and translation theory of immediate relevance to the present research are tackled. As this thesis is primarily centred on the issue of meaning, this chapter elaborates on this topic, presenting different approaches to meaning, and discussing different views on types of meaning. Issues related to word meaning, sentence meaning, and text meaning are also tackled in this chapter. All the points treated in this chapter are related one way or the other to the translation of the verses under investigation in this thesis.

5.2 The Importance of Meaning in Translation

In translation studies, it is generally acknowledged that the meaning of a text is the essence which translation aspires to transfer from one language to another. Translation involves the transfer not of the lexis and structures from one language to another, but of the meaning expressed by such lexis and structures. Goddard (1998) stresses the importance of meaning in the study of language in general, "expressing meanings is what languages are all about. Everything in a language—words, grammatical constructions, intonation patterns— conspires to realise this goal in the fullest, richest, subtlest way."[491]

Quine (1959) states, "EMPIRICAL meaning is what remains when, given discourse together with all its stimulatory conditions, we peel away the verbiage. It is what the sentences of one language and their firm translations in a completely alien language have in common."[492] This stresses the fact that meaning with all its aspects and types is the cornerstone of translation. It is what should be preserved in translation. House (1981) maintains, "the essence of translation lies in the preservation of 'meaning' across two different languages".[493] Highlighting the importance of meaning, not only on the level of sentences and texts, but beginning from the level of single words, in bridging the gaps among languages and cultures, Anna Wierzbicka (1996) writes:

> The semantic structure of an ordinary human sentence is about as simple and 'shallow' as the structure of a galaxy or the structure of an atom. Looking into the meaning of a single word, let alone a single sentence, can give one the same feeling of dizziness that can come from thinking about the distance between galaxies or about the impenetrable empty spaces hidden in a single atom.... [But] if we don't face this complexity we shall fail to carry out some of our important professional obligations, such as that of laying the groundwork for a more effective lexicography, of developing tools which could revitalise language teaching, or of promoting cross-cultural understanding via a non-ethnocentric description of cultural

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[491] Goddard, C., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 1.
[492] Quine, W. V. O., (1959). *Meaning and Translation.* In: Brower, R. A., ed. *On Translation.* 148-172. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard., p. 148.
[493] House, J., (1981). *A Model for Translation Quality Assessment.* Tubingen: Gunter Narr Verlag., p. 25.

> variation; we shall also throw away our chance of exploring and contemplating the dazzling beauty of the universe of meaning.[494]

Neubert (1984)[495] asserts, "Meaning is the kingpin of translation studies" [496].

Catford (1965)[497] maintains, "It is generally agreed that *meaning* is important in translation... Indeed, translation has often been defined with reference to meaning; a translation is said to 'have the same meaning' as the original." From the above discussion we arrive at the conclusion that meaning is generally the most important aspect in translation.

Although there is a general consensus among translation and semantic theorists on the importance of meaning in translation, there have been various approaches to the nature of meaning itself. These are discussed in the next section.

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[494] Wierzbicka, A., (1996). *Semantics: Primes and Universals.* Oxford: Oxford University Press., p. 233.
[495] Neubert, A., (1984). *Translation Studies and Applied Linguistics.* AILA Review 1, 46-64. , p. 57.
[496] Quoted in Bell, R. T., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 79.
[497] Catford, J. C., (1965). *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics.* London: Oxford University Press., p. 35.

5.3 Theories of Meaning

There are several distinguishable theories of meaning. Lyons (1995) reviews some of them. He explains that they all seek to answer the question: What is meaning? Among them, he mentions the following:

(i) the **referential** (or **denotational)** theory ("the meaning of an expression is what it refers to (or denotes), or stands for"; e.g., 'Fido' means Fido, 'dog' means either the general class of dogs or the essential property which they all share);

(ii) the **ideational**, or **mentalistic**, theory ("the meaning of an expression is the idea, or concept, associated with it in the mind of anyone who knows and understands the expression");

(iii) the **behaviourist** theory ("the meaning of an expression is either the stimulus that evokes it or the response that it evokes, or a combination of both, on particular occasion of utterance");

(iv) the **meaning-is-use** theory ("the meaning of an expression is determined by, if not identical with, its use in the language");

(v) the **verificationist** theory ("the meaning of an expression, if it has one, is determined by the verifiability of the sentences, or propositions, containing it");

(vi) the **truth-conditional** theory (" the meaning of an expression is its contribution to the truth-conditions of the sentences containing it").[498]

Lyons points out that none of these theories will serve alone as the basis for a comprehensive theory of linguistic semantics.[499] They are all important, and each of them has contributed in one way or another to our understanding of meaning.

Waismann (1971) mentions the following views on meaning:

(i) The meaning of a word is the object to which it refers.

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[498] Lyons, J., (1995). *Linguistic Semantics: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., p. 40.
[499] Ibid., p. 41.

(ii) The meaning of a word is the image which we have when we speak, or hear the word.

(iii) The meaning of a word is the effects it has on a hearer.

He argues that none of these views reaches the heart of the matter, and asserts, following Wittgenstein, that "the meaning of a word is its use."[500]

According to Goddard (1998), meaning is not reference, not scientific knowledge, not use, but should be approached linguistically[501]. Regarding the view that meaning is reference, he explains:

> People sometimes think that the meaning of an expression is simply— and merely—the thing that it identifies or 'picks out' in the world (the so-called REFERENT). This seems sensible enough in relation to names, for instance *Margaret Thatcher*, *the Sydney Harbour Bridge*, Mexico, or definite descriptive noun phrases, such as *the President of the United States*. But to see that meaning is distinct from reference, we only have to think of words which do not refer to anything at all, such as *nothing*, *empty*, *unicorn*, *and*, *usually*, *hullo*. These words are not meaningless, so whatever the meaning of a word may be, it must be something other than what the word refers to.[502]

On the second view, meaning as scientific knowledge, he comments, "It is also wrong to think that meaning can be described in terms of scientific knowledge, a position advocated by the early American linguist Leonard Bloomfield."[503] He goes on to argue, "Knowledge of everyday word-meanings is part of people's linguistic competence, but scientific knowledge is not". For him there is:

> Another reason for rejecting the idea that meaning can be described in terms of scientific knowledge is that such an approach would not lead to a uniform account of meaning, since,

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[500] Waismann, F., (1971). *Meaning*. In: Rosenberg, Jay F. and Travis, Charles, eds. Readings in the Philosophy of Language. 395-402. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall., pp. 401-402.
[501] Goddard, C., (1998), Op. Cit., pp. 4-6.
[502] Ibid., p. 4.
[503] Ibid., p. 5.

> as Bloomfield concedes, it would only be applicable to a limited proportion of word-meanings. How could it cope with words like *love*, *God*, and *hello*?[504]

On the view that meaning is use he writes, "Some people hold that the meaning of a word is 'its use in the language', a slogan taken from the work of the great twentieth-century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein."[505] He argues:

> There is no doubt that the meaning of a word is related to its use; in fact, it can be argued that the meaning of a word is the main determinant of its use. But for the purpose of accounting for linguistic competence, the 'meaning is use' theory must be rejected, or at least heavily modified. What we are after is an account of what people know about their language. Just to say that they know the use of all the words is not very helpful—we would have to go on to describe in each case WHAT IT IS that they know about the use...It is also hard to see how the 'meaning is use' view could account for the meaning of whole sentences or utterances.[506]

Also, Alston (1971) comments on the view that "in telling someone what a word means we are putting him in a position to be able to use it, hence that knowing what it means is being able to use it, and hence that the meaning of the word is a function of how it is used" saying, "But all this, I fear, goes on the assumption that we already have an adequate understanding of what is involved in knowing how to use a word. I do not see how we could derive such an understanding from these considerations."[507]

Having dismissed meaning-is-reference, meaning-is-scientific-knowledge, and meaning-is-use theories of meaning as falling outside the domain of linguistics, Goddard (1998) reviews some theories of meaning which are more relevant to modern linguistics. Among them are truth conditional theories, conceptual theories, Platonist theories, structuralist theories, and the semiotic approach. He explains that the basic idea in truth conditional theories is that "the meaning of a sentence is the conditions in the world which would have

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[504] Goddard, C., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 6.
[505] Ibid.
[506] Ibid.
[507] Alston, W. P., (1971). *Meaning and Use*. In: Rosenberg, Jay F. and Travis, Charles, eds. Readings in the Philosophy of Language. 395-402. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall., p. 406.

to be met for the sentence to be true."[508] According to such theories, "the meaning of a word is the contribution it makes to the 'truth conditions' of sentences in which it appears."[509] Such theories have some theoretical difficulties. Goddard points them out:

> The main theoretical difficulty faced by truth-conditional approaches is raised by the question: How are the truth conditions themselves to be stated? Inevitably, in some language—or metalanguage, as a language used to describe another language is usually called. But how then are the meanings of the sentences in the metalanguage to be described? By stating their truth-conditions in terms of yet another metalanguage? Clearly the buck has to stop somewhere, or we will have what is called an infinite regress.[510]

The second problem, he explains, is related to the 'objectivist' attitude toward meaning, which means that meaning resides in the relationship between a linguistic expression and aspects of an 'objective' world. He goes on to explain how this is problematic:

> For, clearly, there are innumerable expressions in any language whose meanings are inherently subjective and/or culture-bound and cannot be reduced to a correlation with features of the external world. How could moral, aesthetic, religious, or philosophical meanings be tied down to correlations with an objective world? Consider words like *unfair*, *beautiful*, *God*, and *rights*. It seems obvious that these meanings do not correspond to anything in external reality, and the same applies to a myriad of culture-specific words like *Monday*, *bar mitzvah*, *associate professor*... [511]

Horwich (1998), in developing his own theory which he calls "the use theory of meaning", reviews some of the theories of meaning. He explains that an expression's 'meaning' may be the concept it standardly manifests, the thing in the world to which it refers, or the propositional element that (given the context) it expresses. It could be also, he maintains, what the speaker takes it to be about, or what the speaker intends his audience to infer from its use. He believes, however, that the fundamental notion of meaning is the literal, semantic meaning of an expression type; "that which is expressed independently of the speaker's intentions, beliefs, or context, and is known by anyone who understands the

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[508] Goddard, C., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 7.
[509] Ibid.
[510] Ibid.
[511] Ibid.

language."[512] "The other notions", he argues, "are quite legitimate, and it is not normally wrong to characterize them as 'meaning'." However, for the sake of disambiguation, he explains that those notions are better referred to by terms such as "reference", "propositional meaning", "speaker's meaning", "pragmatic meaning", and "implicature", and that they are best understood on the basis of an adequate account of semantic meaning, to which he reserves the word "meaning".[513] Thus, semantic, literal meaning, as explained by Horwich (1998)[514], is the basis for approaching different accounts of meaning.

The proposed theories of meaning discussed so far as reviewed and summarised by the quoted scholars can be summarised and compared in Figure 5-1 page 160.

[512] Horwich, P., (1998). *Meaning*. Oxford: Clarendon Press., p. 3.
[513] Ibid.
[514] Ibid..

Theories of Meaning

Lyons (1995)	Waismann (1971)	Goddard (1998)		Horwich (1998)	
The referential (or denotational) theory	The meaning of a word is the object to which it refers	Meaning-is-reference	Dismissed as falling outside the domain of linguistics	The thing in the world to which it refers	Are better referred to with terms such as: Reference
The ideational, or mentalistic, theory	The meaning of a word is the image which we have when we speak, or hear the word	Conceptual theories: Closest to the commonsense view.		An expression's 'meaning' may be the concept it standardly manifests: The fundamental notion of meaning is the literal, semantic meaning of an expression type	
The meaning-is-use theory	The meaning of a word is its use.	Meaning-is-use		Meaning as use	
The behaviourist theory	The meaning of a word is the effects it has on a hearer.	Meaning-is-scientific-knowledge		What the speaker intends his audience to infer from its use	Pragmatic meaning implicature
The verificationist theory				What the speaker takes it to be about	Speaker's meaning
The truth-conditional theory		Truth conditional theories	Theories of meaning which are more relevant to modern linguistics	The propositional element that (given the context) it expresses	Propositional meaning
		Platonist theories			
		Structuralist theories			
		The semiotic approach			

Figure 5-1: Summary and comparison of some theories of meaning.

It seems that the conceptual theory of meaning, or in Horwich's (1998) words, "An expression's 'meaning' may be the concept it standardly manifests"[515] is more appropriate for the purposes of the present research. This is because, as Horwich (1998) believes, the fundamental notion of meaning is the literal, semantic meaning of an expression type; "that which is expressed independently of the speaker's intentions, beliefs, or context, and is known by anyone who understands the language."[516] Thus, the range of various possible meanings of, for instance, one of the lexical items discussed in the examples quoted in chapter seven may not be limited by a particular context of situation, or by the understanding of a particular individual. On the contrary, it is to be approached independently of such restrictions by giving priority to the linguistic meaning. Semantic, literal meaning, as explained by Horwich (1998)[517], is the basis for approaching different accounts of meaning. It is for this notion in particular that he reserves the word 'meaning'.

As there have been different theories of meaning, some of which were discussed in the previous section, there have also been various proposals on the issues of types of meaning. Some proposals are discussed in the next section.

[515] Horwich, P., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 3.
[516] Ibid.
[517] Ibid..

5.4 Types of Meaning

Cruse (1986)[518] distinguishes between propositional and expressive meaning. To explain this, he gives the following example:

a. I just felt a sudden sharp pain.

b. Ouch!

He explains that although the content of the message conveyed by these two utterances is the same, or at least very similar, they differ in the way that the meaning is put across; they differ in respect of **semantic mode**. The meaning in the former is in the **propositional mode**, while it is in the **expressive mode** in the latter.

Other types of meaning he recognises are presupposed meaning and evoked meaning. By presupposed meaning he means the semantic traits which are taken for granted in the use of an expression, or lexical item. As an example on this type of meaning he explains that the use of the verb *drink* takes for granted the existence of an actual or potential 'sufferer' of the act of drinking, which has the property of being liquid. He points out that the importance of the existence of such presupposed semantic traits in certain lexical items lies in the restrictions they place on the normal syntagmatic companions of such expressions. For example, *die* presupposes the existence of an animate entity, which means that *?The spoon died* does not make sense.

As for evoked meaning, he maintains that "the possibility of this type of meaning is a consequence of the existence of different dialects and registers within a language." Basically, evoked meaning is the information we gain on receiving a text regarding the origin of its producer in terms of the use of particular dialectical expressions that distinguish one group from another, or regarding the topic or the subject matter of such a

[518] Cruse, D. A., (1986). *Lexical Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., p. 271.

text in terms of the use of certain lexical items that suggest its belonging to a certain register.

He believes that "propositional and expressive meanings are the most important types of meaning in language, and we can think of them as what a speaker principally utilises and directly manipulates in order to convey his intended message."

Leech (1974)[519] distinguishes seven types of meaning, summarised in the following diagram:

SEVEN TYPES OF MEANING

1. CONCEPTUAL MEANING or *Sense*		Logical, cognitive, or denotative content.
ASSOCIATIVE MEANING	2. CONNOTATIVE MEANING	What is communicated by virtue of what language refers to.
	3. STYLISTIC MEANING	What is communicated of the social circumstances of language use.
	4. AFFECTIVE MEANING	What is communicated of the feelings and attitudes of the speaker/writer.
	5. REFLECTED MEANING	What is communicated through association with another sense of the same expression.
	6. COLLOCATIVE MEANING	What is communicated through association with words which tend to occur in the environment of another word.
7. THEMATIC MEANING		What is communicated by the way in which the message is organized in terms of order and emphasis.

Figure 5-2: Leech's seven types of meaning (Leech: 1974, 26).

[519] Leech, G. N., (1974). *Semantics.* Harmondsworth: Penguin., p. 10.

Nida (1975)[520] distinguishes between 'referential' meaning, which is outside language, and 'grammatical' meaning, which is related to language itself. He explains the difference:

> Referential meanings may be described in terms of conceptual features which closely parallel the features of the referents, but grammatical meaning is primarily a description of relations between verbal units. These relations are essentially of three types: (I) participation (i.e. the ways in which agents, recipients, affected constituents, instruments, locations, etc. relate to events, processes, and states); (2) qualification (i.e. the ways in which events, entities, and abstracts are qualified, quantified, intensified, etc. by attributives); and (3) relationship (i.e. the ways in which certain constituents are related to others in space, time, and logical circumstances — by juxtaposition, order, or particles, e.g. prepositions and conjunctions).

His typology of meaning may be summarised in the following diagram:

[520] Nida, E. A., (1975). *Exploring Semantic Structures*. München: Fink., pp. 15-16.

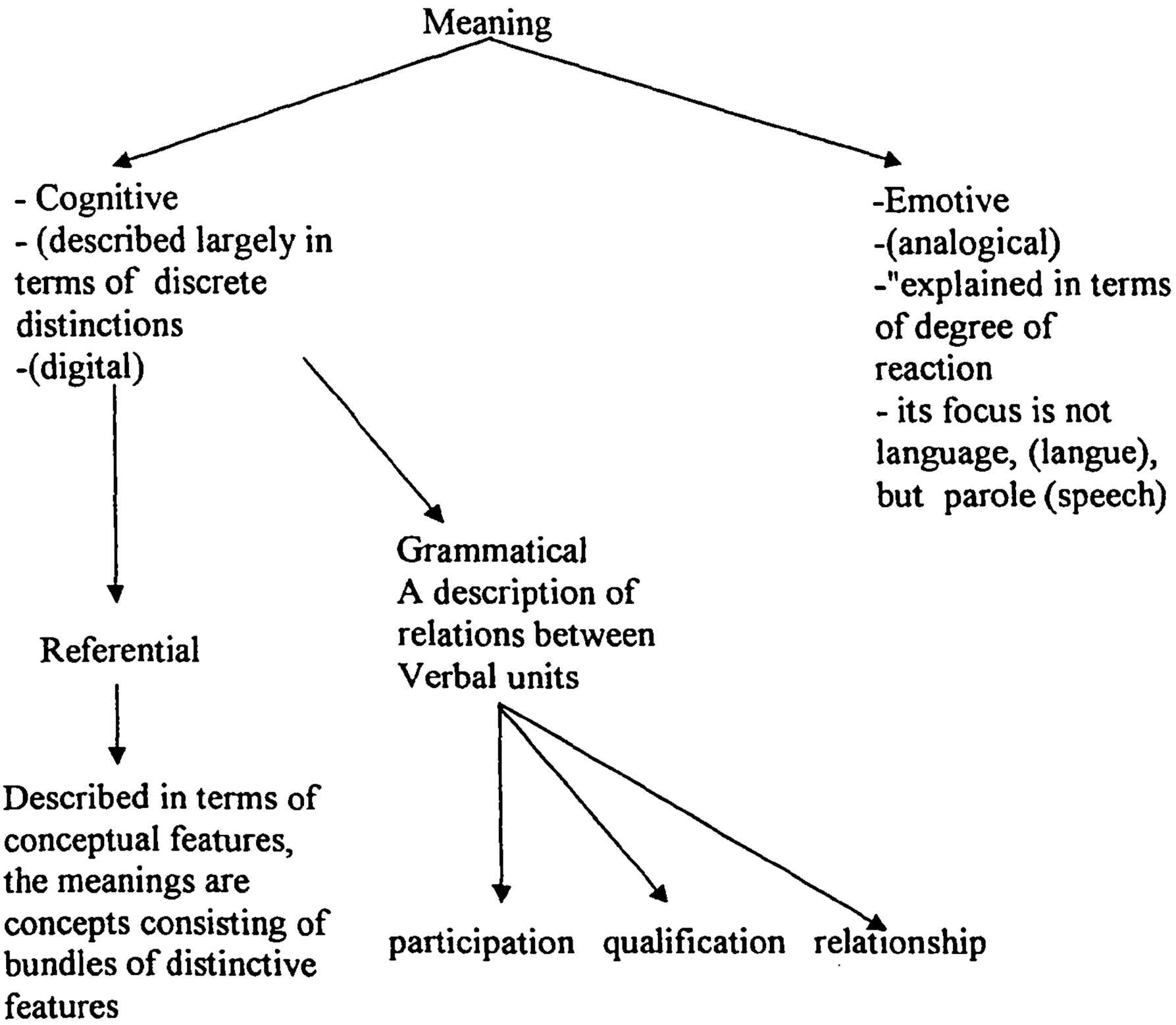


Figure 5-3: Nida's (1975) typology of meaning.

It can be assumed that meaning can be roughly divided into two main types: obligatory and accessory[521]. Such types of meaning as conceptual meaning or sense, logical, cognitive denotative[522]; propositional;[523] and referential[524] meaning can be included under the first heading. On the other hand, types of meaning such as connotative, stylistic, affective,

[521] Cf. for example Barghout, M., (1990). *Translation Quality Assessment: An Application of a Rhetorical Model.* Ph.D. thesis. University of Salford., pp. 133ff who proposes that the meaning of a text can be classifiable into three interlocked layers of meaning: obligatory, extended, and accessory meanings. In a literary text, extended and accessory meanings abound leaving a tiny room for obligatory meaning. In non-literary texts, on the other hand, extended and accessory meanings recede to the background leaving the obligatory meaning in the foreground.

[522] Leech, G. N., (1974), Op. Cit., p. 26.
[523] Cruse, D. A., (1986), Op. Cit., p. 271.
[524] Nida, E. A., (1975), Op. Cit., p. 15.

reflected, collocative, thematic[525]; expressive, evoked, presupposed[526]; and emotive[527] meaning may be subsumed under the second rubric.

As discussed in the previous section (5.3), the conceptual theory of meaning, in which an expression's meaning can be seen as the concept it standardly manifests[528], has been chosen as more appropriate for the purposes of the present research. This is because, according to some semantists[529], the fundamental notion of meaning is the literal, semantic meaning of an expression type, which is expressed independently of the speaker's intentions, beliefs, or context. Moreover, semantic, literal meaning can be taken as the basis for approaching different accounts of meaning[530]. In relation to this, Leech's conceptual meaning may be chosen for the purposes of the present study. As Leech (1974) explains,

> CONCEPTUAL MEANING (sometimes called 'denotative' or 'cognitive' meaning) is widely assumed to be the central factor in linguistic communication, and I think it can be shown to be integral to the essential functioning of language in a way that other types of meaning are not...[531]

It seems that this type of meaning fits better the discussion in chapter seven of the meanings of certain lexical items responsible for the proposed dynamism of meaning enabling a supposedly wide range of possible understandings. This is because the discussion in these examples will mostly address first-level issues related to 'conceptual meaning' rather than dealing with connotative, thematic, or affective types of meanings. Having established the appropriate conceptual and cognitive meaning of a lexical item, and consequently of the relevant verse as a whole, the discussion may move on in some examples to consider issues related to the stylistic acceptability of some suggested translations of the verse concerned.

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[525] Leech, G. N., (1974), Op. Cit., p. 26.
[526] Cruse, D. A., (1986), Op. Cit., p. 271.
[527] Nida, E. A., (1975), Op. Cit., p. 15.
[528] Horwich, P., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 3.
[529] For example, Horwich, P., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 3.
[530] Horwich, P., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 3.
[531] Leech, G. N., (1974), Op. Cit., p. 10. Original emphasis.

5.5 Meaning on the Level of Word

As explained in the introduction, achieving an adequate translation of the verse as a whole has got to start on the level of individual lexical items, especially the key items found in the type of verses under study here. This is because an understanding of the accurate meaning of these lexical items, seen both individually and contextually, helps pave the way for a better understanding of the verse as a whole, hence its translation. These kinds of words are prevalent in the verses discussed in this research. They are believed to allude to certain scientific facts in such a way that different interpretations of meaning can be inferred from them depending on the level of knowledge man has reached at a certain time. The discussion in this research will, therefore, address semantic issues on both levels: the textual level as well as the level of individual lexical items. I shall begin by discussing meaning at the level of individual lexical items. Some approaches to word meaning will be reviewed, and the importance of individual word meanings will be highlighted. Then, the relationship between word meanings, sentence meaning, and text meaning will be considered. This is followed by a discussion of the issue of compositionality (constituting sentences from single words, hence their meanings), and contextuality (determining word meanings from the contexts in which they occur).

Schwanenflugel et al. (1991)[532] provide a review of literature on the relationships between language, culture, and word meanings. They propose that there exist four basic theoretical positions:

> 1. Linguistic determinism: According to Schwanenflugel et al. (1991), this view is associated with the work of Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956) and is commonly referred to as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. It is usually stated in the following way: "languages divide up the world in a completely arbitrary and nonuniversal fashion, and thus the meanings that words encode vary without constraint from language to language, resulting in entirely different cognitive experiences of their speakers."[533] In other words, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis maintains that "thought does not 'precede' language, but on the contrary it is

[532] Schwanenflugel, P. J. and et.al., (1991). *Cross-cultural Aspects of Word Meanings*. In: Schwanenflugel, Paula J. and University of Georgia.Institute for Behavioral Research., eds. The Psychology of Word Meanings. 71-90. Hillsale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates., pp. 72-76.
[533] Ibid., p. 72.

conditioned by it".[534] Taken to its extreme, this view indicates that translation is impossible[535].

2. Word meaning as world structure view: This view stands at the opposite end of the possible determinants of word meaning. According to this view, meaning distinctions made by languages and coded by words "follow the basic cuts determined by the structure of objects and events in the world"[536], which in turn, are determined by cognitive prototypes. Meaning in this view is said to have its origin "out there," derived from the structure of the world, rather than "in the head."[537] Schwanenflugel et al. (1991) explain that this view seems to be the position originally held by Rosch and her colleagues in their earlier work (Heider, 1972; Rosch, Mervis, Gray, Johnson, & Boyes-Braem, 1976).

3. Linguistic relativism view: This view stands in an intermediate position between 1 and 2. It can be viewed as a derivative of the Linguistic Determinism View. Schwanenflugel et al. (1991) explain that this view was identified earlier by Roger Brown (1976). According to Schwanenflugel et al. (1991), "the critical difference between this view and the Linguistic Determinism View is that no assertion is made about the impossibility of conceiving concepts for which one does not have single words to express."[538] The bearing of this approach on translation is that it holds that "almost any concept can be expressed in any language. If a simple lexical equivalent is not available, phrases or sentences can be used to describe or refer." This is because, "the structure of the world is allowed to play an independent, but not fully determinant, role in the meanings that persons can entertain."[539]

4. Cultural relativism view: This is another intermediate position which considers that "differences across word meanings and concepts are due to differences between cultures taken as a whole."[540] The central idea in this view is that "language is only one of the many cultural factors that might make certain concepts more difficult or less likely to be expressed by words in a given culture."[541] Then, relating this view to translation, Schwanenflugel et al. (1991) point out "Regardless of similar translatability of terms from language to language or even when the cultural groups speak the same language, one can expect cross-cultural differences in the meanings of words to be the norm rather than the exception."[542] Among the proponents of this view, according to Schwanenflugel et al. (1991) are Boas (1911), Sapir (1921), and Whorf (1956).

Concluding their review of the relationships between language, culture, and word meanings, Schwanenflugel et al. (1991: 76) provide the following summary:

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[534] Snell-Hornby, M., (1995), Op. Cit., p. 41.
[535] Cf. Snell-Hornby, M., (1995), Op. Cit., p. 41.
[536] Schwanenflugel, P. J. and et.al., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 74.
[537] Ibid.
[538] Ibid., p. 75.
[539] Ibid.
[540] Ibid.
[541] Ibid.
[542] Ibid.

> In sum, we have outlined four potential relationships... The Linguistic Determinism View focuses on how the words of a language limit the kinds of meanings than can be conceived by its speakers. Its weaker form, the Linguistic Relativism View claims only that the words of a language assist in the development of certain kinds of meanings and not others, but do not limit the kinds of meanings that can potentially be represented by its speakers. The Word Meaning as World Structure View places the burden of word meaning on the structure of the environment which is then codified by words, with language and culture playing only a minor role, if any, in the formation of concepts. Its weaker form, the Cultural Relativism View, holds that, while the structure of the environment might play some role, there are sociocultural factors (including language) that play an equally important role in the determination of word meanings by drawing a cultural group's attention to certain relationships and attributes in the environment.

There have been a number of theories on word meaning. Chiefly among them are semantic field theories and frame semantics. Chaffin (1992)[543] mentions some of the current approaches that can be included under semantic field theories. According to Lyons[544] (1977: 268), a semantic field is a set of "lexemes and other units that are semantically related . . . and a field whose members are lexemes is a lexical field". Semantic field theories use relations as explanatory constructs. Relations between words or concepts provide a starting point for explaining other phenomena such as word meaning, recall, comprehension, or inference. These theories represent concepts in terms of properties, prototypes, attributes, or networks. Among the theories that can be subsumed under the rubric of semantic field theories, according to Chaffin (1992), are feature models, prototype theories, attribute theories, network and schema, because "in all these approaches the key to representing meaning is the idea of a semantic field in which meaning arises from relationships between concepts." Thus, the meanings of words, according to semantic field theory:

> ...must be understood, in part, in relation to other words that articulate a given content domain and that stand in the relation of affinity and contrast to the word(s) in question. Thus to understand the meaning of the verb *to sauté* requires that we understand its contrastive relation to *deep fry*, *broil*, *boil*, and also to affinitive terms like *cook* and the

[543] Chaffin, R., (1992). *The Concept of a Semantic Relation*. In: Lehrer, Adrienne and Kittay, Eva Feder, eds. Frames, Fields, and Contrasts: New Essays in Semantic and Lexical Organization. 253-288. Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates., p. 254.
[544] Quoted in Chaffin, R., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 254.

> syntagmatic relations to *pan*, *pot*, and the many food items one might sauté. [545]
> (Original emphasis)

While it is stressed in most semantic fields studies that structure and therefore relations are important in determining word meanings, Wierzbicka (1992)[546] argues that the meaning of a word does not depend on the meaning of other words in the lexicon, because a word meaning is, "so to speak, a configuration of semantic primitives". Nevertheless, she maintains that although this is so, "to establish what the meaning of a word is one has to compare it with the meanings of other intuitively related words."

In frame semantics, word meaning is approached differently. Fillmore and Atkins (1992) explain the difference:

> Semantic theories founded on the notion of *cognitive frames* or *knowledge schemata*, by contrast, approach the description of lexical meaning in a quite different way. In such theories, a word's meaning can be understood only with reference to a structured background of experience, beliefs, or practices, constituting a kind of conceptual prerequisite for understanding the meaning. Speakers can be said to know the meaning of the word only by first understanding the background frames that motivate the concept that the word encodes. Within such an approach, words or word senses are not related to each other directly, word to word, but only by way of their links to common background frames and indications of the manner in which their meanings highlight particular elements of such frames.[547]

It seems that in defining the literal meaning of a word, semantic field theories operate mainly on "the relations of sense that one lexeme incurs with others in a semantic or lexical field"[548], while in frame semantics, other aspects of social and expressive meaning (subsumed under the rubric of interpersonal meaning) are incorporated in the description of

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[545] Lehrer, A. and Kittay, E. F., (1992). *Frames, Fields, and Contrasts: New Essays in Semantic and Lexical Organization*. Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates., pp. 3, 4.
[546] Wierzbicka, A., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 210.
[547] Fillmore, C. J. and Atkins, B. T., (1992). *Toward a Frame-Based Lexicon: The Semantics of RISK and its Neighbors*. In: Lehrer, Adrienne and Kittay, Eva Feder, eds. Frames, Fields, and Contrasts: New Essays in Semantic and Lexical Organization. 75-102. Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates., p. 76.
[548] Powell, M. J., (1992). *Folk Theories of Meaning and Principles of Conventionality: Encoding Literal Attitude via Stance Adverb*. In: Lehrer, Adrienne and Kittay, Eva Feder, eds. Frames, Fields, and Contrasts: New Essays in Semantic and Lexical Organization. 333-353. Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates., p. 333.

the conventional or literal meaning of a word. Powell (1992)[549] explains that, "one of the differences between semantic field theory and frame semantics is the extent to which each theory type encourages incorporation of socially determined attitudes within semantic description." Thus, in frame semantics, "aspects of meaning that are generally taken as pragmatic are regarded as part of conventional, literal meaning", and "aspects of lexical meaning that are linked with interpersonal relations and with cultural and social institutions occupy a prominent place within semantic description."[550] Powell goes on to explain:

> Thus, in this theory type, when one defines the literal meaning of a word, one may draw on social and expressive values that would not ordinarily appear in the specification of sense relations comprising the lexical meaning of a word in semantic field theory.[551]

This, it seems, parallels formal vs. text-linguistics, in that the latter caters for contextual clues for determining the meaning, while the former is mainly concerned with abstract systems. This brings us back to whether the meaning of a word should be sought in conventional dictionaries or interpreted according to the textual and contextual clues. Perhaps it is better to benefit from both approaches in producing accurate translations. While textual meaning and contextual clues help determine the correct understanding of individual lexical items' meanings, and hence pave the way for understanding the text as a whole, pure lexical dictionary meaning of such items should not be neglected. On the contrary, the accuracy and success of translating the text as a whole depend to a great extent on the correct understanding of the meaning, and hence the accurate translation of the individual lexical items which make up the text.

Touching upon the importance of taking the smallest details into account when one is trying to arrive at the meaning of a text, and highlighting the relationship between subject matter and linguistic structure, Gentzler (1993)[552] writes:

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[549] Powell, M. J., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 333.
[550] Ibid., p. 334.
[551] Ibid.

> The subject matter is contingent upon and constituted by the linguistic structure of the language. In order to determine what an expression as a whole means, what determines its poeticity, one has to look at the smallest details that, when structurally built together, determine the work of art's style. The expressive features form together hierarchically, constructing the work's meaning and value.[553]

It is true, as Bell (1991)[554] puts it, that "the greater problem is meaning which derives from the relationship of word to word rather than that which relates to the word in isolation" but the meaning of the isolated words cannot be overlooked completely. "The adherence to the plain meaning of words", as pointed out by Zelechow (1993)[555], "is the beginning of reading, translating and interpreting. But it is only the beginning of the project." The plain meaning of individual words, as is known, is listed in the dictionaries. Nevertheless, "even the 'context-free' dictionary definition of the meaning of a word actually rests on an implicit assumption of some kind of setting of use as part of a text..."[556] Thus, the dictionary provides us with a list of possible meanings, each used in particular contexts, and it is through comparing these to the actual text in hand, seeking the help of other factors such as context and text type that we can arrive at the most appropriate choice of meaning, and hence translation.[557] Explaining that definitions are preference rules—statements about the relative interpretation of expressions in terms of criterial attributes—not necessary, sufficient, and exhaustive reductions, Frawley (1992) writes:

> To define an expression in terms of semantic properties is *not* to provide a unique and exhaustive list of all and only the essential features of a projected referent so that it can be reliably selected in any context. Grammatically relevant semantic properties do not comprise necessary and sufficient – that is, reductive – definitions. Fodor, Garrett, Walker, and Parks (1980) have shown that necessary and sufficient definition is always inachievable... A definition is not a reduction of the meaning of an item, but a statement about the *interpretation of an item in any context*. This can be done without pretenses to necessary and sufficient conditions. No lexicographer, for example, harbors any illusions

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[552] Explaining Miko's (1970) view, Miko, F., (1970). *La Théorie de L'expression et la Traduction*. In: Holmes, James S., de Hann, Frans, and Popovic, Anton, eds. *The Nature of Translation*. Mouton: The Hague.
[553] Gentzler, E., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 84.
[554] Bell, R. T., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 83.
[555] Zelechow, B., (1993). *The Myth of Translatability: Translation as Interpretation*. In: Jasper, David, ed. Translating Religious Texts: Translation, Transgression, and Interpretation. 122-139. New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press., p. 135.
[556] Bell, R. T., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 83.
[557] See also Nida, E. A., (1964), Op. Cit., p. 40.

> that definitions absolutely define an entry word, or that an entry and its definitions can be read symmetrically. A lexicographic definition is also a preference rule: it fixes reference probabilistically as a statement of how to interpret an entry in any context.[558]
>
> (Original emphasis)

Linton (1991)[559] also stresses the importance of single words. He explains:

> Style is inseparable not only from sentences and gatherings of sentences but even from single words. The difference between content and feeling is expressed by the words 'denotation' (the content, or 'whatness', of a word) and 'connotation' (the mood, the 'feel', of a word). 'House' and 'home', for example, may often denote the same thing; but the emotional aura of the latter is greatly richer.

Discussing the issue of semantic correlation between two different languages (English and another jungle language in his example), Quine (1959)[560] concedes, "Though the thinking up and setting forth of such a semantic correlation of sentences depend on analyses into component words, the supporting evidence remains entirely at the level of sentences." Nevertheless, he stresses, "The word-by-word approach is indispensable to the linguist in specifying his semantic correlation and even in thinking it up."

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[558] Frawley, W., (1992), Op. Cit., pp. 56, 57.
[559] Linton, C. D., (1987), Op. Cit., p. 21.
[560] Quine, W. V. O., (1959), Op. Cit., p. 168.

5.6 Expanding Words' Literal Meaning and a Mechanism for Fluidity of Meaning

Lyons (1995)[561] explains that the expressions of a language fall into two sets. The first is finite in number and is made up of lexically simple expressions (lexemes). These are the expressions found in a dictionary. The second set is non-finite. These he calls lexically composite expressions. They are constructed from the first set by means of grammatical (syntactic and morphological) rules. These are the productive (derivational) rules for word-formation. On the relationship between the two sets, Lyons (1995) goes on to point out that "it is an important principle of modern formal semantics that the meaning of all such lexically composite expressions should be systematically determinable on the basis of the meaning of the simpler expressions of which they are composed."[562] This relates to the issue of the relationship between words' meanings and sentence's meaning, which will be handled in the next section (5.7). Similarly, in Arabic, roots, patterns, and affixes may be thought of as the finite set. The lexically composite set is constructed from this set by means of grammatical (syntactic and morphological) rules.[563] Many Arabic-Arabic and Arabic-Arabic dictionaries use this system to arrange their entries; if one wants to look up a word he has to go back to its root first. Words listed under one root, generally speaking, share some features of meaning. Thus, in order to find the meaning, or range of meanings, of a single word, in the sense of word-expressions (see Lyons 1995: 50), one should go back to its root. Therefore, in the verse والسماء ذات الرجع, for example, the root of الرجع is ر ج ع which has the meaning property of 'returning'.[564] So it is plausible not to limit the meaning of الرجع to المطر only. This is because the meaning مطر is not directly accessible; it is arrived at only through the fact that مطر returns many times, i.e. through a shared feature of 'returning again and again' الرجوع مرة بعد مرة between الرجع and ر ج ع. On this basis, as will be discussed in chapter seven, some proponents of scientific exegesis argue that through

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[561] Lyons, J., (1995), Op. Cit., pp. 50-51.
[562] Ibid., p. 51.
[563] See Holes, C., (1995). *Modern Arabic: Structures, Functions, and Varieties.* London: Longman., p. 81.
[564] See example 7.2.23.

the help of modern science, new meanings, which were not conceivable in the past due to limitation of scientific knowledge have now become available and the lexical item الرجع can equally refer to them in this particular context. However, although morphology sometimes suggests the general area of meaning, it does not always give unambiguously the exact meaning.[565] Proponents of scientific exegesis argue that the proposed meanings of الرجع are not new in the sense of being totally novel, because they are originally built into the root ر ج ع. Cruse (1986)[566] maintains, "...most of what we call lexical meaning is carried by roots." In spite of the fact that among the meanings given for الرجع in some Arabic-Arabic dictionaries under ر ج ع is المطر, this may be extended to cover anything which goes back or returns يرجع. Dictionaries, as pointed out by Leech (1974)[567], "are open-ended, and are continually being adapted to new requirements..." So, the meanings found in a dictionary can be expanded to suit the needs of the contemporary society, for example by adding new lexical entries (neologism), or by finding new uses of established word, metaphorical or otherwise. Thus, الرجع, for example, can be thought of as expanding its meaning which once was understood to be 'rain' to cover other things which have been found to share the characteristic of 'returning' with rain in the sky, for example echo, waves, etc. One should always be prepared, as Lyons (1995)[568] puts it, "to revise one's previously held view of the meaning of words in the light of new information or of scientific discoveries which change one's view of the world"[569]. Similarly, Murphy (1991), explaining how people misunderstood the meaning of the word 'lemon' by using it for years to refer to what actually turned out to be 'oranges', says, "The example of the lemon is somewhat realistic, in that scientific discoveries are often changing our conceptions of things that we thought

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[565] Cf. for example the root ك ت ب, from which some words can be derived and said to share some features of meaning, e.g.مكتب، مكتبة,(مفعَل للمكان + ك ت ب) But in other cases, this can be dubious, e.g. بشر، بشارة: ب ش ر vs. نَشر in the sense of 'peel' etc. cf. Wehr, H. and Cowan, J. M., (1974). *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic.* Beirut: Librairie du Liban., under بشر. I owe this explanation to James Dickins.

[566] Cruse, D. A., (1986), Op. Cit., p. 46.

[567] Leech, G. N., (1974), Op. Cit., p. 202.

[568] Quoting Kripke (1972) and Putnam (1975).

[569] Lyons, J., (1995), Op. Cit., p. 93.

we understood."[570] Change of word meanings due to advancement in scientific knowledge may be on the level which such words occupy. Nida (1964) explains, "the level of the English words *sun* and *moon* changed as the result of changes in astronomical knowledge. Formerly they referred to unique objects, and thus were on the lowest hierarchical level. Now, however, one may speak of stars as 'suns,' and the satellites of planets as 'moons.'"[571]

But before proceeding in this discussion, it seems necessary to establish a mechanism by means of which the expansion and fluidity of meaning, and hence translation, are governed; otherwise translation will not be possible. In this regard, an important question arises: How fluid can a meaning be? It seems that, as far as the type of texts under investigation in this study is concerned, the proposed fluidity and expansion of meaning as suggested by some proponents of scientific exegesis will remain within the boundaries of literal meaning. That is to say, the discussion will not involve how to account for other possible figurative extensions of meaning and read them into the translation. Discussing literal and figurative meanings, Nida and Taber (1969) write:

> While it does not seem possible to define "literal" with great rigor, it is possible to give a general characterization of the notion. If each term is assumed to have some primary or central meaning, then the term may also have other literal meanings which are relatively close to the central one through the sharing of important components; a good example is found in the several senses of *chair* ... On the other hand, a word may have additional meanings assigned to it which are very different in every essential aspect from the primary one; and where the link is not through essential components, such meanings are called "figurative." Though the distinction becomes blurred at the margins, it provides the basis for our intuition that some meanings are actually closer and some more remote. In terms of the semantic domains...and of the hierarchical arrangement of generic and specific terms, it can be said that the higher one has to go in the hierarchy to find a covering generic term for the two senses under consideration, the more figurative the extended sense is. If the two meanings are close in the hierarchical structure, so that a rather low-level term covers them both, they are probably both literal. The higher one goes in the generic hierarchy (*e.g.*, in the realm of English object terms, *thing* is an almost universal cover- term), the less meaningful are the relationships involved, and the more reluctant we are to call the

[570] Murphy, G. L., (1991). *Meaning and Concepts*. In: Schwanenflugel, Paula J. and University of Georgia (Institute for Behavioral Research.), eds. The Psychology of Word Meanings. 11-36. Hillsale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates., p. 13.
[571] Nida, E. A., (1964), Op. Cit., p. 79.

> included category a domain. Figurative meanings may in this sense be said not to be in the same domain as the literal meaning of the same term.[572]

Nida (1975) also explains, "in most instances, a word seems to have a central meaning from which a number of other meanings are derived. And we can usually recognize or imagine some kind of connection between each of these meanings and the apparent central meaning"[573]. In his discussion of the modes of meaning, Lewis (1971) distinguishes between: (1) the denotation of a term, which is the class of all actual things to which the term applies; (2) the comprehension of a term, which is the classification of all possible or consistently thinkable things to which the term would be correctly applicable, and (3) the signification of a term, which is that property in things the presence of which indicates that the term correctly applies, and the absence of which indicates that it does not apply.[574] Newmark (1981)[575] also proposes an analogous system of classification as he discusses the series of semantic categories. Referring to the logical properties of lexical items, he suggests the following classification: (a) denotation (contextual): "the direct, specific meaning of a word, optimally shown ostensively"; (b) intension (extra-contextual): "property or group of properties connected by a term which are essential to the thing named; the set of attributes belonging to anything to which a term is applied", for example "the intension of 'knife' includes (sharp), (metal), (thin) blade, handle, cutting"; and (C) extension (extra-contextual): "the total range over which something can be extended or extends; the class of things to which a term is applicable; the group of things denoted by a term" for example "the denotative extension of 'knife' is 'pocket, table, bread, carving, etc., knife, sword, dagger'". Nida (1964)[576] has a similar system for describing the domain of referential meaning. He distinguishes between three properties of meaning; these Morris (1946) names: 1-designata, 2-denotata, and 3-significata. Nida calls the first a 'type', or generalized meaning, in which the class is named usually by contrasting it with other classes. In the second, the individual members of the class are identified, generally by listing; this he calls the 'definition' or the particular meaning. The third property is based

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[572] Nida, E. A. and Taber, C. R., (1969), Op. Cit., p. 87.
[573] Nida, E. A., (1975), Op. Cit., p. 11.
[574] Lewis, C. I., (1971). *The Modes of Meaning*. In: Rosenberg, Jay F. and Travis, Charles, eds. Readings in the Philosophy of Language. 15-41. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall., pp. 18-19.
[575] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 119.
[576] Nida, E. A., (1964), Op. Cit., p. 88.

upon the 'sufficient and necessary features of the class'; this he calls the abstract meaning of the class. To clarify his classification, he gives the lexical item 'chair' as an example and provides the following explanation:

> For example, we may define *chair,* first by contrasting the term *chair,* as the name of a class, from other possibly related classes, e.g. *bench, stool, position, post.* Secondly, we may define *chair* by listing the specific tokens of the class, e.g. *the chair in the living room, the chair of philosophy, the electric chair, he will chair the meeting.* In a sense, such tokens are almost unlimited, for such referents of *chair* are extensive. Thirdly, we may define *chair* by describing the sufficient and necessary features which distinguish it from all other objects. For example, *chair* in at least certain aspects of its meaning is described in The American College Dictionary (1947) as "a seat with a back and legs or other support, often with arms, usually for only one person." The American College Dictionary then goes on to list other meanings based upon tokens, not upon "sufficient and necessary features," for many symbols cover such a wide area of meaning that there is not a single cluster of defining features, but chains of such features.[577]

Nida (1964) comments on the issue of 'fluidity of meaning'. He explains that the meanings of words are not limited to the prerequisites (*significata*: the distinguishing features of any members belonging to the same class), for there are also other features which may be called the probabilities or possibilities of the class, but such features are far more 'fluid' and difficult to describe than are the prerequisites included in the *significata.* He gives as an example the lexical item 'father', and explains, "We may say that in certain usages the terms *father*, *dad*, *daddy*, *pop*, and *old man* all have the same *significata*, and that to this extent the *denotata* are identical. Thus the same referent may be identified by all these terms. But these words certainly have different emotive meanings, i.e. features which as possibilities and probabilities are far more "fluid" and difficult to describe than are the prerequisites involved in the *significata*."[578] Newmark (1981) also refers to the issue of a word acquiring new meanings, and the mechanism governing this process:

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[577] Nida, E. A., (1964), Op. Cit., p. 88.
[578] Ibid.

> Frequently, a new meaning of a word is a logical extension of its previous shifts of meaning, and can be accounted for by the translator; thus, *marée* = tide → wave → fish (carried by tide) → fishing expedition."[579]

What is important for the purposes of this research from the above is, firstly, the fact that the extent to which meaning can be expanded, as suggested by some proponents of scientific exegesis, will remain within the boundaries of literal meaning as described by Nida and Taber (1969) above. That is to say, all the different senses a word is claimed to have should share some important components, and hence be relatively close to the central meaning. Secondly, it seems that the system proposed by Lewis (1971), Newmark (1981), and Nida (1964) for identifying referential meaning can provide a feasible guideline for including different senses within such boundaries. That is to say, 'the signification of a term' in Lewis (1971)'s terminology, Newmark (1981)'s 'intension', or what Nida (1964) calls 'the abstract meaning of the class (based on the 'sufficient and necessary features of the class'), which is *significata* in Morris (1946)'s terminology – this property of meaning provides the basis for, as it were, promoting different senses of a word from (2) into (1) of this model, i.e. a word's meaning may be extended if it fulfils the condition of (3) to include a sense that falls within the boundaries of (2). To give an example, it can be said that the denotation of الرجع was rain only in the past, and this denotation may be extended by 'comprehension' according to the available level of knowledge, as suggested by some proponents of scientific exegesis, to accommodate what has been found through recent discoveries to share the 'signification' of the same term الرجع, namely 'things which have the characteristic of returning in the sky'. Thus الرجع, for example, has a number of meanings, all of which supposedly share an important component (returning in the sky). It can be said, therefore, that they are all literal and closely related to the central meaning. This example will be analysed in detail in chapter seven.[580] This can be summarised in the following table:

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[579] Newmark, P., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 165.
[580] See example 7.2.23.

Lewis (1971):	denotation	comprehension	signification
Newmark (1981):	denotation (direct, specific meaning)	extension	intension
Morris (1946):	denotata,	designata	significata
Nida (1964):	definition (particular meaning)	generalized meaning	abstract meaning of the class

Example:

Properties:	Direct meaning: definition (at one stage)	Possible things to be included	Attributing features
for example: الرجع	rain	Echo, rays, waves, heat, etc.	Returning in the sky

Although figurative expansion of meaning, which may be possible, is not covered by this mechanism, this does not mean that it should be ruled out. Different readers will read the text and understand various implications, including the figurative meaning. However, such extra-linguistic expansions can be said to lie outside the domain of literal meaning, i.e. they cannot be realised in the actual text, but can be added in commentaries. As Nida says, "figurative meanings may in this sense be said not to be in the same domain as the literal meaning of the same term."[581] So, figurative meanings may be said to be not in the same domain as literal meaning, but may still exist.

In this section, I reviewed some significant approaches to word meaning, highlighted the importance of individual word meanings, and discussed the issue of expanding words' literal meaning, proposing a mechanism governing the fluidity and expansion of meaning. I will now move on to consider the relationship between word meaning, sentence meaning, and text meaning.

[581] Nida, E. A. and Taber, C. R., (1969), Op. Cit., p. 87.

5.7 Word Meaning, Sentence Meaning and Text Meaning

The issue of how word meanings relate to sentence meaning is one of the central issues in semantics. Generally speaking, there are two main views involved here. Some scholars believe that sentence meaning is built up of individual word meanings; other scholars take a more reluctant view regarding this issue, proposing some modifications.

Among the proponents of the first view is Lyons (1995)[582] who explains that the meaning of a sentence is determined by the meaning of the words of which it is composed. He states, "...it is generally agreed that the words, phrases and sentences of natural languages have meaning, that sentences are composed of words (and phrases), and that the meaning of a sentence is the product of the words (and phrases) of which it is composed."[583] This proposal, however, does not work with idioms. Nida (1975)[584] points out that it is true of most utterances, except idioms, that "the meaning of the whole can be determined by adding up the meanings of the parts". Nida and Taber (1969) also writes, "Idioms are typically constructed on quite normal grammatical patterns of phrase structure, but the meaning of the whole idiom is not simply the sum of the meanings of the parts, nor can one segment the meaning (in the many cases where it is complex) and assign a definable portion of the meaning to each grammatical piece (*e.g.*, a morpheme). In other words, idioms are expressions in which the semantic and grammatical structures are radically different."[585] Cruse (1986)[586] also provides a traditional definition of an idiom which supports this, "an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meanings of its parts." Then he comments, "The definition must be understood as stating that an idiom is an expression whose meaning cannot be accounted for as a compositional function of the meanings its parts have when they are not parts of idioms."[587]

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[582] Lyons, J., (1995), Op. Cit., p. 32.
[583] Ibid., p. 46.
[584] Nida, E. A., (1975), Op. Cit., p. 126.
[585] Nida, E. A. and Taber, C. R., (1969), Op. Cit., p. 45.
[586] Cruse, D. A., (1986), Op. Cit., p. 37.
[587] Ibid.

Another scholar who supports the view that sentence meaning is built up of individual word meanings is Hampton (1991). He points out that one of the central issues in the semantics of natural language is the question: How does the meaning of a sentence relate to the meaning of the individual words within it? For him, "in the absence of any strong contextual influence, the answer must be that the meaning of a sentence is composed or derived from the meanings of the individual words within it."[588]

Cruse (1986) is also of the view that the meanings of individual words contribute to the total meaning of a sentence:

> The meaning of a typical sentence in a natural language is complex in that it results from the combination of meanings which are in some sense simpler. (The fact that the meanings of sentences are more accessible to intuition than the meanings of words does not alter this.) These simpler meanings (which does not necessarily mean 'simple') are carried by identifiable parts of the sentence; and the way they must be combined to yield the global meaning of the sentence is indicated by the syntactic structure of the sentence. Thus, the meaning of *The cat sat on the mat* is "the" + "cat" + "sat"+ "on" + "the" + "mat"...[589]

Similarly, Kittay and Lehrer (1992)[590], referring to Davidson's (1985) theory, point out, "The meaning of the sentence is built up compositionally from the meaning of its parts (and the logical or syntactic structure)".

Katz and Fodor (1971) also maintain that, "the meaning of a sentence is a function of the meanings of the parts of the sentence."[591] They apply the principle of compositionality on the level of word meaning as well, "As a rule, the meaning of a word is a compositional function of the meanings of its parts..."[592]

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[588] Hampton, J., (1991). *The Combination of Prototype Concepts.* In: Schwanenflugel, Paula J. and University of Georgia (Institute for Behavioral Research)., eds. The Psychology of Word Meanings. 91-116. Hillsale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates., p. 91.
[589] Cruse, D. A., (1986), Op. Cit., p. 24.
[590] Lehrer, A. and Kittay, E. F., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 11.
[591] Katz, J. J. and Fodor, J. A., (1971). *The Structure of a Semantic Theory.* In: Rosenberg, Jay F. and Travis, Charles, eds. Readings in the Philosophy of Language. 472-513. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall., p. 488.
[592] Ibid., p. 495.

Also addressing the principle of compositionality in semantic theory, Frawley (1992) writes:

> The meaning of an expression is a function of the meaning of its parts. Compositionality is a general condition on semantic representations; it derives from the work of Frege, who saw a principal goal of semantic theory to be to account for how expressions with arbitrary meaning, like words (which have unmotivated, conventionalised extension), are put in nonarbitrary meaningful combinations, or structures. Compositionality can hold either across an entire expression or within a single form. In the first case, the meaning of an entire expression is a function of the meaning of its component forms, as the interpretation of a sentence derives from the meanings of its words. In the second case, the semantic representation of a single form, say a word, is composed of semantic properties that in conjunction fix the reference of the form.[593]
>
> (My underlining).

According to the above view proposed by some semantists, the total meaning of the noun phrase والسماء ذات الرجع, for example, can be interpreted on the basis of the meaning of the simpler expressions of which it is composed, i.e. the meaning of "و","السماء", "ذات", and "الرجع" – in this noun phrase, 'السماء', by which God swears using the oath particle 'و', is qualified by 'ذات الرجع'.[594] Similarly, it may be possible also to draw a semantic relation between the meaning of each one of these simple lexemes and its composing basic units, i.e. its root, pattern, etc.[595] Applying this to the lexical item رجع, for instance, would suggest that its meaning may not be limited to مطر, because other related meanings can be arrived at through considering the meaning of the root ر ج ع.

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[593] Frawley, W., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 21.
[594] See example 7.2.23 page 343.
[595] See section 5.6.

On the other hand, some semantists are against the view proposed so far regarding the relationship between word meanings and sentence meanings, and suggest some modifications. Palmer (1976) associates word meaning and sentence meaning with different types of meaning:

> It is clear... that sentences and words do not have meaning in the same way. If we consider meaning in terms of reference in the wide sense of the term, i.e. as saying something about the world about us, it is reasonable to believe that only sentences can have meaning. In so far as words have referential meaning, they acquire it either through being parts of sentences or, more specifically, through ostensive definitions ... but even ostensive definitions are achieved only by means of sentences of the kind *This is a*... Referential meaning, then, seems to be a characteristic of sentences. Meaning in terms of sense, on the other hand, appears, at least in part, to belong largely to words...Dictionaries are, of course, very largely concerned with words, and thus with sense relations...[596]

Regarding the issue of relating word meaning to sentence meaning, Palmer (1976)[597] points out "some scholars believe that the meaning of a sentence can be derived from the sum of the word meanings." Yet, he is aware that considering referential meaning to be a characteristic of sentences, while meaning in terms of sense to belong to words leads to concluding that "this is back-to-front, that, since only sentences have referential meaning, the meaning of words is derived from the meaning of the sentences in which they occur and not vice versa." Then, he introduces the theory of Componential Analysis as used by Katz and Fodor (1963), and particularly *projection rules* and *predicate calculus*. He explains the way in which it is envisaged that this theory may take us from the meaning of words to the meaning of sentences:

> As a means of showing sentence meaning (if we can restrict meaning to propositional or cognitive meaning), some kind of predicate calculus seems to be the most satisfactory. It allows us to move from word to sentence in that the formula for each word will usually form part of the whole sentence formula though it will often be more than a single predicate or argument...[598]

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[596] Palmer, F. R., (1976). *Semantics: A New Outline*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., p. 102.
[597] Ibid., p. 103.
[598] Ibid., p. 110.

Also, Davies (1986)[599] criticises the views that sentence meaning is entirely determined by the meanings of its constituent words and the way they are put together; and that, the meaning of a sentence determines the conditions under which an utterance of the sentence is strictly and literally true or false. He explains that, according to this picture, "truth conditions are determined compositionally by the semantic properties of words and ways of putting words together."[600] He believes that such a picture is very simplistic because it neglects the role of contextual features. He suggests further modifications that incorporate contextual aspects; thus "truth conditions are determined compositionally from the semantic values of the words relative to the context."[601] This modified view, he believes, still needs further adaptation to cater for pragmatic aspects. He concludes that:

> To the extent that sentence meaning is compositional, meaning is not a determinant of, but a constraint upon, explicit content and truth conditions. And because this is so, we need to take care in choosing a scheme for representing sentence meaning – the narrowly linguistic contribution to truth conditions. But none of this is to deny that there is such a thing as semantic structure in natural languages, or to deny that there is such a project as systematic semantic theorizing.[602]

McCawley (1971)[603] also criticises the scholars who "naively assume that since a sentence can be regarded as a sequence of words, its meaning is simply a sequence of meanings, namely the meanings of those words". He argues that "the meaning of an utterance can in no sense be regarded as a sequence of 'unit meanings'", and that "the relation of the meaning of a sentence to its superficial form is in fact much more complicated." He explains that to describe a sentence meaning it is necessary not only to list 'unit meanings' which are involved in it but also to indicate how they are grouped together into more

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[599] Davies, M., (1986). *Tacit Knowledge, and the Structure of Thought and Language*. In: Travis, Charles, ed. Meaning and Interpretation. 127-158. Oxford: B. Blackwell., p. 128.
[600] Ibid.
[601] Ibid.
[602] Ibid., p. 130.
[603] McCAWLEY, J. D., (1971). *Meaning and the Description of Languages*. In: Rosenberg, Jay F. and Travis, Charles, eds. Readings in the Philosophy of Language. 514-532. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall., p. 515.

complex meanings. Moreover, determining a sentence meaning may also more often involve considering items which do not appear in the superficial form of the sentence.[604]

According to the previous discussion, it is controversial whether word meanings can combine to build up sentence meaning, or whether it is through context that we can arrive at the meaning of individual words. The discussion of this issue is known in semantic theory as 'compositionality' vs. 'contextuality'. This is addressed below.

The two principles of compositionality and contextuality have aroused a lot of controversy in semantic theory. This is because they seem to contradict each other. Rott (2000)[605] explains this:

> ...the idea of compositionality seems to run counter to the context principle. Whereas the latter says that the meaning of words can only be determined from an antecedent understanding of the sentences in which they occur, the former has it just the other way round. The question is: What comes first, the parts or the whole, the understanding of words or the understanding of sentences? This looks exactly like the problem of the hen and the egg.

Sometimes this issue is referred to as whether semantical primacy should be accorded to the parts over the wholes or vice versa. For example, Janseen (1997, pp. 420, 462)[606] believes that the context principle is 'incompatible with' and 'the opposite of' compositionality. Rott (2000)[607] quotes another semantist, Stokhof (1998), who suggests that semantical primacy seems to be, at least in one interpretation of the context principle, for parts over wholes[608]. Rott (2000) argues that this approach should be resisted.[609]

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[604] McCAWLEY, J. D., (1971), Op. Cit., p. 516.
[605] Rott, H., (2000). *Words in Contexts: Fregean Elucidations*. Linguistics and Philosophy 23, 621-641. *Netherland: Kluwer Academic Publishers*., p. 626.
[606] Quoted in Rott, H., (2000), Op. Cit., p. 636.
[607] Rott, H., (2000), Op. Cit., p. 636.
[608] Stokhof, M., (1998). *Ethics and Ontology in Wittgenstein's Early Thinking: An Introductory Essay*. Manuscript. Department of Philosophy, University of Amsterdam., p. 164.
[609] Rott, H., (2000), Op. Cit., p. 636.

To help solve this controversy, the following may be proposed. It seems that in composing a text, a text producer builds up his/her text from words. In this direction, word meanings accumulate to make up the total contextual meaning. A text receiver, on the other hand, although s/he receives the text bit by bit, word by word, is actually deducing the intended meaning of a word by relating it to its context, words preceding it, and words following it until s/he feels satisfied that s/he has understood the intended meanings of single words first, and then the text as a whole. This is achieved in a to and fro movement between single words and the context in which they occur until the whole picture of meaning is built up. Sometimes, when composing a text, a text producer fails to achieve his/her intended meaning by the wrong choice of a word, misplacing it, etc. resulting in the receiver's misunderstanding or confusion. Sometimes a text producer may recognise that his/her words, having combined in a text, produced the wrong meaning, so s/he withdraws his/her statements, whether in oral or written communication, and re-explains him/herself, paraphrases, etc. and may also ask the receiver (in oral communication) to make sure that s/he has understood him/her correctly.

Thus in composing or producing a text, words help determine the meaning of the text; in decomposing or receiving a text, on the other hand, it is the other way round. In the first case, the movement is from the parts towards the whole, whereas it is vice versa in the second case. Nevertheless, neither of these operations is exclusive in either case. That is, in the first case (producing a text), words, having combined, may produce a meaning different from the intended one which their producer first had as s/he uttered them. In the second case, understanding the meaning of the text as a whole depends sometimes on understanding the exact meaning of certain key words. This is clear in cases when one, having read a whole text, feels that s/he didn't quite understand its intended meaning; s/he feels that there is something missing, one word or more which s/he has not understood, as it were, locks up the text. Thus, the two principles of compositionality and contextuality cooperate to interpret the text's meaning. Rott (2000)[610] holds that "the principles of contextuality and compositionality collaborate in the overall process of interpretation".

[610] Rott, H., (2000), Op. Cit., p. 634.

Also, Bartsch[611] believes that "the context principle is 'complementary to' and 'the basis of' compositionality, and that they 'supplement each other.'"

In this section, the relationship between word meanings, sentence meaning, and text meaning was considered. The two aspects of 'compositionality' and 'contextuality' in relation to the present research were also discussed. The discussion in this section is important for the purposes of the present research in that meaning at the level of individual words has been shown to be as important as textual and contextual meaning, hence the discussion in this thesis addresses word meanings individually first, and then contextually.

[611] Forthcoming, Quoted in Rott, H., (2000), Op. Cit., p. 637.

5.8 Word Meaning in and out of Context

As indicated elsewhere,[612] the discussion in this research addresses semantic issues on both the textual level, as well as the level of individual lexical items. Examining the textual level will necessarily lead to a consideration of the extra-linguistic context in which a certain text occurs. In this section, word meaning in and out of context will be dealt with.

Stressing that the meaning of a lexical item is to be sought within its purely linguistic properties seen in relation to all actual and potential contexts, and that the relevant extra-linguistic context should not be taken as limiting all aspects of such meanings, Cruse (1986) writes:

> ...it is assumed that the semantic properties of a lexical item are fully reflected in appropriate aspects of the relations it contracts with actual and potential contexts... In theory, the relevant contexts could include extra-linguistic situational contexts. But there are good reasons for a principled limitation to linguistic contexts: first, the relation between a lexical item and extra-linguistic contexts is often crucially mediated by the purely linguistic contexts ... second, any aspect of an extra-linguistic context can in principle be mirrored linguistically; and, third, linguistic context is more easily controlled and manipulated. We shall therefore seek to derive information about a word's meaning from its relations with actual and potential linguistic contexts.[613]

Nida (1975)[614] also agrees that "the meaning of a unit must be described in terms of the sum total of what it signals in all the contexts in which it is used."

Thus الرجع[615], for example, was understood according to the context which the culture at that time conceived of to mean 'rain', but now new potential contexts have been supposedly developed; it is claimed that there is more than rain in the sky that returns. The

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[612] See section 1.1 page 10 and section 5.5 page 167.
[613] Cruse, D. A., (1986), Op. Cit., p. 1.
[614] Nida, E. A., (1975), Op. Cit., p. 121.
[615] See example 7.2.23 page 343.

meaning of this word, therefore, may be perceived as the total sum of its meanings in all actual and potential contexts. In this regard, Parikh (2000)[616] explains, "Once we allow situations a role in the determination of content, it becomes clear that there are certain aspects of utterances that are constant across utterance situations and there are others that vary from one situation to another. One of the most salient linguistic constants is the meaning of a sentence. This is different from its content in an utterance, which varies from situation to situation. Meaning is the collection of possible contents of a sentence." Parikh distinguishes between two concepts: the meaning of a sentence, and its content. The former is constant across utterance situations, while the latter varies from one situation to another, but 'meaning' in Parikh's sense is "the collection of possible contents of a sentence", that is its different interpretations in different situations. Applying this to the translation of the verses under investigation in this thesis, it could be suggested that their meanings, which translation aspires most to transfer to another language, may not be limited to one interpretation in one time and situation.

In fact, the context in which a certain word is used helps in defining its meaning in that context, but still, much of its meaning is built into the word itself regardless of the context. In this regard, Cruse (1986) explains:

> The full set of normality relations which a lexical item contracts with all conceivable contexts will be referred to as its **contextual relations**. We shall say, then, that the meaning of a word is fully reflected in its contextual relations; in fact, we can go further, and say that, for present purposes, the meaning of a word is constituted by its contextual relations.
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> In its basic form, this conception of the meaning of a word is of limited usefulness: much important information concerning word meaning remains, as it were, latent.[617]
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> (original emphasis, Underlining added)

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[616] Parikh, P., (2000). *Communication, Meaning, and Interpretation*. Linguistics and Philosophy 23, 185-212. , p. 186.
[617] Cruse, D. A., (1986), Op. Cit., p. 16.

Similarly, Frawley (1992)[618], addressing the issue of pragmatic meaning (which is more oriented towards context, linguistic and ultimately extra-linguistic), and semantic meaning, explains:

> [the] view that pragmatics exceeds or somehow precludes other approaches to meaning relies on the failure to distinguish—or the unwillingness to acknowledge the difference between—the selection of meaning from the meaning selected. Linguistic expressions come into a context of use with a set of possible meanings to be selected. Pragmatics involves the selection of the contextually relevant meaning, not the determination of what counts as the meaning itself.

In his review of the approach 'meaning as context and use', Frawley points out "...that the properties to which linguistic expressions refer are relatively stable in any context because they are inherent in the expressions themselves."[619] He goes on to explain:

> When people say that meaning is use in context, they are really saying that some meaning is variable and selected by the situation at hand. This meaning is unlike the kind of information that is grammaticalized, which is a property of the expressions themselves and is relatively stable across any context.[620]

So the meaning (or range of different possible meanings) is built into the expression itself, and it is through the help of other contextual factors that the choice of the appropriate meaning can be made. After all, "the context must operate on the what [sic][621] semantics gives it, not the other way around..."[622]. It seems that this is important in the case of understanding the meaning of certain lexical items found in the Holy Qur'an which are believed to refer to scientific facts not only on the level of context, but the culture as a whole. Thus, when a verse is supposedly found in the context of addressing what some people believe to be scientific issues, the meaning of its words, they believe, can be understood in various ways depending on the level of knowledge available to people at a certain time.

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[618] Frawley, W., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 37.
[619] Ibid., p. 36.
[620] Ibid., p. 43.
[621] Presumably 'the' is extra here.
[622] Frawley, W., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 44.

After discussing cognitive synonymy in which more than one word can yield the same concept, but each in a distinctive way, i.e. a word may add emotional dimension, for example 'die' vs. 'pass away'/'snuff it', Cruse (1992) presents his view on word meaning:

> ...the whole meaning of a word is the associated concept (together with its pattern of connections within the concept network) plus any word-specific properties. It would be useful to have terms to distinguish words that do not have any word-specific properties from those that do: I refer to the former as "plain" words, and the latter as "charged" words.[623]

Thus, it can be understood from Cruse's view that each word, at least the type of words he terms 'charged words', will always have its own word-specific properties regardless of the context in which it is employed. This aspect cannot be overlooked in any account of its meaning.

[623] Cruse, D. A., (1992). *Antonymy Revisited: Some Thoughts on the Relationship Between Words and Concepts.* In: Lehrer, Adrienne and Kittay, E. F., eds. Frames, Fields, and Contrasts: New Essays in Semantic and Lexical Organization. 289-308. Hillsdale, N.J.: L. Erlbaum Associates. p.290.

6 CHAPTER SIX: TEXT TYPOLOGY IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will start with a literature review regarding modern text typology, highlighting its importance particularly in translation, and presenting some approaches that have been proposed for developing text typologies. The issue of text multifunctionality will also be addressed. A comparison between the concepts of text type, genre, and register will follow explaining why I have opted for text typology. Then, I will refer to some traditional attempts to delineate text typology in the Holy Qur'an on various levels. A comparison between the traditional text typology of the Holy Qur'an and modern text typology will also be attempted. The purpose of this investigation, as explained in the introduction,[624] is to identify the verses discussed as a specific group, and to find out whether the questions with which this thesis is concerned may be appropriately answered if the texts analysed in this work are studied in contrast with other text types in the Holy Qur'an in an attempt to identify their features.

[624] See section 1.3.

6.2 *Text Typology and Translation*

Translation theorists agree that text typology provides valuable help in guiding the translator's decisions. Hatim (1997) explains:

> Translation equivalence ... can be adequately established only in terms of criteria related to text type membership, and in the light of how these criteria inform the kind of compositional plan (structure) and the way a text is made internally cohesive (texture).[625]

He also writes, " Text type is ... the last court of appeal in determining what forms of expression are to be retained or discarded [in translation]."[626] Chau (1984) also highlights the importance of text types in translation studies: "research into text types and their implications for translating, such as those done by Neubert (1968), Reiss (1969, 1971, 1976), and Newmark (1981), were most illuminating".[627] Hatim (1997) highlights the importance of identifying text-type focus and shows the intimate relationship obtaining between text type, text structure and texture, and the reflection of this in translating various texts between English and Arabic.

Addressing the issue of text typology in translation, Hervey and Higgins (1992) write:

> Because any ST [source text] shares some of its properties with other texts of the same genre, and is perceived by a SL [source language] audience as being what it is on account of such genre-defining properties, the translator must be familiar with the broad characteristics of the source-culture genres. Furthermore, since any source culture presents a whole array of different textual genres, the translator must have some sort of overview of genre-types in that culture. This does not imply an exhaustive typology of genres – even if such a thing were possible, it would be too elaborate for a methodology of translation. All that is needed is an approximate framework of genre-types that might help a translator to

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[625] Hatim, B., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 4.
[626] Ibid., p. 105.
[627] Chau, S., (1984). *Hermeneutics and the Translator: The Ontological Dimension of Translating.* Multilinaua 3[2], 71-77. , p. 73, quoted in Benhaddou, M., (1991). *Translation Quality Assessment: A Situational/ Textual Model for the Evaluation of Arabic/English Translations.* Ph.D. thesis. University of Salford., p. 29.

> concentrate on characteristics that make the ST a representative specimen of a particular source-culture genre.[628]

They also explain the importance of text typology in choosing an appropriate translation methodology: "The reason why this classification is useful for translation methodology is that *differences in approach to subject matter* entail fundamental *differences in the way a text is formally constructed.*"[629] (emphasis in the original).

Recognising *text type* as a broad concept that can refer to any distinct type of text and includes the notion of genre, Trosborg (1997) argues that "text typology involving genre analysis can help the translator develop strategies that facilitate his/her work and provide awareness of various options as well as constraints."[630]

Sager (1997) also highlights the importance of text typology for translation, emphasising that there is a close relationship between text type and the choice of a translation strategy.[631] Criticising the notion of 'equivalence' and reviewing some of its approaches, Sager (1997)[632] proposes an approach to translation based on communication theory. In this approach, determining the type of the ST according to some linguistic and situational features is the first step towards producing an adequate translation. Sager (1997)[633] explains that equivalence is recognised through "a static view of translation which takes the source text as its starting point and sets up parameters for measuring the 'interesting' differences between source and target text, i.e. those which are not simply the result of the linguistic structures of the languages involved." He argues that the concept of 'equivalence' with all its aspects, linguistic, functional, etc. is vague and inadequate for translation studies. The static view that a text to be translated consists of linguistic form and semantic content, and that the form is to be changed while retaining the same content

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[628] Hervey, S. G. J. and Higgins, I., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 135.
[629] Ibid., p. 141.
[630] Trosborg, A. ed., (1997). *Text Typology and Translation*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins., p. viii.
[631] Sager, J. C., (1997). *Text Types and Translation*. In: Trosborg, Anna, ed. Text Typology and Translation. 24-41. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins., p. 38.
[632] Sager, J. C., (1997), Op. Cit., pp. 25ff.
[633] Ibid., p. 25.

is challenged. Therefore, a dynamic approach should be used in which translation is viewed as one possible step in a communication process between two cultures.[634]

Sager (1997) distinguishes between what information scientists call 'documents' as units of texts having particular functions in communication by virtue of the writer's intention and the situational circumstances, and simple texts as, for example, ancient historical texts that "have served or lost their original raison d'etre over time, and have subsequently been stored in some way, the original intention is also no longer relevant to later readers..."[635] The importance of this distinction for translation, Sager points out, lies in the fact that in the former type, translators can observe the original intention clearly incorporated in the original text, which, as is the case with most literary texts, should remain the same in the target text. On the other hand, if the texts are identified as simple texts divorced of any clear intentions, translators should depend entirely on the commissioner, i.e. the person or organisation who has requested the translation, to specify the intention of the target text, and provide them with clear indications of the expectations of the proposed readers. Thus, identifying certain features in the ST guides the translators' decisions for producing a TT. Applying this to the case of translating the Holy Qur'an, it may not be said, according to Islamic belief, that the Holy Qur'an belongs to the latter type 'simple texts' in which the communication purpose has been lost. Moreover, translators of the Holy Qur'an have the added benefit that what they are dealing with, unlike texts belonging to the former type in Sager's classification, is not entirely "documents, i.e. messages outside their original pragmatic communicative situation, which they have to reconstruct in order to fully understand the original messages"[636]. This is because translators of the Holy Qur'an have access to a wealth of interpretative work building on situational observations as recorded in the 'occasions of revelations' and accompanying exegeses.

To summarise the issue of the relevance of text typology to translation theory and practice, one can conclude that this approach is based on the premise that to arrive at an adequate transfer of a text embedded in a particular socio-cultural setting into another text of a

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[634] Sager, J. C., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 26.
[635] Ibid., p. 27.
[636] Ibid.

different socio-cultural setting, texts must be classified in terms of the types they belong to.[637] It follows that answers to two important questions[638] in this regard should guide the translator's decision and help him/her produce an adequate translation; these questions are:

1. Do different text types need different treatment in the process of translating?

2. To what degree can a text type belonging to a particular language be transferred to a similar text type, if any, in another language?

To provide a simple example as a possible answer for the first question, Hervey and Higgins (1992) argue that "sound-symbolism and the deliberate use of connotative meanings are inappropriate in English empirical/ descriptive texts."[639] Explaining how different text types need different treatments in translation, they thus propose "a scale or continuum defined by the relative importance of explicit literal meaning at one extreme, and of implicitly conveyed connotative and/or stylistic meaning at the other."[640] They explain that texts like scientific or legal documents, or textbooks stand at one end of the scale. In translating such texts, priority should be maximally given to precision in literal meaning rather than to 'aesthetic' or stylistic effects. "At the opposite end of the scale", they go on to argue, "are texts that depend maximally on subtle nuances of non-literal meaning and aesthetic effect, and minimally on explicit, literal meaning."[641] They name 'poetry' as the type of genre standing at this extreme, where "understanding the literal content of sentences is often no more than perceiving the outer garb of a more subtle textual meaning, no more than a stepping-stone towards sensing a 'deeper' message-content of which the literal meaning is a symbol."[642] It is because poetry has such characteristics that they believe it is often said to be untranslatable.

Neubert and Shreve (1992) provide a direct answer to the question of relating text types to translating techniques. They assert, "Different types of texts presuppose different

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[637] See Benhaddou, M., (1991), Op. Cit., pp. 73ff.
[638] Cf. Hervey, S. G. J. and Higgins, I., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 145 for more detailed questions.
[639] Hervey, S. G. J. and Higgins, I., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 141.
[640] Ibid., p. 144.
[641] Ibid.
[642] Ibid.

translation techniques and different criteria for revision or criticism."[643] They also agree with Hervey and Higgins (1992) as quoted above that certain text types such as scientific texts, legal documents, commercial transactions, and technical manuals exhibit a high degree of directness in meaning, and are thus easier to translate.[644]

Another example that answers the first question can be found in Hatim and Mason (1990)[645]. Conducting a translation exercise, they found that the majority of twelve translator trainees produced translations which could be faulted on the grounds that they misinterpreted text-type focus. The sample text in English belongs to the argumentative text type and contains the concessive structure '*certainly, . . . but*'. Misinterpreting the text type as expository instead of argumentative, most of the trainees rendered this structure into Arabic using the structure that is equivalent to the confirmative '*it certainly is. . .*' in English. Thus, "It is only when text-type criteria are invoked that alternative ways of marking concession will be looked for, including syntactic as well as lexical means."[646]

Hatim (1997)[647] also provides another example that relates to the first question. Conducting a translation exercise in which two English sample texts, one argumentative and the other expository, are to be translated into Arabic, he concludes that Arabic prefers the use of nominal sentences in the argumentative text type, while verbal sentences are preferred in the expository text type.[648]

Wilss (1982) also argues that "different text types require in translation not only different transfer methods, but also different TE [translation equivalence] criteria.[649]

Regarding the second issue, text typology across languages, there are two basic views:

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[643] Neubert, A. and Shreve, G. M., (1992). *Translation as Text*. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press., p. 17.
[644] Ibid., p. 41.
[645] Hatim, B. and Mason, I., (1990). *Discourse and the Translator*. London: Longman., p. 149.
[646] Ibid., p. 154.
[647] Hatim, B., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 87.
[648] For a detailed account of the issue of word order and sentence types in Arabic, see Dickins, J. and Watson, J. C. E., (1999). *Standard Arabic: An Advanced Course*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., pp. 337-51, and Dickins, J., (2001). *Supplement to Thinking Arabic Translation*. Manuscript, 38-46. , pp. 38-46. See also Holes, C., (1995), Op. Cit., pp.203-43.
[649] Wilss, W., (1982). *The Science of Translation: Problems and Methods*. Tübingen: G. Narr., p. 112.

According to the first view, it is not necessary, even not desirable, to force the resulting TT to conform to the original ST typology. What is important is the communicative function of the ST in its environment, and this is what should remain invariant in the translation, even if the TT typology has to be changed.

Among the scholars who propose this view is Sager (1997) who explains that "it is the distance between the communicative situation of the source text and the situation of the target text which is mainly responsible for changes of intention and hence changes of text types."[650] Thus, he proposes a typology for translation based on text type, which influences translation strategies:

1. Existing target language text types: STs translated into parallel text types already existing as original in the TL,
2. Translation-specific text types: new text types introduced into the TL as a result of translating certain SL text type that do not originally exist in the TL.

Observing that text-type conventions are interrelated with speech-act rules[651] and with situational dimensions, Kussmaul (1997)[652] is also of the view that the primary interest of translators in this regard should not be whether to preserve the source-text-type structures which may result in creating a kind of alienation effect in the translated text, or to conform to the target-text-type conventions and thus create a text which looks perfectly normal regardless of the original ST communicative purpose. On the contrary, he proposes that the main concern should be preserving the original speech-act of the ST even if some adjustment has to be made on the level of text typology of the TT.

Another scholar who is concerned with communicative functions in a cross-cultural perspective is Hansen (1997) who shows that the membership of SL text-type may need to

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[650] Sager, J. C., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 34.
[651] For an overview of speech act theory, see Austin, J. L., (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. ; Levinson, S. C., (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press..
[652] Kussmaul, P., (1997). *Text-Type Conventions and Translating: Some Methodological Issues*. In: Trosborg, Anna, ed. Text Typology and Translation. 67-83. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins., p. 80.

be changed in the TL in order to preserve the communicative function. Conducting a study on translating German technical brochures into Danish, he concludes that a semantic translation is too formal and too rigid and most often ineffective in achieving the intended purpose of technical brochures.[653] Instead, he proposes that the focus should be on pragmatic aspects. Therefore, a shift from representative ('conceptual exposition' in Hatim and Mason's typology) to directive /persuasive function ('instruction with option' in Hatim and Mason's typology) is required when translating from German into Danish. Although his study is limited to this language pairs, he argues that the results are also very relevant to translations between other languages.[654]

In the second view, it is important to preserve the integrity of the text types in translation.

Among the proponents of this view one can mention Bhatia (1997). In his study on legal texts, Bhatia (1997)[655] stresses the importance of preserving the integrity of text types in translation, but adaptation to target audience in terms of 'easification' is also suggested. He proposes a genre-based approach to the teaching and learning of translation in which an adequate understanding of the easification procedures establishes the importance of generic integrity in translation work. "The approach establishes the importance of interpretation or facilitation in translation work, on the one hand, and of maintaining generic integrity in the translated work, on the other."[656]

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[653] Hansen, J., (1997). *Translation of Technical Brochures*. In: Trosborg, Anna, ed. Text Typology and Translation. [v. 26], 185-202. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins., p. 193.
[654] Ibid., p. 186.
[655] Bhatia, V., (1997). *Translating Legal Genres*. In: Trosborg, Anna, ed. Text Typology and Translation. [v. 26], 203-214. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins., p. 203.
[656] Ibid., p. 212.

6.3 Approaches to Text Typology

There have been a number of attempts made to identify a text typology; some of which are summarised below. Hatim and Mason (1990)[657] point out two major methods proposed for developing a text typology, i.e. classifying texts according to situational criteria such as 'field of discourse', or in terms of a general notion of 'domain'.

Along similar lines, Baker (1992)[658] explains that there have been two main ways of classifying texts: according to the context in which the texts occur, for example 'journal article', 'science textbook', 'newspaper editorial'; the second according to "the nature of the message involved or the addressee/addresser relationship." The second classification results in text types such as 'narration', 'exposition', 'argumentation', and 'instruction'.

Another approach to text typology is to define texts in terms of genre. Kress (1985)[659], defines genre as " a conventionalized 'form of text' which reflects the functions and goals involved in a particular 'social occasion', as well as the purposes of the participants in them." Hatim and Mason (1997)[660] define genres as "conventional forms of texts associated with particular types of social occasion (e.g. the news report, the editorial, the cooking recipe)."[661]

Hervey and Higgins (1992)[662] explain that the most elementary subdivision in textual genres is into oral text types, and written ones; which are both further subdivided into many specific genres. Examples of the oral text types include oral narrative, anecdotes, jokes, unrehearsed conversation, oral poetry, dramatized reading, and reading aloud. As for

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[657] Hatim, B. and Mason, I., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 138.
[658] Baker, M., (1992). *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*. London: Routledge., p. 114.
[659] Quoted in Hatim, B. and Mason, I., (1997). *The Translator as Communicator*. London: Routledge., p. 108.
[660] Hatim, B. and Mason, I., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 218.
[661] For comparison with other text-typology proposals see Figure 6-1 page 209.
[662] Hervey, S. G. J. and Higgins, I., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 135.

the written genres, they explain that all the proposed subdivisions for at least the past four centuries can be traced back to classical antiquity where five main genres were recognized: literary/fictional, theological/ religious, theoretical/ philosophical, empirical/ descriptive, and persuasive/prescriptive.[663] "This classification", they go on, "is primarily based on subject matter, or, more precisely, on *the author's attitude to the treatment of subject matter.*"[664]

Dickins et. al. (2002)[665] also maintain that all texts are defined in terms of genre, and that "the term **'text-type'** is often used in a similar sense to 'genre'". Reviewing some approaches to categorizing texts according to the notion of text-type, they present the typology of Katharina Reiss ([1977] 1989: 105-15), who distinguishes three types: artistic and creative self-expression, conveying information, and persuading somebody to do something. Dickins et. al. (2002)[666] also cite Snell-Hornby's (1988) much more complex prototypology, which she puts forward as she sees Reisse's classification as too limited. They also refer to Neubert and Shreve's (1992: 125-35) attempt to use the concept of 'prototype' rather than 'type', which is also considered too limited. Another classification Dickins et. al. (2002)[667] present is that of Hatim and Mason (1990: 153-8), who classify texts into three text types: expository, argumentative, and instructional.

Dickins et. al. (2002)[668] adopt a definition of genre as "a category to which, in a given culture, a given text is seen to belong, and within which the text is seen to share a type of communicative purpose and effect with other texts". They explain that in this definition "the term also covers the traditionally identified genres of literature, and genres bearing

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[663] Hervey, S. G. J. and Higgins, I., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 139. See Chapter 11 of this book for full discussion of this issue.
[664] Hervey, S. G. J. and Higgins, I., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 139. Original italics.
[665] Dickins, J. et. al., (2002). *Thinking Arabic Translation: A Course in Translation Method: Arabic to English*. London: Routledge., p. 175.
[666] Ibid.
[667] Ibid.
[668] Ibid.

what Baker [1992: 114[669]] calls 'institutionalized labels' such as 'journal article', 'science textbooks, 'newspaper editorial', or 'travel brochure'".

Dickins et. al. (2002)[670] emphasise the author's attitude to the treatment of the subject matter of the text as the essential factor in determining a genre typology rather than subject matter, which "in itself", they argue, "is not a useful criterion for describing genres, because the same subject matter can figure in very different genres". Under this approach, five broad categories are distinguished: literary genres (e.g. poetry, fiction, drama), religious genres (e.g. in Christianity, wide range of styles, from Authorized Version to 'happy-clappy'; in Arabic and Islamic context, religious texts aimed at scholars vs. those aimed at the general public, sermons in mosques), philosophical genres (e.g. pure mathematics), empirical genres (e.g. scientific, technological texts), and persuasive genres (e.g. instruction manuals, through laws, rules and regulations).

Another factor Dickins et. al. (2002)[671] recognise in determining a genre typology is "the question of whether the text is oral or written." Recognising the overlap between oral and written texts, and referring to the five genre-categories discussed above, they explain:

> Each of the five genre-categories includes both oral and written texts. In practice, however, it is almost impossible not to distinguish an oral text as belonging to a discrete oral genre, and a written text as belonging to a discrete written genre, even where the texts share the subject matter: the difference in medium generally entails a difference in attitude to treatment of the subject matter... A complicating factor is that many oral genres also involve written texts: songs, plays, sermons, lectures, a salesman's patter – all may be performed on the basis of a written text that is either read out, or spoken from memory, or used as the basis for improvization.[672]

Addressing the issue of text typology, and relating it to text function, Nord (1991) has the following discussion:

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[669] See page 202.
[670] Dickins, J. et. al., (2002), Op. Cit., pp. 177-79.
[671] Ibid., p. 179.
[672] Ibid.

> As structural text features are normally polyfunctional, the relationship between text function and text structure is rarely 1:1. As a general rule, a text with a particular function is characterized by a combination or "configuration" of features, which can be constituted by both extratextual (i.e. pragmatic) and intratextual (semantic, syntactic, and stylistic) elements.[673]

"This idea", she goes on, "can be useful as a starting point for a systematic classification of text groups, classes, 'genres', or types according to certain common features or feature combinations...where the relation between a particular configuration of features and a particular text function is culture-specific."[674] She then explains that German linguists and translation scholars (e.g. Lux 1981 or Reiss & Vermeer 1984) usually distinguish between text type ("Text-type") and text class ("Textsorte"). The former is a functional classification and comprises categories such as informative, expressive, persuasive, descriptive, narrative, and argumentative texts. The latter is a category that refers to the occurrence of texts in standard situations (e.g. weather report, prayer, recipe, folk-ballad, operating instructions) and corresponds to the literary category of genre. "English-speaking authors", she argues, "normally seem to use the term 'text type' for both classifications (cf. Beaugrande 1980: 197, Beaugrande & Dressler 1981: 183ff., or House 1981a: 35)".[675]

However, such proposed text typologies are controversial. House (1981)[676] takes issue with linguists and translation theorists who set up functional text typologies, which resulted, she argues, from the simplistic equation of textual function with one of the language functions suggested for example in Bühler (1969), Jakobson (1960), or Halliday (1970a, b, 1971, 1973). She explains her view along the following lines:

> ...we believe that such an equation of language function and textual function and type is overly simplistic: given that language has functions a to n, and that any text is a self-contained instance of language, it should follow that a text will also exhibit functions a to n, and not, as is presupposed by those who set up functional text typologies, that any text will exhibit one of the functions a to n. We believe that if the notion of functionally based text typology can have any empirical validity, it can only be a probabilistic one as the

[673] Nord, C., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 18.
[674] Ibid.
[675] Ibid.
[676] House, J., (1981), Op. Cit., p. 36.

> ground for placing any text inside text type A can only be that this particular text exhibits language function A to a greater extent than it exhibits other language functions.
>
> (emphasis in the original)

Hatim and Mason (1990)[677] explain that both methods proposed for developing a text typology, i.e. classifying texts according to situational criteria such as 'field of discourse', or in terms of an over-general notion of 'domain' suffer from serious shortcomings; the former "amounts to little more than a statement of subject matter, with [unhelpful] examples such as 'journalistic' or 'scientific' text types," and the latter "leads to text types such as 'literary', 'poetic', 'didactic'." Such categories, they argue, are too broad to yield a useful classification.

Highlighting the issue of multifunctionality of texts, and attempting to render such proposed text typologies useful for the purpose of translation, Hatim and Mason (1990) write:

> The problem is that, however the typology is set up, any real text will display features of more than one type. This multifunctionality is the rule rather than the exception, and any useful typology of texts will have to be able to accommodate such diversity.
>
> To account for the multifunctionality of texts, what is needed is a comprehensive model of context ... The most important feature of such a model is that it brings together communicative, pragmatic and semiotic values and demonstrates their importance for the development of text and the way in which communication takes place. Thus, in looking at text types from the translator's point of view, we intend to examine the ways in which context determines the focus of any given text.[678]

Similarly, Hatim (1997)[679] proposes a text-type model in which "a view of context is taken which is sufficiently broad to accommodate communicative use-user distinctions, pragmatic notions such as intentionality, and the semiotic categories such as genre and discourse." Recognising a broad distinction between texts which set out to 'monitor' a

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[677] Hatim, B. and Mason, I., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 138.
[678] Ibid.
[679] Hatim, B., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 36.

situation and texts which set out to 'manage' a situation, he proposes, similarly in Hatim and Mason 1990, a typology of texts in which the following text types are distinguished: **exposition**, which subsumes conceptual exposition, narration, and description; **argumentation**, which subsumes through-argumentation and counter-argumentation; and **instruction**, which subsumes the subcategories 'without option' and 'with option'. The first text type belongs to the category of texts which set out to 'monitor' a situation, while the last two belong to that of texts which set out to 'manage' a situation.

Attempting to render text typology useful for translation, Wilss (1982) also defines text types in terms of their basic communicative functions and points out the relevance of this to translation:

> Every text ... is characterized by one or several basic communicative functions. Texts with a comparable basic communicative function can be combined into a text type. Hence, different text types require in translation not only different transfer methods, but also different TE [translation equivalence] criteria.[680]

De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) similarly maintain that "the assignment of a text to a type clearly depends on the function of the text in communication, not merely on the surface format."[681]

In another attempt to find useful insights for relating text typologies to translation, Nord (1991)[682], having reviewed some approaches to text typologies (e.g. Reiss 1971, 1976a, Reiss & Vermeer 1984, Koller 1979, Matt et al. 1978, Thiel 1980a), stresses the importance of taking into account the 'polyfunctionality' of texts. However, she believes that text typology can be useful for translation only when such typology is functionally oriented:

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[680] Wilss, W., (1982), Op. Cit., p. 112.
[681] De Beaugrande, R. and Dressler, W. U., (1981). *Introduction to Text Linguistics.* London: Longman., p. 185.
[682] Nord, C., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 21.

In my opinion, the assignment of a text to a particular type or genre cannot bring about the "ingenious" solution for its translation. Rather I would suggest the following procedure. By means of a comprehensive model of text analysis which takes into account intratextual as well as extratextual factors the translator can establish the "function-in-culture" of a source text. He then compares this with the (prospective) function-in-culture of the target text required by the initiator, identifying and isolating those ST elements which have to be preserved or adapted in translation.

Nord stresses the importance of text function-in-culture as the basic guideline for translating texts across cultures rather than adhering to formal text typology equivalence. In other words, according to her, certain ST elements may be adapted in the process of translation, which may result in changing the category of the TT. Understood in this way, her proposal might be included within the first view regarding text typology across languages as discussed above, which concentrates on the communicative function of the ST in its environment.[683]

The proposed typologies of texts discussed so far can be summarised and compared in Figure 6-1, page 209. This figure shows both the typologies suggested in the literature as reviewed and summarised by the quoted scholars with some examples, and their own proposed typology (in *italics*) where applicable. Following Hatim and Mason (1990) and Hatim (1997), classifications according to subject matter such as literary, religious, philosophical, etc., or on the basis of external situational criteria such as 'field of discourse', e.g. journalistic, scientific, newspaper article, etc. seem to be too broad to yield any helpful insights for translation purposes. On the other hand, the view that functionally oriented approaches to text typology, which have attracted many scholars as the only plausible way to render text typology helpful for translation[684], is accepted as such in this research. Therefore, the first two approaches are marked as 'unhelpful' and the functional ones as 'helpful' in this figure.

[683] See page 200.
[684] See pages 200ff.

Text Typology Classification

According to (attitude to) subject matter

Hervey & Higgins (1992: 135): text types = genres	*Dickins et. al. (2002: 178): Text types defined in terms of genres*	Hatim & Mason (1990: 139): Over-general notion of domain
Literary/ fictional	*Literary genres: poetry, fiction, drama*	Literary Poetic
Theological/ religious	*Religious genres: Authorised Version -- 'happy-clappy'*	Didactic
Theoretical/philosophical	*Philosophical genres: pure maths*	...etc.
Empirical/descriptive	*Empirical genres: scientific, technological*	
Persuasive/prescriptive	*Persuasive genres: instruction manuals, laws ... etc.*	

On the basis of external situational criteria

Hatim & Mason (1990: 139): Field of discourse	Baker (1992: 114): Context in which the text occur	Nord (1991:18): Occurrence of text in standard situations
Journalistic	Journal article	Weather report
Scientific	Scientific textbook	Prayer
	Newspaper article	Recipe
	Travel brochure	Folk-ballad
Religious ...etc.	...etc.	Operating instructions
		...etc.

Non-helpful: too broad

Helpful

On the basis of functional/ communicative purpose

Nord (1991: 18): functional classification	Baker (1992: 114): nature of the message involved	*Hatim and Mason (1990: 140-158): communicative intentions serving an overall rhetorical purpose.*
Informative		
Expressive	Exposition	*Monitor a situation:* *1. Exposition:* *conceptual* *descriptive* *narrative*
Descriptive		
Narrative	Narration	
Argumentative	Argumentation	*Manage a situation:* *1. Argumentation:* *through* *counter*
Prescriptive	Instruction	*2. Instruction* *with option: e.g. advertisements* *without option: e.g. contracts*

Figure 6-1 Summary and comparison of some approaches to text typology

Among the proposed functional approaches, Hatim and Mason's (1990) and Hatim's (1997) functional typology may be chosen for the purposes of this research as it accommodates communicative use-user distinctions, pragmatic notions such as intentionality, and the semiotic categories such as genre and discourse[685]. Beginning from a broad division between texts which set out to 'manage' and those which set out to 'monitor' a situation, they propose the following divisions:

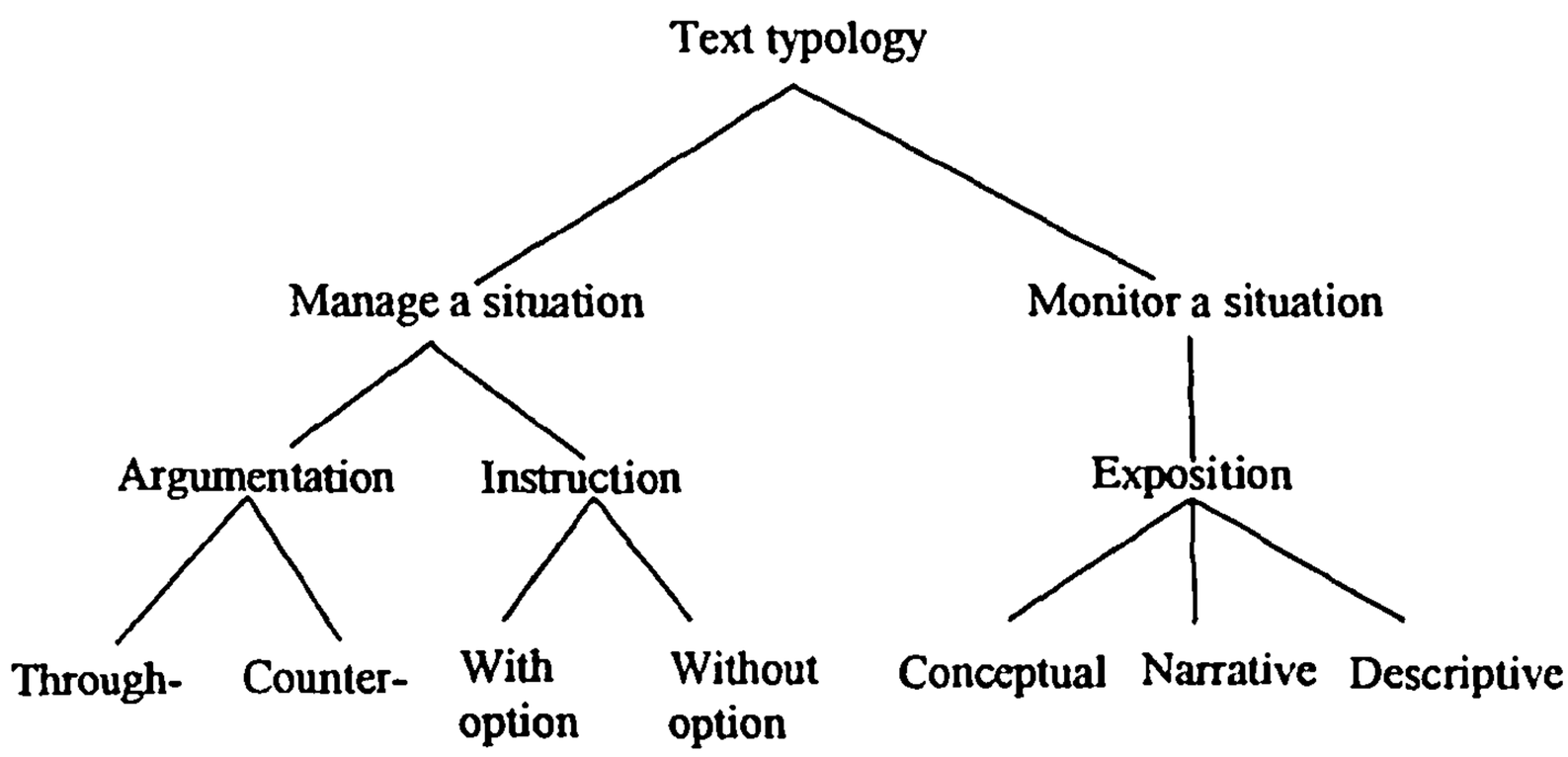


Figure 6-2: Hatim and Mason (1990: 158) text typology

Employing this approach, it can be said that texts may be best classified according to their communicative function, as they are utilized for achieving an ultimate purpose on the environment: either to manage a situation or to monitor a situation. Managing a situation is achieved through argumentation and instruction. Monitoring, on the other hand, is realised though exposition which can be divided into conceptual, descriptive, and narrative. In managing a situation, the text is directed towards achieving a certain function the author has in mind, while in monitoring a situation the purpose is to provide a detached account of the situation minimising the involvement of the author's attitude. Approaching the typology in such a way enables a better analysis and recognition of the hierarchy of functions a text may have. The ultimate function may be, for example, to manage a situation, to argue, but in order to achieve this other types of texts belonging to monitoring a situation may be used. In other cases, the author may aim to instruct the receiver to do

[685] Hatim, B., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 36.

something (instruction), and in order to convince him/her of this (argument), s/he may describe an object (conceptual: descriptive), tell a story (conceptual: narrative), etc. Thus, the ultimate function of the text is what counts here. Subfunctions can be adjusted if they fail to comply with the ultimate function. This is why, for example, Hansen (1997)[686] concludes that a shift from representative ('conceptual exposition' in Hatim and Mason's typology) to directive/ persuasive function ('instruction with option' in Hatim and Mason's typology) is required when translating technical brochures from German into Danish. This is also shown in the example quoted from Trosborg[687] about the advertisement. This does not mean, however, that such subtexts with such subfunctions cannot be studied or analysed on their own. There are numerous cases when whole texts are composed of many subtexts which do not necessarily belong to the same text type of the text as a whole. This has been discussed in the literature under such titles as multifunctionality of texts, text hybridisation, and frame text with embedded texts. This is to be addressed in the next section.

[686] Hansen, J., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 193. See page 200.
[687] Trosborg, A. (1997), Op. Cit. See page 212.

6.3.1 Texts Multifunctionality, Frame Text and Embedded Texts: Assigning the Discussed Verses to a Particular Text Type

Reviewing some approaches to text typology, Trosborg (1997)[688] explains that Kinneavy (1971, 1980), building on Aristotle, proposes the following typology of texts: *descriptive, classificative, narrative,* and *evaluative*. Werlich's (1976) typology includes five categories: description, narration, exposition, argumentation, and instruction. She goes on to explain that his typology is adopted later by Hatim and Mason (1990) for translation purposes with a division of instruction into two subclasses: *instruction with option* (as in advertisements, manuals, recipes, etc.) and *instruction without option* (e.g. legislative texts and contracts). Trosborg (1997) also highlights the issue of multifunctionality of texts: "Most discourse employs multiple views of reality and is therefore multiple in type... pure narration, description, exposition and argumentation hardly occur." [689] She gives the example of an advertisement in which the information is there to further the persuasion. "In expressing an opinion", she argues, "factual knowledge as well as evaluative judgements may be brought as supportive statements."[690] Classifying texts of multifunctional nature is, therefore, problematic, but should not be impossible if it is understood that although all real texts are in fact multifunctional, there will usually be one dominant aim according to which they may be classified. This issue has been referred to by Morris (1946)[691] as the "dominant mode" a text may have, *text type focus,* or *contextual focus* in Werlich's (1976)[692] and Hatim and Mason's (1990)[693] terminology[694]. In such multifunctional texts, one of the aims is dominant and the others are a means to that end. Thus, a text maybe composed of a number of subtexts, each with its own type, but the classification of the text at the macro level should be made according to the overall communicative function of the text as a whole. To borrow an example from Trosborg (1997),

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[688] Trosborg, A., (1997). *Text Typology: Register, Genre and Text Type*. In: Trosborg, Anna, ed. Text Typology and Translation. 3-23. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins. p.15.
[689] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit. p.16.
[690] Ibid., p.14.
[691] Morris, C. W., (1946). *Signs, Language, and Behavior*. New York: Prentice-Hall., p. 75.
[692] Werlich, E., (1976). *A Text Grammar of English*. Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer..
[693] Hatim, B. and Mason, I., (1990), Op. Cit..
[694] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 16.

> ...an advertisement may be predominantly referential in nature, consisting of informative (and expressive) statements, but still, as is well known, the aim is that of persuading the consumer to buy. Advertisements are difficult to classify at the level of typical formation patterns, but they all share the same function of promoting the sales of a product, i.e. they are directive at text level. [695]

However, analysing each subtext with regard to its specific linguistic characteristics is not unacceptable. Trosborg (1997) argues, "If a text is incorporated into a larger text with a different overall purpose, the performative impact of the incorporated text may be changed by its incorporation. This explains why linguistic features at microlevel need not be isomorphic with the particular characteristics of the contextual focus."[696] Thus, although the overall purpose of an extract from the Holy Qur'an in which a verse referring to what some proponents of scientific exegesis believe to be a scientific fact occurs is, for example, to persuade man that God really exists, etc.[697], this does not necessarily mean that the linguistic features of the embedded text under analysis should correspond to the overall style of the text at the macro-level. Each subtext can have its own linguistic features which assign it to one type of text or another regardless of the overall textual / contextual focus. In other words, it maybe that the overall text focus of a text differs from that established in the verse or group of verses discussed, i.e. they are believed to refer to some aspects of science, while the main purpose of the section of the text in which they occur, for example, is to support the proposition that God is the only One worthy of worship, and that He sent His apostles with guiding books for humanity, etc. Taking this a step further, it could be argued that in the case of the Holy Qur'an, the primary aim at the larger scale, i.e. of the Qur'anic text as a whole, is to guide man to God. This aim is then expressed by various means in different texts: persuasion (under which 'through presenting what some proponents of scientific exegesis regard as scientific facts expressed or alluded to in some verses', or what other scholars refer to as signs passages[698] may be included), threat, promising (الوعد و الوعيد), etc. So, these verses must be adequately translated to reflect the way in which some proponents of scientific exegesis have been able to arrive at their

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[695] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 14.
[696] Ibid., p. 16.
[697] See the example in page 216.
[698] See section 6.3.3.

conclusions on the basis of specific linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned. Thus, the Qur'anic text can be seen as stratified layers of different text types and different text-type focuses, in which text hybridisation is at its extreme due to the unique nature of the Holy Qur'an[699]. This means that analysis of these verses at the macro-level, 'text-type focus/ contextual focus' for the particular focus of this study may not be as helpful as analysing them on the micro-level.[700] The reference to some natural phenomena, for example is signalled by the occurrence of certain words, e.g. يعقلون، يتفكرون، الشمس، القمر، نطفة/علقة/ مضغة, etc.

Thus, as Trosborg (1997) argues, what is needed is:

> ...a two-level typology for text types (as well as for communicative functions) rather than a single level of types only. At the macrolevel of discourse, text type may be assumed to precede the level of text-strategic choices, thus affecting the whole strategy of the text. The choice of microlevel text types on the other hand, has to do with the textualization process, which is determined by the text producer's text strategy. The text types employed in a particular text (or genre) need not agree with its contextual focus. An argumentative text-type focus may be realized through narration, instructions may take the form of description, and so forth. In the sense of various blends of different text types, a dominant text type is often recognizable...
>
> Of great interest is the interaction between communicative purpose and rhetorical purpose (text type), for example, in order to persuade one can narrate, describe, counterargue, etc.[701]

Virtanen (1992)[702] also addresses the issue of text hybridisation and subtexts. He explains that most texts are heterogeneous in character, composed of mixtures of different types, but "still, it often seems possible to assign a given text to a particular category according to some overall pattern(s)", and that "they may thus show a dominance of a particular type, so that we may assign the whole text, for instance, to the narrative category instead of the expository one

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[699] See section 1.2. Also Cf. Hervey, S. G. J. and Higgins, I., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 143, where they present the Bible as an example of a text which is a hybrid of genres.
[700] See below.
[701] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 16.
[702] Virtanen, T., (1992). *Discourse Functions of Adverbial Placement in English: Clause-initial Adverbials of Time and Place in Narratives and Procedural Place Descriptions.* Abo: Abo Academy P., p. 65.

or vice versa..."[703] However, there is the issue of distinct subtexts, i.e. within a larger text sample assigned to a certain text type according to its overall pattern or dominant aim, various subtexts exhibiting characteristics of other types of texts can be identified. Referring to this issue, Virtanen writes:

> Another dimension in the discussion of the relative homogeneity or heterogeneity of a text as regards type is that of the existence of more or less distinct *sub-texts* within a text. In this light, texts may consist of only one type, and may, accordingly, be called *unitype texts*. More often, however, texts consist of a combination of several types of text; they are *multitype* in character (cf. Virtanen 1987b: 351-352; Virtanen and Wårvik 1987:102-103). In multitype texts, we often find a main - or "frame" -type of text, within the boundaries of which one or more text types are embedded. Multitype texts may be assigned to a specific text type mainly through identification of the frame.[704]

Nord (1991) also refers to the notion of a frame text with embedded texts belonging to different text types:

> It is not always possible for a text as a whole to be assigned to any one single function. This applies to the so-called "complex text types" (Reiss and Vermeer 1984: 180) or to frame texts with embedded texts belonging to different text types. In these cases, situation and function have to be analysed separately for each of the embedded texts or text sections (paragraphs, chapters, etc.).[705]

Benhaddou (1991) refers to embedded texts as well, "More than one type may co-exist in a single text type. These may be called embedded texts insofar as they do not represent the dominant function of the text".[706]

From the above it can be concluded that verses under study in this research can be analysed as subtexts having their own linguistic characteristics that assign them to one type of text or another regardless of the overall textual / contextual focus of the section of the text in which they occur. That is, some proponents of scientific exegesis believe that they mention

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[703] Virtanen, T., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 67.
[704] Ibid.
[705] Nord, C., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 14.
[706] Benhaddou, M., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 81.

or allude to some scientific facts, while other scholars refer to them as signs passages (see section 6.3.3). Nevertheless, the main purpose of the surrounding text, for example, is to argue that God is the only Deity, or that there will be a Resurrection. On the macro-level of the Qur'anic text as a whole, it could be said that the main purpose is to guide man to God. These verses may be subsumed mainly under the descriptive expository text type. This is because, seen as independent embedded texts, they refer to certain objects (the sky, the sun, the moon, the earth, the mountains, etc.) with some descriptive statements. The focus in such verses is on providing a reasonably detached account of these facts, which is a characteristic of the expository text type.[707] These verses seem to appear more frequently as embedded subtexts within larger text stretches that can be assigned to the argumentative text type. This is a well-known style in which information and factual knowledge are presented to further the persuasion. To take an example, an attempt will be made to analyse verse (10: 5)[708] within its context. Therefore, verses 1-10, which seem to form a distinct interlocked stretch of text, will be discussed here. For convenience, the Arabic text with English translation[709] is presented here; the verse discussed in chapter seven is underlined.

﴿الر تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ(●)أَكَانَ لِلنَّاسِ عَجَبًا أَنْ أَوْحَيْنَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ أَنْ أَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ وَبَشِّرِ
الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ قَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ إِنَّ هَذَا لَسَاحِرٌ مُبِينٌ(●)إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِذْنِهِ ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ
رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ(●)إِلَيْهِ مَرْجِعُكُمْ جَمِيعًا وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقًّا إِنَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ بِالْقِسْطِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَهُمْ شَرَابٌ مِنْ حَمِيمٍ وَعَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ بِمَا كَانُوا
يَكْفُرُونَ(●)هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَّرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ مَا
خَلَقَ اللَّهُ ذَلِكَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ يُفَصِّلُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ(●) إِنَّ فِي اخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَّقُونَ(●)إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ لِقَاءَنَا وَرَضُوا بِالْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَاطْمَأَنُّوا بِهَا
وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ آيَاتِنَا غَافِلُونَ(●)أُولَئِكَ مَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ(●)إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
الصَّالِحَاتِ يَهْدِيهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ بِإِيمَانِهِمْ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهَارُ فِي جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ (●)دَعْوَاهُمْ فِيهَا سُبْحَانَكَ
اللَّهُمَّ وَتَحِيَّتُهُمْ فِيهَا سَلَامٌ وَآخِرُ دَعْوَاهُمْ أَنِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (●) ﴾

A. L. R. these are the Ayats of the Book of Wisdom. (●) Is it a matter of wonderment to men that We have sent Our inspiration to a man from among themselves? – That he should warn mankind (of their danger), and give the good news to the Believers that they have before their Lord the lofty rank of Truth. (But)

[707] See Hatim, B. and Mason, I., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 155.

[708] See example 7.2.1 page 264.

[709] The translation provided here is Yusuf Ali's. It is intended for illustration purposes only and not chosen because it is the best one. An analysis of the different translations discussed in this study of the verses under investigation will be considered in chapter seven.

> say the Unbelievers: "This is indeed an evident sorcerer!".(●) Verily your Lord is God, Who created the heavens and the earth in six Days, and is firmly established on the Throne (of authority), regulating and governing all things. No intercessor (can plead with Him) except after His leave (hath been obtained). This is God your Lord; Him therefore serve ye: will yet not receive admonition? (●) To Him will be your return– of all of you. The promise of God is true and sure. It is He Who beginneth the process of Creation, and repeateth it, that He may reward with justice those who believe and work righteousness; but those who reject Him will have draughts of boiling fluids, and a Penalty grievous, because they did reject Him. (●) It is He Who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light (of beauty), and measured out stages for her; that ye might know the number of years and the count (of time). Nowise did God create this but in truth and righteousness. (Thus) doth He explain His Signs in detail, for those who understand. (●) Verily, in the alternation of the Night and the Day, and in all that God hath created, in the heavens and the earth, are Signs for those who fear Him. (●) Those who rest not their hope on their meeting with Us, but are pleased and satisfied with the life of the Present, and those who heed not Our Signs,– (●) their abode is the Fire, because of the (evil) they earned. (●) Those who believe, and work righteousness,– their Lord will guide them because of their Faith: beneath them will flow rivers in Gardens of Bliss. (●) (This will be) their cry therein: "Glory to Thee, O God!" and "Peace" will be their greeting therein! And the close of their cry will be: "Praise be to God, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds!". (●)

The first verse is an introductory statement explaining that what follows is some examples of the signs contained in the Book of Wisdom (the Holy Qur'an). The second verse argues that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the messenger sent by Allah to guide people to Islam (argument). Verse (10: 3) also argues that Allah is the Creator of heavens and earth, regulating and governing all affairs, and thus should be worshipped (argument). Within it there is a reference to the heavens and the earth, lending internal support to the argument of the same verse. The following verse (10: 4) contains another argument regarding the Resurrection and the Hereafter. Verse (10: 5), which is among the verses under analysis in this research[710], comes as a supporting statement for the arguments presented in the verses preceding it. This verse, as will be analysed in chapter seven, refers to an aspect of the creation of the universe. Some proponents of scientific exegesis believe that it alludes to the scientific fact that the sun's light is produced and composed of a group of lights (the spectrum) and that the moon's light is reflected from the sun's light. It may be further

[710] See page 264.

noted that this verse concludes with a structure related to knowledge لقوم يعلمون.[711] Another reference to another aspect of the creation of the universe immediately follows (10: 6). This verse talks about the alternation of day and night and all God's creation in the heavens and the earth. This verse also can be considered as another supporting statement for the arguments presented so far. The concluding verses 7-10 can be grouped under conceptual exposition, in which two groups of people who, having received these arguments and the supporting pieces of evidence at the beginning of the *sura* may be grouped into two: 1. those who disbelieve them and deny the Hereafter, and who are pleased and satisfied with this earthly life – these will be doomed to Hellfire. The second group of people are those who believe and accept these arguments and do righteous deeds – these will be further guided by God because of their faith until they enter Paradise[712]. To summarise, the following structure of this stretch of Qur'anic text may be proposed:

- Verses 2,3, 4 belong to the argumentative text type, containing three arguments:
  - Muhammad ﷺ is Allah's messenger;
  - Allah is the Creator of heavens and earth (evidence) and therefore should be worshipped (argument); and
  - there will be Resurrection and Hereafter, in which believers will go to Paradise and the unbelievers will go to Hellfire.

- Verses 5, and 6: descriptive exposition, because they describe objects (heavens, earth, sun, moon, and other creatures in heavens and earth) and explain the purpose of their creation. These verses can be considered as supporting statements for the arguments presented in this stretch of text.

- Verses 7-10: the concluding verses of this stretch: conceptual exposition: division of people into two groups, and description of them: the believers and the non-believers. The believers will go to Paradise; the non-believers will go to Hellfire.

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[711] Cf. Abu-Milha, K., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 21.

[712] "Indirectly, this is presumably also persuasive, since it tells people about the punishment for disbelief and the rewards for belief", James Dickins, (personal communication). In fact, the Holy Qur'an as a whole is meant to be a Book of Guidance, and hence all the verses and types of texts it contains should eventually serve this ultimate purpose.

6.3.2 Genre vs. Text Typology vs. Register

In this section, I intend to explain why I opted for text typology to classify texts in the Holy Qur'an rather than genre or register. In fact, the boundaries are not always clear between these concepts. In this regard, Trosborg (1997) explains that for some scholars, "genre is sometimes used in a broad sense to refer to register variation, such as journalistic language, legal language, scientific discourse, etc. Other scholars mix genres with rhetorical types, naming expositions and argumentative texts as genres." Therefore, such questions as "how do genres relate to register and text types?"; "how does the classification of genres work?; "how is the interrelation between the purpose of the communication and the rhetorical strategies determining the text type(s) employed to achieve the intended communicative goal?" arise[713]. There is no general consensus on the meaning and extension of these terms. As has been seen in the last section, many scholars do not draw a clear distinction between text types and genres. Therefore, they propose text typologies in terms of genres.[714] Referring to 'register' and 'genre', Leckie-Tarry (1993) points out that, "...there is considerable variation in the definitions and conceptualization of the two terms, with some degree of overlap between the two concepts..."[715]

For Gregory and Carroll (1978)[716], "register, as a functional language variation, is a contextual category correlating groupings of linguistic features with recurrent situational features."[717] Genres, on the other hand, "are the text categories readily distinguished by mature speakers of a language.... Texts used in a particular situation for a particular purpose may be classified using everyday labels such as a guidebook, a nursery rhyme, a poem, a business letter, a newspaper article, a radio play, an advertisement, etc. Such categories are referred to as genres".[718]

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[713] Trosborg, A. ed., (1997), Op. Cit., p. viii.
[714] See page 202.
[715] Leckie-Tarry, H., (1993). *The Specification of a Text: Register, Genre and Language Teaching*. In: Ghadessy, Mohsen, ed. Register Analysis: Theory and Practice. 26-42. London: Pinter., p. 30.
[716] Gregory, M. and Carroll, S., (1978). *Language and Situation: Language Varieties and Their Social Contexts*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul., p. 4.
[717] Quoted in Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 5.
[718] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 6.

Crystal provides the following definition for register in the field of stylistics and sociolinguistics: "the term refers to a VARIETY Of LANGUAGE defined according to its use in social SITUATIONS, e.g. a register of scientific, religious, FORMAL English. In HALLIDAYAN linguistics, the term is seen as specifically opposed to varieties of language defined according to the characteristics of the users (viz., their regional or class DIALECT), and is given a subclassification into FIELD, MODE and MANNER of DISCOURSE."[719]

On the relationship between genre and register, Trosborg (1997) explains that "registers are divided into genres reflecting the way social purposes are accomplished in and through them in settings in which they are used."[720] She gives the example of the legal register which can be divided into a number of genres. This example may be summarised in the following figure:

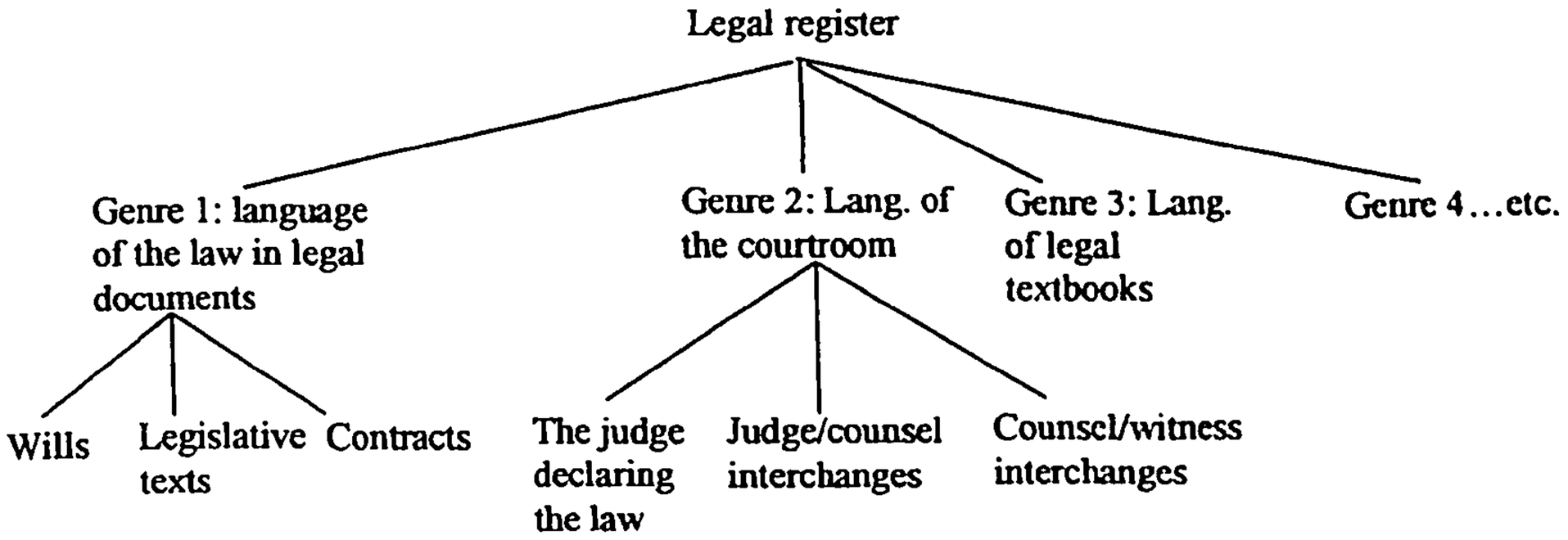


Figure 6-3: Based on Trosborg's (1997: 7) example of the divisions of legal register into genres.

She concludes that a close relationship between register and genre can only exist in the case of restricted registers (e.g. weather forecasts).[721]

Referring to a study carried out by Swales (1981)[722] which has shown that a research article in chemistry may not be very different from a research article in, for example,

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[719] Crystal, D., (1991). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. 3rd. ed. Oxford: B. Blackwell., p. 295.
[720] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 6.
[721] Ibid., p. 7.
[722] Swales, J. M., (1981). *Aspects of Article Introductions*. Aston ESP Research Report No.1 . Birmingham: Language Studies Unit, University of Aston in Birmingham..

sociology, Trosborg (1997) points out that "a particular genre may cut across a number of registers", and concludes that "genres are subordinated to registers only in the sense that one register may be realized through various genres. Conversely, one genre may be realized through a number of registers just as a genre constrains the ways in which register variables of field, tenor and mode can be combined in a particular society."[723]

To represent this notion in a diagram, the following figure may be suggested:

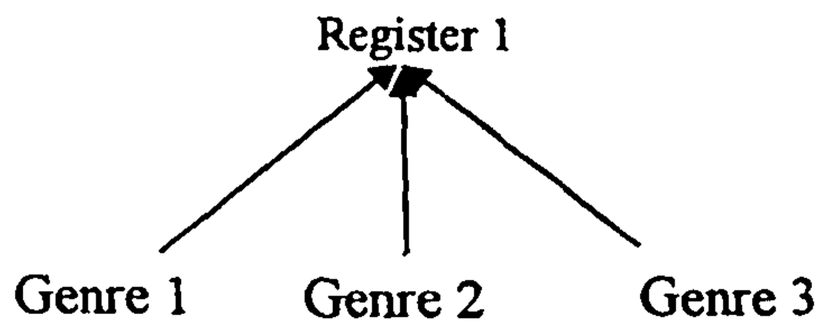


Figure 6-4: One register may be realized through various genres.

To represent the opposite case (realising one genre through different registers):

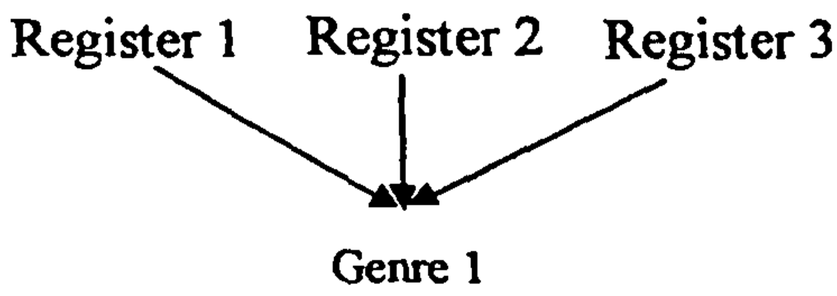


Figure 6-5: One genre may be realized through a number of registers

Having discussed the relationship between genre and register, Trosborg moves on to consider the relationship between text type and genre. In an attempt to explain how text types relates to genres, Trosborg (1997) argues that "genres and text types are clearly to be distinguished, as linguistically distinct texts within a genre may represent different text types, while linguistically similar texts from different genres may represent a single text type."[724]

To represent this in a diagram, the following figure may be suggested:

[723] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 10.
[724] Ibid., p. 12.

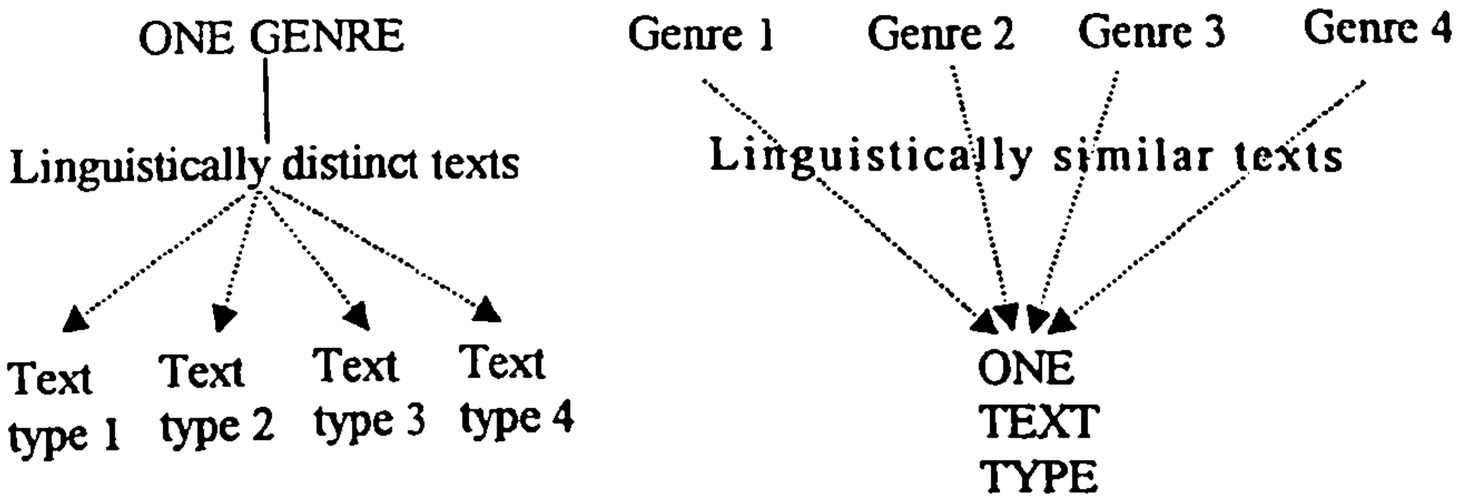


Figure 6-6 and Figure 6-7: Linguistically distinct texts within a genre may represent different text types, while linguistically similar texts from different genres may represent a single text type.

Another scholar who has written on the relationship between text type and genre is Nord. She argues that "each text type is assumed to include various text genres, but one text genre (such as letters) does not necessarily correlate with just one text type: a love letter may be of the expressive type, a business letter would be informative, whereas a letter requesting help would belong to the operative type."[725]

Now, an attempt will be made to combine the four figures representing Trosborg's (1997) views explained above to see how register, genre and text type relate to one another:

[725] Nord, C., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 37.

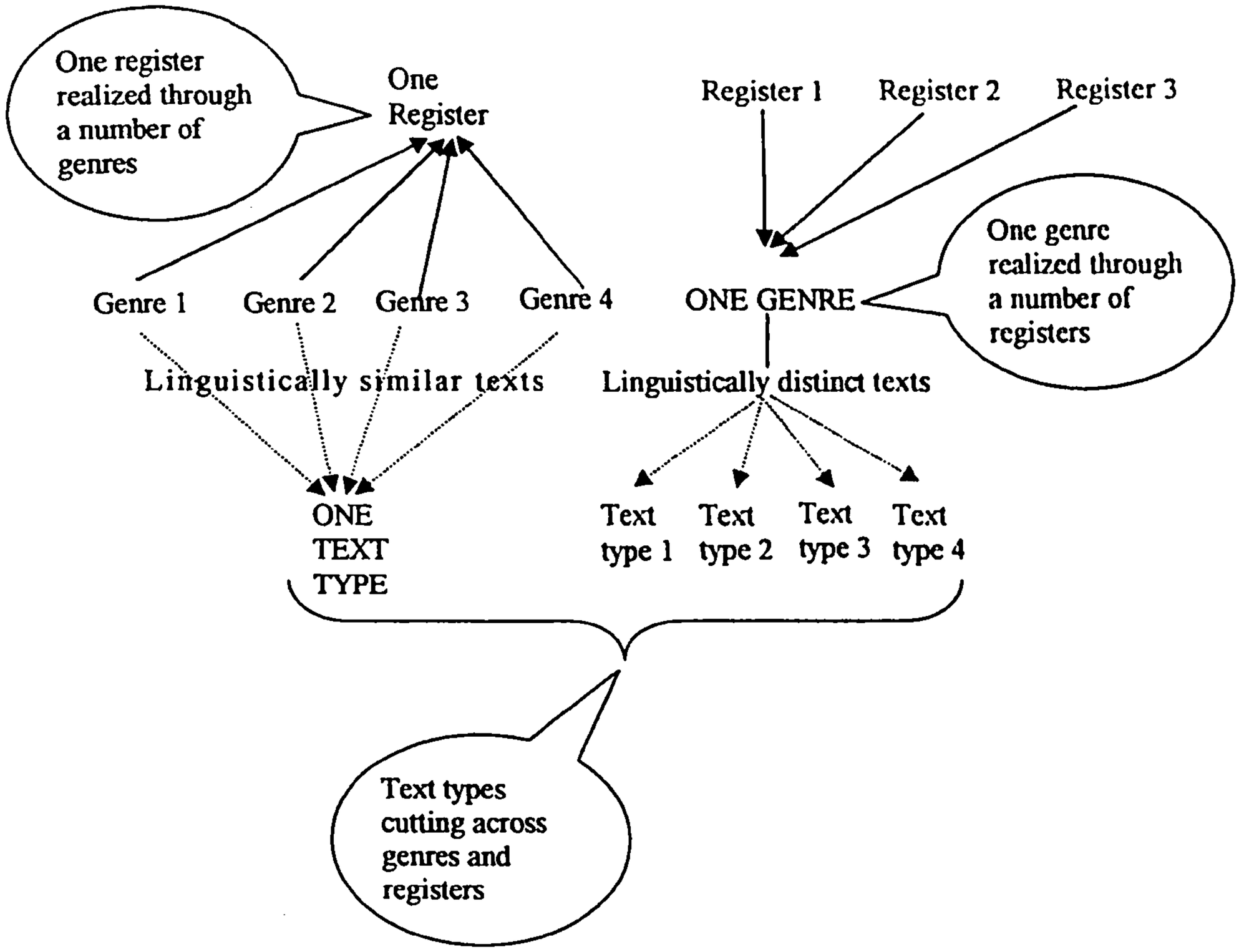


Figure 6-8: How register, genre and text type relate to one another.

From the above figure, it is clear that 'register' is too broad a concept to be used for classifying different texts in the Holy Qur'an: the whole Qur'anic text can be said to belong to the religious register. Also:

> Texts within particular genres can differ greatly in their linguistic characteristics; for example, newspaper articles can range from extremely narrative and colloquial in linguistic form to extremely informational and elaborated in form. On the other hand, different genres can be quite similar linguistically; for example, newspaper articles and popular magazine articles can be nearly identical in form.[726]

[726] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 12.

Moreover, genre refers to individual texts, while communicative function and text type, "being properties of a text, cut across genres. Thus informative texts may comprise newspaper reports, TV news, textbooks, etc. and argumentative texts may comprise debates, political speeches, newspaper articles, etc."[727] Leckie-Tarry (1993) also agrees with Trosborg (1997) that the term 'register' "tends to suggest a focus on the linguistic side of the text-context paradigm, on patterns of lexis and syntax rather than on discourse structure or textual organization, and on sections of discourse smaller than the whole text" while 'genre' focuses on "the text as a complete event."[728] On the other hand, comparing genres to registers will also show that "registers impose constraints at the linguistic level of vocabulary and syntax, whereas genre constraints operate at the level of discourse structure. Furthermore, genre specifies conditions for beginning, structuring and ending a text, for which reason genres, unlike registers, can only be realized in completed texts."[729] Moreover, text types "may be defined on the basis of cognitive categories ... or on the basis of strictly linguistic criteria", while "genres are defined and distinguished on the basis of systematic non-linguistic criteria"[730]. Thus, text type, being distinguished on the basis of linguistic characteristics, and being applicable to parts of texts, proves to be more suitable for this study, because it deals only with parts of texts, not whole texts, focusing on analysing specific linguistic characteristics (e.g. the meaning and translation of some lexical items describing some aspects of science). However, it seems that focusing on certain linguistic features is a characteristic of register analysis. Thus, it seems that there is

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[727] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 12.
[728] Leckie-Tarry, H., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 41.
[729] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 10.
[730] Ibid., p. 16. What Trosborg means by 'cognitive categories' is that the typology can be based, for example, on some cognitive properties of texts: differentiation and interrelation of perceptions in space distinguishes the descriptive text type, differentiation and interrelation of perceptions in time is a characteristic of the narrative text type, comprehension of general concepts through differentiation by analysis and/or synthesis indicates the expository text, evaluation of relations between and among concepts through the extraction of similarities, contrasts, and transformations is a property of the argumentative text type, while planning of future behaviour is a sign of the instructive text type (Trosborg 1997: 15). This is how Werlich's (1976) typology works. (Cf. Werlich's (1976) typology presented in page 212.) The typology can be based also on some cognitive categories which offer ways of conceptualizing, perceiving and portraying the world. For, example Kinneavy (1971, 1980) classifies text types in terms of modes, which derive from philosophical concepts of how reality can be viewed. He mainly distinguishes between static and dynamic, "between looking at something at a particular time and looking at how it changes over time, and he arrives at the four classes of narration, classification, description, and evaluation. If our static view of reality focuses on individual existences, we *describe;* if it focuses on groups, we *classify*. If our dynamic view of reality looks at change, we *narrate;* if it looks at the potential for reality to be different, we *evaluate*." (Trosborg 1997:15). See page 212.

another level to the relationship between text type and register. Attempting to determine the type of a certain text, one may look for certain linguistic features that help classify this text as narrative, argumentative, descriptive, instrumental, etc. Thus, it seems that 'register' has a narrower sense in which it is seen as involving a bottom-up analysis, beginning with the lower level of words and structures, leading to the upper level of the text as a whole. For example 'once upon a time' indicates a narrative text (cf. in the Holy Qur'an﴿ نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ أَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ﴾[731]), 'H_2O' a scientific text, 'I hereby' a legal text, etc. Consequently, it can be said that the verses from the Holy Qur'an under study here may be classified on the level of subject matter as belonging to a distinctive text-type because they are characterised by certain linguistic features, e.g. the occurrence of certain words الشمس، يتفكرون، يعقلون، القمر، نطفة/علقة/ مضغة, etc., the existence of certain structures such as oaths, which suggest the existence of such things by which God swears as in والبحر المسجور, etc.[732] On this basis, proponents of scientific exegesis believe that they allude to some aspects of science. On the other hand, other scholars refer to these verses as signs passages because of a refrain that occurs in them in various forms such as "in this is a Sign for those who reflect. On the level of formal text structure, they can be assigned to the descriptive conceptual text type.[733]

As discussed above, while the whole Qur'anic text can be said to belong to religious register, different sections may be identified as belonging to different text types, or to different registers in the narrower sense. Robinson's (1996)[734] classification of different sections in the Qur'an is based on 'register' in its narrower sense. He[735] quotes Hawthorn's definition of register:

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[731] The Holy Qur'an (12: 3).
[732] See example 7.2.25 page 353.
[733] See page 216.
[734] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit..
[735] Ibid., p.125.

context-dependent linguistic characteristics — either spoken or written, and encompassing any set of choices which are made according to a conscious or unconscious notion of appropriateness to context (vocabulary, syntax, grammar, sound, pitch and so on). If, for example, one switches on a commercial radio station it is normally immediately apparent if an advertisement is being broadcast, for broadcast sound advertisements generally conform to particular register characteristics that make them immediately distinguishable as such, even if one hears them so badly that the actual words used are indistinguishable. There are similar accepted (if changing) registers for church sermons, academic lectures, political speeches, declarations of undying love, and so on.

Robinson's approach will be discussed below. On the other hand, 'register' also has a broader sense, as Trosborg (1997) seems to use it, in which one can distinguish the religious register, the legal register, the scientific register, etc. Register in this sense can be said to subsume different genres.[736]

[736] For an elaborated study on the relationship between genre and register, see Al-Ali, M., (1999). *Genre, Schema, and the Academic Writing Process: An Enquiry into the Generalisability of Generic Structure and its Relationship to Schematic Knowledge.* Ph.D. thesis. University of Durham., pp. 12ff, Leckie-Tarry, H., (1993), Op. Cit., pp. 27ff.

6.3.3 The Qur'anic 'signs passages'

Many of the verses discussed in this research have also been discussed by other scholars, but not from the perspective of science. For example, in a number of his books and articles, Robinson discusses some of these verses under the heading of 'signs passages / sections'. He points out that they are found in Makkan suras, which contain besides 'signs sections' five other principal types of material: 'messenger sections', 'polemical sections', 'narrative sections', and 'eschatological sections'[737]. The function of the 'signs sections' is that they "point to the wonders of God's creation as evidence of His beneficence, which should elicit gratitude (e.g. 55.1—25), and as evidence of His power, which ought to convince sceptics of His ability to raise the dead to life (e.g. 56.57—73; 75.36—40)".[738] He[739] cites some examples of the sections which list some of the signs of the Creator's power and beneficence. These appear in some Makkan suras: (51: 20-22, 47-49; 53:43-49; 55: 1-29; 56: 57-73; 75: 36-40; 77: 20-27; 78: 6-16; 79: 27-33; 80: 18-32; 82: 7-8; 86: 5-7; 87: 1-5; 88: 17-20; 90: 8-10; 96: 1-5). Other signs passages appear in surat Al-Mu'minu:n (chapter 23 of the Qur'an): (23: 78-80)[740], (23: 12-22)[741], (23: 30, 45, 50)[742]. Robinson explains that the signs sections may be broken into shorter units comprising "biddings, hymnic signs lists, ethical inferences, rhetorical questions concerning the Creator and His creation, third-person signs controversies, and first-person signs controversies"[743]. He gives the opening verses of four suras as examples of biddings: (87.1), (96.1a), (96.3), (106. 1—3), and (1.2). The signs sections may be built up of one or more of the shorter, distinguishable units listed above, which may figure out in different combinations. For example, Robinson (1996) explains that three of the four surahs referred to above, which have opening biddings, continue with third-person inventories of God's works. "In Surah 106.4, this amounts to no more than a brief statement about His having provided food and security. In

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[737] Robinson, N., (1999), Op. Cit. pp.63-4.
[738] Ibid., p.63.
[739] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.109.
[740] Robinson, N., (2000). *The Structure and Interpretation of Su:rat al-Mu'minu:n*. Journal of Qur'anic Stdies II [1], 89-106. 100.
[741] Ibid., p.99.
[742] Ibid.
[743] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.109.

Surah 96 the inventory in vv. 1b-5 is more obviously hymnic, referring as it does to the creation of humankind and the imparting of divine instruction."[744] He goes on to argue that the same is true of Surah 87, which continues (Robinson's translation):

Who created and shaped	الذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوّٰى
Who proportioned and guided	وَالذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى
Who brought forth the pasturage	وَالذِي أَخْرَجَ المَرْعَى
And transformed it into blackened stubble (87.2—5).	فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَى

Other examples on the hymnic signs lists Robinson presents include the first few ayahs of Surah 55, whose theme is the same as 96. 1b-5. These verses Robinson translates as:

The All-merciful	الرَّحْمَنُ
He taught the Qur'an	عَلَّمَ القُرْآنَ
He created man	خَلَقَ الإِنسَانَ
He taught him the Explanation (55.1—3).	عَلَّمَهُ البَيَانَ

This hymnic signs list continues further to be interrupted at one point by another unit, viz. an ethical reference in (55: 8-9), which Robinson translates as:

"And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice), in order that ye may not transgress (due) balance. So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance."

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ المِيزَانَ (●) أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي المِيزَانِ (●) وَأَقِيمُوا الوَزْنَ بِالقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا المِيزَانَ

The occasion for this is explained by Robinson: "Reference to the All-merciful's having created the sky and the balance (the constellation of Libra?) provides the occasion for instruction about honesty"[745].

Robinson (1996) maintains that the hymnic signs list is continued in vv.4—7, 10—12, 14—15, 17, 19—20 and 22—29, but interspersed with other material[746].

This group of verses is a good example in which different units of the signs sections appear in different combinations to achieve the ultimate purpose of eliciting gratitude, using other

[744] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.110.
[745] Ibid., p.111.
[746] Ibid., p.110.

means, such as polemic, for example. Robinson (1996)[747] explains that this group of verses appears "in hymnic mode with a third-person signs list, which is interrupted by an ethical inference. The inventory is resumed in V.10, but from v.13 onwards it is punctuated by the refrain translated by Robinson as:

So which of the benefits of your Lord will you two deny?" فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

The repeated occurrence of this refrain indicates that, "despite its sustained lyrical qualities, the signs list has a polemical function."[748]

Another example of the signs sections in which a rhetorical question introduces a list involving the third-person signs controversies is given by Robinson in Surah 79. Robinson's translation of the rhetorical question reads:

Were you harder to create or the sky He built? (79.27). أَأَنتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمِ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا

This is followed by the list involving the third-person signs controversies (79: 28-33) where "the works of the Creator being adduced as proof that He is able to recreate man at the resurrection."[749]

A similar example in which the signs section, which is made up of third-person controversies that aim to achieve a similar function as that in the preceding example, contains rhetorical questions can be found in verses (75: 36-40). The signs section is "preceded by two rhetorical questions (75.36—37), and followed by a third (75.40)."[750]

Another example on the hymnic signs lists Robinson gives is the signs section in 53.43—49.

Sometimes, the elements that distinguish a certain group of verses as involving a polemic twist or a feature of argument or controversy such as rhetoric questions can be easily detached, leaving the list of verses as an independent hymnic signs list. However, there are other cases where the controversial elements are organically built into the signs list, in

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[747] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.111.
[748] Ibid.
[749] Ibid.
[750] Ibid.

which case the whole stretch of verses appears as what Robinson calls 'signs controversies'. Robinson (1996)[751] explains this:

> Whereas in Surahs 55, 75 and 79 the rhetorical questions can easily be detached from the signs lists, there are other instances where the controversial tone is more pervasive. For example, the whole of 82.6-8 is in the form of a question, and the second person singular personal pronoun recurs no less than six times in these ayahs: O humankind, who has lured thee away from thy Gracious Lord, Who created thee, fashioned thee, proportioned thee, and composed thee in whatever shape He wished? (82.6—8).

These he further divides into third-person signs controversies and first-person signs controversies. Among the third-person signs controversies are the verses (86: 6-8) mentioned above and 51.20-22; 86.5-7, 80: 18-20; and 88.17-20[752].

Robinson goes on to list some examples of first-person controversies: (51: 47-49); (56: 57-73); (77: 21-27); (78: 6-16); and (90: 8-10). Robinson maintains that in these examples the Creator enumerates His own deeds. The controversial tone is maintained by rhetorical questions and by exclamations such as فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ, which Robinson translates as 'If you would only acknowledge it!' (56.57); فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ, translated by Robinson as 'If you would only recall it!' (56.62); فَنِعْمَ الْقَادِرُونَ, which he translates as 'How excellent the Determiner! (77.23b), and so on.[753]

On the general features of the signs sections Robinson writes:

> The signs sections often mention the sun and the moon (7:54; 16.12; 22.18; 41.37; 78.13; 91.1f), sometimes stressing that God makes them pursue a regular course (13.2; 14.33; 31.29; 35.13; 36.38—40; 55.5), thereby enabling human beings to calculate the passage of time (6.96; 10.5). They also mention the stars (7.54; 16.12; 22.18; 53.49) with which he adorned the nearest heaven (41.12) and which help human beings to navigate (6.97; 16.16). References to day and night are even more frequent. Here, the stress is on God's causing

[751] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.111.
[752] Ibid.
[753] Ibid.

> their regular alternation (7.54; 10.6; 13.3; 14.33; 16.12; 30.23; 31.29; 35.13; 36.37; 41.37; 45.9; 79.29; 91.3f.), which affords human beings opportunities for sleep and for seeking their livelihood (25.47; 78.9—11). There is, in addition, one reference to God's causing the dawn to break (6.96), and several to the sun, moon and stars bowing down before Allah their Creator (22.18; 41.7; 55.6). Not only the heavenly bodies but everything in heaven and earth bows down before Him, either willingly or grudgingly, just as their shadows do in the morning and evening (13.15; 16.48).[754]

Robinson (1996) explains that there is a close relationship between the six registers of the Makkan surahs[755] (see above). This echoes the conclusion drawn at the end of discussing some features of the Makkan chapters in section 6.4.3[756]. Thus, as the signs sections mention the heavenly bodies; references to them and to the phases of the day and night also abound in the Messenger sections[757]. Similarly, the heavenly bodies and the phases of the day and night often feature in the Qur'anic oaths[758]. Providing his own translation, Robinson (1996)[759] gives some examples:

By the stars when they set! (53. 1)	وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ
By the sky and the night-star! (86. 1).	وَالسَّمَاءِ وَالطَّارِقِ
No, I swear by the positions of the stars (56.75).	فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوَاقِعِ النُّجُومِ
No, by the moon!	كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرِ
And the night as it retreats!	وَاللَّيْلِ إِذْ أَدْبَرَ
And morning when it shines forth! (74.32ff.).	وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا أَسْفَرَ
By the sun and its forenoon!	وَالشَّمْسِ وَضُحَاهَا
And by the moon when it follows!	وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا تَلَاهَا
And by the day when it reveals its splendour!	وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا جَلَّاهَا
And by the night when it veils over it! (91.1-4).	وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَاهَا
By the night as it veils over!	وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَىٰ
And the day in full splendour! (92.1f.).	وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّىٰ
By the morning bright!	وَالضُّحَىٰ
And the night when it is still! (93.1f.).	وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا سَجَىٰ

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[754] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.159.
[755] Ibid., p.155.
[756] See p. 257.
[757] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.160.
[758] Ibid., p.161.
[759] Ibid.

He[760] mentions two other examples of oaths featuring heavenly bodies and other natural phenomena:

By the sky with its constellations! (85.1) وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْبُرُوجِ ; By the swollen sea! (52.6) وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ.

Thus, heavenly bodies, day and night, and other natural phenomena can be thought of as signs of God. References are made to them whether in the signs sections, messenger sections or oaths to draw people's attention to the Greatness of their Creator, to whom man should be grateful.

Robinson includes under the heading of 'signs sections' many of the verses which are discussed in this research. These are:

1. 7.2.1 (10:5) ﴿ هُوَ الذي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَّرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ...﴾
2. 7.2.3 (71: 16) ﴿ وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا ﴾
3. 7.2.4: (78: 12-13) ﴿وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا (●) وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا﴾
4. 7.2.6 (36: 40) ﴿ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴾
5. 7.2.7 (31: 29) ﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ ...﴾
6. 7.2.9 (36: 38) ﴿ وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ... ﴾
7. 7.2.10 (13: 2, 35: 13) ﴿وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى...﴾
8. 7.2.11 (31: 29) ﴿ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى...﴾
9. 7.2.15 (13: 3) ﴿ وَهُوَ الذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ ...﴾
10. 7.2.16: (88: 19) ﴿ وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ﴾
11. 7.2.17 (79: 32) ﴿ وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَاهَا﴾

[760] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.101.

12. 7.2.18 (78: 7) ﴿ وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا﴾

Other verses I discuss appear in oath form. These can also be included within the signs of God, as mentioned above:

13. 7.2.23: (86: 11) ﴿وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ﴾

14. 7.2.24: (86: 12) ﴿وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ﴾

15. 7.2.25: (52: 6) ﴿ وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ﴾

Robinson (1996)[761] refers to verse (16: 12) as mentioning the sun and moon, and stars. The context of this verse is also followed by verses mentioning the sea and the mountains, of which I discuss (16: 15). This suggests that this verse contains signs as well. The majority of the verses under study in this work, like the verses Robinson discusses as signs sections, appear in the Makkan suras. [762]

In his analysis of the Signs verses, Robinson looks at the structural relationships between the different materials found in Makkan suras, which contain, as mentioned above, besides 'signs sections' five other principal types of material: 'messenger sections', 'polemical sections', 'narrative sections', and 'eschatological sections'. He sometimes links this to the natural world of the first recipients. For example, in his analysis of sura 36, which contains a section referring to some of the signs of God's power and beneficence (vv.33—44), he[763] explains that the order in which these signs are depicted is determined by simile and metaphor. He explains this by pointing out that the description of the dead earth which God brings to life (v.33) includes a reference to 'date-palms' (v.34). He goes on, "It is followed by a description of night, day, sun and moon in which the waning moon is likened to an

[761] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.159.
[762] See page 255.
[763] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.152.

to a reference to a 'ship' and 'drowning'."[764] Thus, he links the reference to the 'swimming' of the celestial bodies in (v.40) figuratively to the reference to a ship (v.41), and drowning (v.42). For clarification, this group of verses will be quoted here:

وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ الْأَرْضُ الْمَيْتَةُ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ(33)وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِنْ نَخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجَّرْنَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ(34)لِيَأْكُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ(35)سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنْبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ(36)وَآيَةٌ لَهُمُ اللَّيْلُ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُمْ مُظْلِمُونَ(37)وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ذَلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ(38) وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَّرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّى عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ(39)لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ(40)وَآيَةٌ لَهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ(41)وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مِثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ(42)وَإِنْ نَشَأْ نُغْرِقْهُمْ فَلَا صَرِيخَ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْقَذُونَ(43) إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنَّا وَمَتَاعًا إِلَى حِينٍ(44)

Yusuf Ali translation of these verses read:

"A Sign for them is the earth that is dead; We do give it life, and produce grain therefrom, of which ye do eat. And We produce therein orchards with date-palms and vines, and We cause springs to gush forth therein: That they may enjoy the fruits of this (artistry): it was not their hands that made this: will they not then give thanks? Glory to Allah, Who created in pairs all things that the earth produces, as well as their own (human) kind and (other) things of which they have no knowledge. And a Sign for them is the Night: We withdraw therefrom the Day, and behold they are plunged in darkness; And the sun runs its course for a period determined for it; that is the decree of (Him), the Exalted in Might, the All-Knowing. And the Moon, We have measured for it mansions (to traverse) till it returns like the old (and withered) lower part of a date-stalk. It is not permitted to the Sun to catch up the Moon, nor can the Night outstrip the Day: each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit (according to law). And a Sign for them is that We bore their race (through the Flood) in the loaded Ark; And We have created for them similar (vessels) on which they ride. If it were Our Will, We could drown them: then would there be no helper (to hear their cry), nor could they be delivered. Except by way of Mercy from Us, and by way of (worldly) convenience (to serve them) for a time."

Of this group of verses, I discuss (36: 40) in example 7.2.6, and (36: 38) in example 7.2.9. Those scholars who propose scientific expansion of the meanings of some verses have other suggestions regarding the verse referring to the sun running its course (36: 38), and that talking about the 'swimming' of the celestial bodies (36: 40). This will be discussed in examples 7.2.6 and example 7.2.9 respectively in chapter seven. In this latter verse Robinson, as mentioned above, suggests a link between the 'floating' of the celestial bodies in their orbits and the reference to a ship and drowning. Although he does not

[764] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.152.

provide a translation of these verses, he seems to suggest translating يسبحون as 'float'. Those who suggest scientific expansion of the meaning of this verse explain that translating يسبحون as 'swim' suits their purpose better. This will be discussed in chapter seven.

Other scholars have also written on the topic of verses which Robinson identifies as signs verses. For example, Shaḥa:tah[765] refers to the verses talking about some cosmological phenomena as repeated particularly in Makkan chapters. He explains that the purpose of such verses is to direct man's attention to the Greatness of the Creator of these signs, and invite man to be grateful to Him.

As mentioned on page 50, Zarabozo[766], referring to some signs verses, also explains that such verses aim to direct man's attention to the fact that these signs are the work of Allah, Who, therefore, should be remembered and worshiped. He[767] concludes that the purpose of such verses is to remind man of God and teach him a very important lesson: This world is not simply made up of a set of scientific laws that were the result of nothing or chance explosions of energy, with no purpose or goal to them. Rather, it is the working of a willing Lord who created people for a very important purpose and designed the universe and subjected it to their benefit.

Similarly, Iqbal[768] explains that the signs verses are so called because of a refrain that occurs in them in various forms such as "in this is a Sign for those who reflect." (16: 11), or "in this is a Sign for those who listen. (16: 65)." He comments on the purpose of these verses:

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[765] Shaha:tah, A., (1980), Op. Cit., p. 30.
[766] Zarabozo, (1999), Op. Cit. p.75.
[767] Ibid., p.76.
[768] Iqbal, M., (2002), Op. Cit. p.30.

> The Qur'an asserts that commonly observable natural phenomena, such as the orderly movement of the planets, are, in fact, due to the design of the Creator. It draws the attention of its readers to the fact that *the sun does not catch up to the moon and the night cannot outstrip the day; [rather] each revolve in their own orbit*, and asserts that this is not merely the result of certain laws of nature, rather these are "signs" for those who reflect.[769]

Although the Qur'an is addressed primarily to a particular audience at a particular time and place, it claims to carry a universal message. It also contains the signs sections, which are of universal significance. After explaining that the Qur'an, as a book addressed originally to the inhabitants of seventh-century Arabia, contains many references to such cultural setting, Robinson (1999)[770] goes on to argue that "Despite this, the Meccan suras nevertheless convey a message which is of universal significance." Commenting on the signs sections which occur mainly in the Makkan chapters, he goes on to explain that they "affirm that God is the sole Creator and that all around us there are abundant signs of His beneficence and power which should evoke our gratitude and awe."[771] Thus, the signs sections can be approached as universal material not meant exclusively for the inhabitants of seventh-century Arabia, because they point to objects observable by people everywhere such as the sky, the sun, the moon, the earth, the mountains, etc. This suggests that people's understanding of these verses may develop in the present age and differ from that of the earlier audience. As explained in section 2.4.4, it may be possible to draw some similarities between this approach and some of the suggestions put forward by some scholars of the moderate group.

To relate this discussion to the main theme of this thesis, it may be suggested that the verses discussed in this research may alternatively be approached as falling under the category of signs verses. They point to some aspects of God's creation in the universe. Their first recipients in seventh-century Arabia understood them in a way suitable to their knowledge. In the present age, people read these same verses, but their understanding of them may differ from that of earlier generations according to the current state of

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[769] Iqbal, M., (2002), Op. Cit. p.30.
[770] Robinson, N., (1999), Op. Cit. p.65.
[771] Ibid.

knowledge. The Qur'an always encourages man to seek knowledge and ponder upon God's signs in the universe and in his own self. Man's appreciation and understanding of these signs may differ from that of the first generation of recipients because of new technology and insights available to him.

Even if this issue is approached without taking into consideration the Qur'an's pretension to divine origin, it can be said that the Qur'an is a text that has meaning. It was first addressed to a certain people at a certain time and place. It contains many references to specific cultural and ecological features (flora and fauna, etc.). According to Islamic belief, the Qur'an is addressed to mankind, including people in the present age. In this regard, Hoyland[772], as quoted in the introduction, writes: "Muhammad evidently thought of his faith as being open to all: 'We have sent you as a messenger to mankind' (Quran 4.79); 'Say [Muhammad], I am the messenger of God to you all' (7.158), 'We have only sent you as a herald and warner to all mankind' (34.28). Consequently the Quran makes no attempt to identify the early Muslim community along national lines." The Qur'an contains 'signs verses'; verses pointing to the creative activity of God in the universe so that man can be grateful to the Creator. These verses were understood in the past in a way that suited the knowledge of their first recipients. In the present age, both Muslims and non-Muslims reading the Qur'anic text can be expected to consider the signs of the natural world in the light of modern knowledge. Their understanding of the relevant verses in the Qur'an may differ from that of the traditional Commentators. For example, modern recipients have been able to see a kind of sea the description البحر المسجور, may be applicable to it. The traditional commentators interpreted البحر المسجور to mean either "the sea kept filled", or that "which will be fire – kindled on the Day of Resurrection".[773] Also, modern recipients have seen the earth from outer space as spherical. Traditionally, some people understood from certain verses that the earth was flat, while other people understood these verses to mean that the earth was spherical, because wherever one went, it was flat before him[774]. In the present age, no one can reasonably claim that the earth is flat, because we have been able to see that it is spherical.

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[772] Hoyland, R. G., (2001), Op. Cit. p.243
[773] See the discussion of this example in chapter seven.
[774] See page 293.

This is probably how it has been possible for certain moderate scholars, although opposed by the majority of Muslim scholars, to suggest new extensions of the meanings recognized traditionally of certain verses. However, the extent to which such claims are legitimate will be dependent upon the conditions discussed in sections 2.4.4 and 2.4.5, namely that any interpretation has to agree with the general principles of exegesis and take into consideration the context of the passage, its linguistic meanings and the immediate senses rendered in the traditions. Moreover, there should be a clear distinction between scientific speculations and generally accepted scientific facts. While the use of the former is not acceptable, the use of the latter is possible to a certain degree. Reading the translations of some signs verses, it is noted that most translations were typically based on the traditionally understood implications and commentaries on these verses, although this does not always respect the literal meaning. This resulted in ruling out the possible scientific expansions which are claimed present in these verses according to certain linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned. On the other hand, these verses cannot be reasonably translated according to a scientific exegesis which also neglects the literal meaning and the traditional interpretation based on it. For example, regarding the verses related to the shape of the earth referred to above, it is noted that, regardless of the interpretation, there is no great problem in translating the relevant verses; all the translators used 'spread out' or a similar expressions to translate مد الأرض. Now, if a translator argues that this verse should be translated as 'the earth we have made it spherical', or the like, according to modern science, this is to be rejected also[775]. A solution is to stick to the literal meaning and adopt the method suggested in this thesis.

From the perspective of translation, this thesis aims to suggest a method for translating these verses in as much a neutral way as possible. This is to give an English-speaking reader who does not understand Arabic a chance to evaluate the extent to which such suggested scientific expansions are plausible. In other words, there are three main options for translating these verses. The first is to confine oneself to the traditionally understood

[775] See also the discussion of حاجزا below.

implications and commentaries and incorporate this into the translation. The second is to adopt what seems to some scholars a 'scientific' interpretation of these verses and translate them according to 'scientific exegesis'. The third option is to let the original text speak for itself and adopt a more literal-oriented approach rather than adopting the understanding of a particular group of people at the expense of the linguistic meaning of the text. This thesis attempts to show that the first two approaches resemble in practice what is called the dynamic or functional approach in translation theory[776]. This aims at confining the translation to the understanding of a certain group of people and directing it to a particular audience. The third approach is the one suggested in this research to show how those who suggest the scientific expansions of the meanings of some verses were able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of specific linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned. This approach can accommodate both traditional and claimed scientific extensions of meaning; for if the latter can be assumed to be present in these verses, it is so thanks to the linguistic meaning of these verses. In other words, traditional interpretation should not be neglected, because it derives from the linguistic structure itself. This echoes the suggestions of some moderates who hold the view that because the Qur'an was first addressed to a certain people at a certain time and place, it is not plausible that it refers to things unknown to them. On the contrary, it contains many references to specific cultural and ecological features (flora and fauna, etc.) On the other hand, it expresses simple ideas which were applicable to some natural phenomena and comprehensible by people of that age. Certain scientific extensions of meaning may be possible according to certain set of rules explained in sections 2.4.4 and 2.4.5. Another possible extension of the meaning is metaphorical meaning. Again, this extension can be catered for by this approach, as explained in the conclusion. To illustrate this further, examples 7.2.21 (25: 53), 7.2.22 (27:61) and 7.2.23 (86: 11) can be discussed here. In the first two verses, the two words برزخا and حاجزا, which both refer to a barrier between two bodies of water, appear. The notion of 'barrier' was understood and interpreted in different ways. Traditionally, most Commentators interpreted it as a kind of barrier created by God to separate the salty water from the sweet, preventing them from getting mixed, although they may mingle. Another traditional interpretation is in terms of a piece of land separating two bodies of water, i.e. a

[776] See chapters four and seven for full discussion.

spit. In his translation of this verse, Yusuf Ali adds a footnote explaining the notion of the two bodies of flowing water getting mingled in terms of the regular water-cycle. He also suggests that there is another metaphorical meaning for this verse. In the modern age, scholars who adopt scientific exegesis differ in their interpretation of this notion. For example, Shaḥa:tah (1980)[777] believes that the 'barrier' refers to the fact that riverbeds are always higher than the level of the seawater. In this way, seawater never mingles with river water. Ibrahim (1997) explains that according to modern science, in the places where two different seas meet, there is a barrier between them, which divides the two seas so that each sea has its own temperature, salinity, and density. No matter how far various interpretations differ ranging from traditional to different modern 'scientific' extensions of meaning of the notion of 'barrier' mentioned in these two verses, this does not affect the fact that 'barrier' is the translation used for these two words by the different translators in the majority of the quoted translations. This happens in seven times out of ten, with three synonymous words used in the remaining three translations: 'a bar', 'a partition', and 'a separating bar'. Different translators may differ, however, in their interpretations of the nature of this barrier, and some of them comment on this in their footnotes. The adoption of traditionally understood implications and commentaries at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning may be illustrated by example 7.2.23 (86: 11) in which the word الرَّجْعِ appears. A detailed discussion of these issues will be presented in chapter seven.

[777] Shaha:tah, A., (1980), Op. Cit., p. 191.

6.4 *Text Types in the Holy Qur'an vs. Modern Text Typology*

In this section, an attempt will be made to investigate how far it is possible to identify different text types in the Holy Qur'an, and to what extent they may be compared to modern text typology. There have been two major approaches proposed for developing text typologies of the Holy Qur'an: Makkan/ Madinan typology, and typology according to subject matter[778]. These are to be considered next.

[778] Another classification, according to meaning, is into two parts: verses with well-established meaning (*a:ya:t muḥkama:t*); and verses with no fixed meaning (*a:ya:t mutasha:biha:t*) (See section 3.2.1). Such a classification, however, is not helpful for comparison with modern text typology because it depends entirely on the nature of meaning, which itself is a highly controversial issue. Moreover, this is not, strictly speaking, a typological classification. Furthermore, as Versteegh (1993) notes, such classification indicates that there were some traditional attempts to propose text typology. Versteegh, C. H. M., (1993). *Arabic Grammar and Qur'anic Exegesis in Early Islam*. Leiden: Brill., p. 106.

6.4.1 Makkan/ Madinan Typology

There have been some traditional attempts to identify different types of texts in the Holy Qur'an. One of these approaches is to divide the Qur'an into Makkan and Madinan verses and chapters. Although this distinction is simply based on when and/or where certain verses or chapters were revealed, and may thus not be considered, strictly speaking, a typological categorisation, it is important to be included here as a significant traditional approach attempting to identify and classify different texts within the Qur'anic text. Moreover, there are many typological differences associated with the classification of verses and chapters into Makkan and Madinan, as will be considered below.[779] Muslim scholars agree that the Holy Qur'an is divided into Makkan verses and chapters and Madinan ones.[780] I intend in this section to investigate this issue, highlighting some distinguishing features of each type.

Al-Qatta:n (1992)[781] explains that ever since the age of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ) Muslim scholars have taken much care in preserving the Islamic heritage through devoting their lives to studying every aspect of the Holy Qur'an to the extent that they know exactly the place and time of the revelation of each and every verse of the Holy Qur'an. In this respect, Ibn Masʿu:d, one of the Companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), asserted that he knew the exact place in which every verse and chapter of the Holy Qur'an was revealed, and the events that occasioned their revelation. Al-Zurqa:ni: (1996)[782] also quotes this saying of Ibn Masʿu:d in a similar vein.

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[779] See section 6.4.3.

[780] For example Al-Zarkashi:, M. B., (1971), Op. Cit., vol.1, p. 187, Ami:n, B. S., (1976). *Al-Ta'bi:r Al-Fanni: fi: Al-Qur'an*. 2nd ed. Cairo: Da:r Al-Shuru:q., p. 49, Al-Qatta:n, M., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 51, Al-Zurqa:ni:, M., (1996), Op. Cit., vol.1, p.138.

[781] Al-Qatta:n, M., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 51.

[782] Al-Zurqa:ni:, M., (1996), Op. Cit., vol.1, p.138.

6.4.1.1 Criteria for Dividing the Verses and Chapters of the Holy Qur'an into Makkan and Madinan

Al-Qatta:n (1992)[783], similarly Ami:n (1976)[784], points out that there are three main criteria for dividing the verses and chapters of the Holy Qur'an into Makkan and Madinan[785]. These are summarised below:

1. According to the time of the revelation: in this case, Makkan verses and chapters are those revealed before the *hijrah* (migration of the Prophet (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah), even if the place of their revelation was not Makkah. Madinan verses and chapters, on the other hand, are those revealed after the *hijrah*, even if their place of revelation was not Madinah.

2. According to the place of the revelation: Makkan are those revealed in Makkah and nearby places such as Mina, ʿArafa:t, and Al-Hudaybiah; Madinan are those revealed in Madinah and nearby places such as Uhud, Quba, and Salʿ. It is noted, however, as Al-Qatta:n (1992)[786] goes on to clarify, that the categorisation of several verses and chapters of the Holy Qur'an according to this criterion would be problematic. This is because various verses and chapters were revealed neither in Makkah nor in Madinah; some were revealed while the Prophet (ﷺ) was travelling, others were revealed in other places far from both Makkah and Madinah such as Tabu:k and Jerusalem. Furthermore, this means that what was revealed in Makkah after the *hijrah* is to be considered Makkan, which contradicts the division of Makkan and Madinan verses and chapters according to the subject matter, as will be explained later on.

3. According to the addressee, in which case Makkan is that which is addressed to the people of Makkah, while Madinan is that which is addressed to the people of Madinah. According to this view, chapters containing the vocative structure يا أيها

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[783] Al-Qatta:n, M., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 61.
[784] Ami:n, B. S., (1976), Op. Cit., p. 49.
[785] See also , Al-Zarkashi:, M. B., (1971), Op. Cit., vol.1, pp. 187ff, Al-Suyu:ti:, A., (1996), Op. Cit., vol.1 pp. 22-50.
[786] Al-Qatta:n, M., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 62.

الناس (O Mankind) are considered Makkan, and those containing يا أيها الذين آمنوا (O you who believe) are considered Madinan. Al-Qatta:n (1992)[787] points out that the majority of the chapters of the Holy Qur'an do not commence with either of these two structures. Furthermore, this division is not applicable in all cases; some chapters are known to be addressed to the believers of Madina, and yet they contain the first structure –يا أيها الناس (O Mankind), while others are addressed to the people of Makkah, and contain the second structure – يا أيها الذين آمنوا (O you who believe).

The majority of Muslim scholars believe that the first criterion is the most reliable one.[788] This is because it is well defined and applicable in most cases. The researcher also holds this view, because, in my opinion, the most important event in the history of Islam was the *hijrah*. This event divided the early history of Islam into two clearly defined stages. When we compare the Qur'anic texts which were revealed before the *hijrah* with those revealed after the *hijrah*, we find several distinguishing features both on the level of form and the level of subject matter.

[787] Al-Qatta:n, M., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 62.
[788] Al-Zarkashi:, M. B., (1971), Op. Cit., p. 187, Ami:n, B. S., (1976), Op. Cit., p. 49, Al-Qatta:n, M., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 61.

6.4.1.2 Some Distinguishing Features of the Makkan and Madinan Chapters on the Level of Form

Muslim scholars have attempted to find distinguishing features for Makkan and Madinan chapters on the level of form as well as the level of subject matter. The following pages summarise the distinguishing characteristics on both levels as explained by a number of scholars (e.g. Al-Zarkashi: 1971, Ami:n 1976, Al-Qatta:n 1992, Qutb 1993, Al-Zurqa:ni:).[789]

[789] Al-Zarkashi:, M. B., (1971), Op. Cit., vol.1 pp. 187ff, Ami:n, B. S., (1976), Op. Cit., p. 49, Al-Qatta:n, M., (1992), Op. Cit., pp. 61-64, Qutb, M., (1993). *Dira:sa:t Qur'a:niyyah*. Cairo: Da:r Al-Shuru:q., pp. 273ff, Al-Zurqa:ni:, M., (1996), Op. Cit., vol.1, pp. 138, 142ff.

6.4.1.2.1 Makkan Chapters

- Every chapter that contains the expression يا أيها الناس (O Mankind), and does not contain يا أيها الذين آمنوا (O you who believe) is considered Makkan. There is, however, a disagreement over chapter 22 (*Al-Hajj* (the pilgrimage)).

- Every chapter that contains the expression كلا (nay!, no!, by no means!) is Makkan.

- Every chapter that starts with the abbreviated alphabetical letters (e.g. الم *Alif-la:m-mi:m)* such as chapters 7, 10, 11 is Makkan, except chapters 2 and 3.

- Every chapter that contains a prostration verse (a verse after reading which Muslims are supposed to prostrate) is Makkan.

- Makkan verses are mostly short, concise, and characterised by the use of fiery and impassioned language.

- Makkan chapters usually exhibit frequent use of oaths.

6.4.1.2.2 Madinan Chapters

- Some of the characteristics of the Madinan chapters have already been alluded to under the characteristics of the Makkan chapters (e.g. they contain يا أيها الذين آمنوا (O you who believe), the expression كلا (nay!, no!, by no means!) does not appear in them, etc.). The following feature may also be added:
    - Madinan verses are mostly long, containing detailed explanations of various aspects of Islamic law (*shari:'ah*) and practices of worship.

Now, I will move to mention some of the characteristics of each type on the level of subject matter.

6.4.1.3 Some of the Characteristics of Each Type on the Level of Subject Matter

6.4.1.3.1 Makkan Chapters

Makkan chapters concentrate on the following issues:

- Calling mankind to monotheism, and worshipping Allah alone without associates of any kind.
- Arguing with atheists, polytheists and pagans to prove the existence and Oneness of Allah, using logical proofs and decisive pieces of evidence.
- Using similar methods to confirm the prophethood of Muhammad (ﷺ), the authenticity of the Holy Qur'an as the true word of Allah, and Resurrection and the Day of Judgement.
- Describing the horror of the Hour (of Judgement).
- Describing Hell Fire and the terrifying torture therein for those who are doomed to it.
- Describing Paradise and the eternal grace and happiness of its people.
- Drawing the broad outline of Islamic law and establishing the essential characteristics of the Muslim society.
- Condemning the dreadful practices of the people at that time such as bloodshed, unjust confiscation of orphans' property, and burying new-born girls alive.
- Mentioning the stories of previous prophets and messengers of Allah, and how those prophets were patient with their peoples who denied the truth and did not believe them until Allah punished them severely. The purpose of these stories is to warn the unbelievers of their destiny if they did not accept Islam, and to comfort the Prophet (ﷺ).
- Mentioning the story of Adam and Eve, and how they were expelled from Paradise because they listened to the temptation of Satan.

6.4.1.3.2 Madinan Chapters

The issues addressed in the Madinan chapters comprise the following:

- Elaborated explanations of the practices of worship, regulations of Islamic law (*shari: 'ah*), and aspects of family life.
- Norms of the Muslim society, and the mutual relations among its members.
- The importance of *jihad* to preserve the sovereignty of the Muslim state.
- International relations in peace and war.
- Arguing with the People of the Book (Christians and Jews) and calling them to Islam; proving that it is the final divine religion and the only one accepted by God, proving that the Holy Qur'an is the final divine Book, and the true Word of God, having supremacy over the previous divine Books.
- Unmasking the hypocrites, analysing their characters, and showing their dangers.

6.4.2 Text Typology in the Holy Qur'an According to its Subject Matter

This section attempts to throw some light on another proposed typology of the Qur'anic texts on the level of subject matter.

As pointed out elsewhere[790] in this thesis, the Holy Qur'an is undoubtedly first and foremost a Book of guidance. Nevertheless, different types of texts in the Holy Qur'an and various styles that are employed to achieve its main purposes can be identified. The main thread that connects all these aspects together is to convey the message that, according to Islamic belief, this is the word of God. Sherif (1985)[791] provides a brief summary of the purposes of the Holy Qur'an which may help shed some light on the nature of various types of texts we expect to encounter in this Holy Book. He explains that it aims to count God's favours to mankind; to teach wisdom; to bring good news of salvation to believers and the virtuous, and warning of eternal torment for infidels and evil-doers; to emphasize that there is only one God and that He has neither associates, consort nor offspring, and that both the visible and invisible worlds are in His power and dominion; to prescribe a code of imperative commandments for believers and to condemn those who do not obey them as infidels; and to warn against the promptings of Satan. In addition, there are lengthy descriptions of Paradise and the blessings of its people, and Hell Fire and the suffering of those who are doomed to it. From the previous explanation, it can be supposed that among the types of the texts present in the Holy Qur'an are **argumentative texts**, which deal with the issue of Islamic belief regarding the existence and oneness of God, **prescriptive** or **instructive texts,** which subsume prescribing a code of imperative commandments for believers, **descriptive texts** in which are presented descriptions of Paradise and the blessings of its people, and Hell Fire and the suffering of those who are doomed to it. Another important text type is **narrative**. This text type is prevalent in the Holy Qur'an. According to Sherif (1985)[792], " A most important part of the Qur'an (1453 verses or about one fourth of the total number) consists of narratives concerning the prophets, sages, and

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[790] See, for example, section 2.4.4.

[791] Sherif, F., (1985). *A Guide to the Contents of the Qur'an.* London: Ithaca Press., p. 26.

[792] Ibid., p. 46.

other historical or legendary celebrities of ancient times..." Al-Zurqa:ni: (1996)[793] also mentions four divisions of the Qur'anic text: تشريع (legislation), قصص (narration), جدل (argumentation), and وصف (description).

Versteegh (1993) presents some of the traditional views regarding text typology in the Holy Qur'an. He writes:

> The commentators were aware of the existence of several text types within the text of the revelation. They knew that some of the verses contained statements, others a request, a command, a question, etc. On a higher level the text could be seen to consist of stories, parables, sermons, regulations, etc. [794]

Then, he explains why there was no clear-cut divisions for the different text types in the Holy Qur'an: "For most commentators these different text types were something self-evident; they did not set up any kind of formal classification and referred to the various types only with non-technical terms."[795] Perhaps, another reason for the vagueness of this aspect is that, as pointed out by Versteegh (1993), the main purpose for studying the Qur'anic text was to elucidate the meaning of God's word, and that is why there was no separation between the studies of various aspects of the text. "Consequently, we find in the earliest commentaries an amalgam of all different aspects of Islamic scholarship: historical narrative, abrogation, pre-Islamic lore, lexicography, legal application, theology, reading, and grammar."[796] However, Versteegh (1993) mentions one traditional Commentator in whose commentary there is a rather extensive classification for the different text types in the Holy Qur'an. This is Muqa:til who gives a detailed explanation on this subject. Versteegh (1993) quotes Goldfeld's (1988:24) translation of this text, although he later on questions Goldfeld's translation of some terms. To give a clear idea of how traditional

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[793] Al-Zurqa:ni:, M., (1996), Op. Cit., vol.2, p.227.
[794] Versteegh, C. H. M., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 104.
[795] Ibid.
[796] Ibid., p. 195.

Commentators, exemplified by Muqa:til, approached the classification of text types in the Holy Qur'an I will quote here Goldfeld's translation which reads as follows:

> The Qur'an [contains] (1) particular [references] and (2) general [references]: (3) particular [references] to Muslims, (4) particular [references] to certain Idolaters, (5) particular [references] to one Idolater, (6) general [references] to mankind; (it) [is] (7) ambiguous and (8) univocal, (9) explained and (10) unexplained; (it) [contains] (11) conciseness and (12) prolixity, (13) connection between [non-sequential] sentences, (14) abrogating and (15) abrogated [verses], [interchanging] (16) earlier and (17) later [matters], (18) homographs of many meanings, (19) continuation in different chapters, (20) commandments, (21) laws, (22) ordinances, (23) parables by which God, mighty and exalted be he, refers to himself, (24) parables by which he refers to Unbelievers and idols, (25) parables by which he refers to this world, to resurrection and to the world to come, (26) history of the ancients, (27) narrative about Paradise and Hell, (28) account of what is in the hearts of the Believers, (29) account of what is in the hearts of the Unbelievers, (30) polemics against the Arab Idolaters, (31) *Tafsīr*, and there is (32) *Tafsīr* to *Tafsīr*.[797]

Versteegh (1993) goes on to explain that in Muqa:til's classification there is a lot of confusion between different levels of textual analysis. He also points out that not all the topics listed in his classification belong to the category of text types mentioned above. "More specifically", Versteegh (1993) goes on to clarify, "the list contains a mixture of topics (e.g., commandments, laws, parables), properties of the text (ambiguous, univocal, etc.), and textual types (*taqdīm wa-ta'ẖīr* [*taqdi:m wa ta'khi:r*] , narrative, etc.), but the dividing line between these categories is fluid. The categories are mostly based on semantic considerations, and although not all of them have formal linguistic correlates, there is at least some relationship between them and their formal expression in the text of the Qur'an."[798]

Versteegh (1993) refers to another traditional classification of text types in the Holy Qur'an. This is provided by Muhammad al-Kalbi:. Versteegh (1993) provides the following translation of al-Kalbi:'s text on this: "All of it [the Holy Qur'an] is *maṯānin* [مثاني *matha:nin*] : command and prohibition, promise and threat, permitted and forbidden,

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[797] Quoted in Versteegh, C. H. M., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 105.
[798] Versteegh, C. H. M., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 105.

abrogating and abrogated, literal sense and metaphor, univocal and ambiguous, account of what was and of what will be, praise of some people and reproof of other people".[799] Although al-Kalbi:'s list is not as exhaustive as Muqa:til's, Versteegh (1993) notes, it is in some respects more clear-cut.

Then, Versteegh (1993) makes an important reference to Ibn 'Abbas's classification of *Muḥkam* and *Mutasha:bih*, which indicates that text typology was current in the first century of the Hijrah.[800]

Another traditional view of the division of the Holy Qur'an according to its subject matter into عقائد (literally 'doctrines'), أحكام (literally 'regulations' or 'rules'), and قصص (literally 'stories' or 'narrations') is proposed by Abu Al-Su'u:d[801] when he comments on chapter 112 (*al-ikhla:ṣ* or *al-tawḥi:d* (literally: 'pure monotheism')). He explains that it was narrated in the sayings of the Prophet (ﷺ) that this chapter equals one third of the Holy Qur'an. Abu Al-Su'u:d attributes this to the fact that the Holy Qur'an deals exclusively with three main subjects: doctrines, regulations, and narrations, and this chapter is dedicated solely, as its name implies, to the issue of monotheism, which is the kernel of the first subject. Other suggestions on the issue of dividing the Holy Qur'an according to its subjects were put forward by other scholars such as Al-Ghazza:li:, Ibn Al-Qa:sim, and Al-Zarkashi:.[802] They are not entirely different from the first one cited above except perhaps in that they use other terminology for this categorization. It seems that all the proposed divisions of the Holy Qur'an on the level of subject matter may be generally subsumed under three main titles: عقائدي (doctrinal), تشريعي (legislative), and قصصي

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[799] Versteegh, C. H. M., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 106.
[800] Ibid. See footnote No. 778 page 241.
[801] Abu al-Su'u:d, M., (1971). *Tafsi:r Abi Al-Su'u:d*. Beirut: Da:r 'iḥya:' Al-Tura:th Al-'arabi., vol.9, p.213.
[802] Al-Zarkashi:, M. B., (1971), Op. Cit., vol.1, pp. 17, 445, Al-Ghazza:li:, A. M., (1985). *Jawa:hir Al-Qur'an*. In: Al-Qabbani, Muhammad Rashi d, ed. Beirut: Da:r 'Iḥya:' Al-'Ulu:m., p. 38, Ibn Al-Qa:sim, M. A., (No date). *'i'ja:z Al-Qur'an*. In: Saqr, Ahmad, ed. Cairo: Da:r Al-Ma'a:rif., p. 36.

(narrative). A close look into the nature and structure of these types according to this view will be attempted in the following section.

As I understand it, the عقائدي part of the Holy Qur'an deals with issues of faith, which are based on the notion of monotheism and the oneness of God. Therefore, it is plausible that it should contain arguments with atheists, polytheists and pagans to prove the existence and Oneness of Allah, using logical proofs and decisive pieces of evidence. Arguments with Christians and Jews regarding these issues are also included under this category. It could be assumed that this type of Qur'anic text is more oriented towards argumentation, and may be, therefore, conceived as belonging to the argumentative text type.

The second type, which contains regulations or instructions, can be thought of as falling under the instructive text type. It includes the orders that Muslims should obey, either by instructing them to do certain things, or abstain from doing other practices; a type which some scholars[803] term الأمر والنهي (commands to do or to abstain from doing certain things).

Of immediate relevance to this are the other issues which constitute the Islamic faith such as believing in angels, Divine Books sent down by God, all prophets and messengers of God, the Day of Judgement; and believing in fate, both good and bad.

The third part of the Holy Qur'an, narrations or stories, mainly consists of stories of the previous prophets with their peoples, stories of sages and other historical figures, and other significant stories in the history of Islam. It seems that this type can be identified with the narrative text type.

In the next section, an attempt will be made to reveal the correspondence between these text types and the Makkan/ Madinan typology.

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[803] For example Al-Qurtubi:, M., (1953), Op. Cit., vol.10, p. 55; Al-Tabari:, M. J., (1985), Op. Cit., vol. 24, p.18, Al-Tha'a:libi:, A., (No date). *Al-Jawa:hir Al-Hisa:n fi: Tafsi:r Al-Qur'an.* Beirut: Mu'assasat Al-'A'lami: li Al-Matbu:'a:t., vol.4, p. 340.

6.4.3 Relating Makkan/ Madinan Typology to Subject Matter Typology

In this section an attempt will be made to explore the relationship between Makkan/ Madinan typology and text typology on the level of subject matter as discussed above.

According to the distinguishing features on the level of subject matter as discussed above, the first text type, argumentative, is further divided into two sub-types. The first is argumentation with atheists, polytheists and pagans. The second is argumentation with the People of the Book (Christians and Jews). The former kind of argumentation is prevalent in the Makkan chapters, while the latter occurs more frequently in the Madinan chapters.[804] According to Qutb (1993)[805], the central issue of the Makkan chapters is doctrine. They include arguments with the pagans, polytheists, and atheists to prove, among other issues, the existence and Oneness of God. Therefore, they contain logical proofs and pieces of evidence to support these arguments. Among these supporting elements are the verses which are believed to be alluding to scientific issues, which are under discussion in the present work[806]. Thus, most of these verses (24 out of 25)[807] occur in Makkan chapters. Arguments with the People of the Book (Christians and Jews), on the other hand, differ in nature from arguments with atheists and pagans. This is because People of the Book do not deny the existence of God, or other issues related for example to the Hereafter, but have, according to Islamic belief, some misconceptions about them.[808] Therefore, this type of

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[804] See Qutb, M., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 494, Al-Zurqa:ni:, M., (1996), Op. Cit., vol.1, p.143.
[805] Qutb, M., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 20.
[806] See Al-Qatta:n, M., (1992), Op. Cit., pp. 300ff.
[807] Some verses are quoted more than once in chapter seven because proponents of scientific exegesis claim that they refer to more than one scientific issue, for example 7.2.7 (31: 29) and 7.2.11 (31: 29). There is some dispute among scholars whether chapter 13 of the Holy Qur'an (*Surat Al-Ra'd*) is Madinan or Makkan. Muhammad Qutb (1993) says that, according to its subject matter, it is more likely to be Makkan. , Qutb, M., (1993), Op. Cit., pp. 151, 181. Sayyid Qutb (1993) asserts that it is Makkan, Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit., vol. 4, p.2039. Two verses of this chapter are quoted in chapter seven: 7.2.10 (13: 2), and 7.2.15 (13: 3). Thus, the actual number of verses quoted in chapter seven is 25: 24 Makkan and 1 Madinan (if chapter 13 '*Surat Al-Ra'd*' is considered Makkan), or 22 Makkan and 3 Madinan (if chapter 13 '*Surat Al-Ra'd*' is considered Madinan).
[808] See Al-Zarkashi:, M. B., (1971), Op. Cit., vol.1, p.261.

argument is found mostly in Madinan chapters, which are characterized, compared to Makkan chapters, by long verses and elaborated explanations.[809]

The second type, instructive, is mostly devoted to the teachings of Islam regarding the practices of worship and the regulations of Islamic law. This type, especially the elaborated explanations on such issues, is prevalent in the Madinan chapters. This is because the Muslim society, which had been established in Madina, needed rules and regulations to govern the mutual relations between its members. These regulations organised all aspects of human life including political, economic, social, and moral aspects.[810] Instructions to protect the growing Muslim state against its enemies through jihad are also common in Madinan chapters.[811]

The third type, narrative, is predominant in the Makkan chapters.[812] There are a number of purposes for citing stories in the Holy Qur'an. Among them, according to Qutb (1993)[813], are proving the authenticity and Divine origin of the revelation received by Muhammad ﷺ, relieving the suffering of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions in face of the hardship they encountered in Makkah, and showing that all the previous Prophets and Messengers of God delivered the same message of worshipping One God. Shadi:d (1984)[814] explains that "The story in the Qur'an is one of the greatest means for education and mission. Especially in the Makkan period, stories occupied a very large amount of the Qur'an. Stories dealt with everything aimed at by the Qur'an, or strengthened the belief in the believers."[815]

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[809] See Qutb, M., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 20.
[810] Qutb, M., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 282.
[811] Ibid., p. 274.
[812] See Qutb, M., (1993), Op. Cit., p. 101.
[813] Qutb, M., (1993), Op. Cit., pp. 101ff.
[814] Quoted in Almisned, O., (2001), Op. Cit., p. 36.
[815] Shadi:d, M., (1984). *Manhaj Al-Qissah fi: Al-Qur'an*. Jeddah: Sharikat Maktabat 'Uka:z li Al-Nashr., p. 15.

As is clear, there is a close relationship between the different types of texts that appear in the Makkan chapters.[816] For example, among the purposes of the narrative text type, as explained above, is to attest to the authenticity of the revelation and the prophethood of Muhammad ﷺ, and to argue that the message of all the Prophets is one and the same. This leads to the argumentative text type, which is also present in the Makkan chapters in the form of arguments with the atheists, pagans, and polytheists. In other words, the arguments relating to the doctrine (عقائدي or doctrinal text type, as it is traditionally known) are supported by the narrative texts and the signs verses, which some proponents of scientific exegesis regard as alluding to scientific issues. These later verses may be assigned to the descriptive expository text type, or subsumed under what Robinson calls 'signs verses'.[817] Thus, narrations, information and factual knowledge are presented to further the persuasion, and "in order to persuade one can narrate, describe, counterargue, etc."[818] It is interesting to note, as mentioned above, that the majority of the verses discussed in this thesis (24 out of 25)[819] are found in Makkan chapters. The relationship between subject matter and linguistic structure is always acknowledged in linguistic studies. In this regard, Gentzler (1993)[820] writes, "The subject matter is contingent upon and constituted by the linguistic structure of the language." Thus, the Madinan chapters of the Holy Qur'an, compared to Makkan chapters, are characterised, for example, by long verses and elaborated explanations, as mentioned above. This suits better the lengthy explanations of the practices of worship, regulations of Islamic law (*shari:'ah*), and aspects of family life, which distinguish Madinan chapters on the level of subject matter, as pointed out above.

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[816] See also page 231 where Robinson explains that there is a close relationship between the six registers found in the Makkan chapters.
[817] See pages 216 and 225ff.
[818] Trosborg, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 16.
[819] See footnote No. 807 page 255.
[820] Explaining Miko's (1970) view.

6.5 Conclusion

To sum up, the discussion of text types in the Holy Qur'an has proven important and rewarding. This is to establish that the verses with which this research is mainly concerned belong to a certain text type with certain characteristics, which enabled those who suggest scientific expansions of the meaning to argue that these verses can be looked at in the light of more advanced scientific knowledge. Consequently, the translation should reflect the way in which the proponents of scientific exegesis have been able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of certain linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned.

Verses of this type are characterised by certain features distinguishing them from other text types in the Holy Qur'an. Whether they come as embedded texts within narrative, instructive, or argumentative text types – although they mostly appear in the latter type[821] – or approached as signs verses, it can be said that they have their own linguistic characteristics that distinguish them from the overall textual / contextual focus of the section of the text in which they occur. That is, they can be approached as universal material not meant exclusively for the inhabitants of seventh-century Arabia. They appear in the Makkan chapters, which carry universal message. They point to objects observable by people everywhere such as the sky, the sun, the moon, the earth, the mountains, etc., which suggests that people's understanding of these verses may develop in the present age and differ from that of the earlier audience. This is perhaps how those who suggest scientific expansions of the meanings have been able to argue that these verses can be looked at in the light of more advanced knowledge. As chapter four argues, translating these verses functionally would result in reading into the translation the traditionally understood implications, or the scientifically understood implications. In the first case, the translation will not reflect how the proponents of scientific exegesis have been able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of specific linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned, and may also in the second case ultimately neglect the literal meaning and the traditional interpretation based on it. To reflect the two aspects, i.e. the traditional interpretation and the claimed scientific expansion of the meaning, which are both

[821] See page 216.

supposedly based on the linguistic meaning, it is recommended to use semantic translation in which the key lexical items are translated in such a way that respects their linguistic meaning. This linguistic meaning is responsible for achieving the (claimed) flexibility of meaning in the original text. The majority of these verses come in the context of describing God's favours towards people, and as supporting pieces of evidence regarding some arguments for the existence of God, the truthfulness of His messengers, the Resurrection, etc. [822] It can be said that the type of text under which these verses may be subsumed is mainly the descriptive expository text type.[823] Alternatively, they can be identified as a specific group subsumed under what Robinson calls 'signs passages'[824].

It is acknowledged in translation studies that the instructive text type is characterised by a high degree of stability and directness of meaning. Hence, texts of this type are easier to translate than some other text types.[825] Legal texts are subsumed under this type of text under the heading of 'instruction without option' in Hatim and Mason's (1991) and Hatim's (1997) typology.[826] Verses addressing *shari'a* limits (Islamic Law) are stated as instructions and orders, with clearly stated meaning. However, this does not mean that some other people may not look at these verses in light of the new developments in the world in different fields and have different understood implications of them. Regardless of the extent to which such proposals are legitimate within different schools of thought, such issues may be discussed outside the borders of translation and in the relevant fields of Islamic legal and jurisprudence systems.[827] The type of verses discussed in this thesis do not usually appear within the instructive texts. This may be because these verses are believed to contain, as will be discussed in chapter seven, some lexical items that can have more than one interpretation. Instructive texts on the other hand, as mentioned above, are usually stated with straightforward meanings. To give an example, there is a full Madinan

[822] See the example on page 216.
[823] See page 216.
[824] See section 6.3.3.
[825] Cf., for example, Hervey, S. G. J. and Higgins, I., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 144; Neubert, A. and Shreve, G. M., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 41. See also El Shiekh (1990) who explains that legislative parts of the Holy Qur'an with their stative style and clear-cut instructions together with informative texts are relatively easier to translate without much loss of meaning. El Shiekh, A., (1990), Op. Cit., pp. 2, 12.
[826] See pages 209 and 212.
[827] See page 103.

Sura (Chapter 4: al-Nisa') in the Holy Qur'an consisting of 176 *a:yah* (Verses) and dedicated mostly to instructions regarding the laws of marriage, inheritance, and prayer. This is one of the longest suras in the Holy Qur'an, and yet, as it is mostly instructive, there is hardly any occurrence of any verse that can be classified as belonging to the type of texts under which the examples discussed in this thesis may be said to fall. However, there are three verses in which the word آيات 'signs' appear: 56, 140, 155. In his analysis of another lengthy Madinan sura, Al-Ma:'idah (chapter 5 of the Qur'an), Robinson (2001)[828] does not classify any verse under the heading 'signs passages'. Among the general themes Robinson identifies in this sura are those which contain regulations and instructions such as the following: regulations and exhortations for the believers (vv 1-9), punishments for antisocial crimes (vv 33-40), messenger must judge in accordance with revelation (vv 41-50), believers should avoid alliances with the Scripturists (vv 51-58), messenger must convey the meseege entrustcd to him (vv 59-68), regulations and exhortations for the believers (vv 87-108).

The next chapter is devoted to a detailed analysis and comparison of the selected English translations of the verses which some proponents of scientific exegesis believe to be alluding to scientific issues related to the creation of the universe.

[828] Robinson, N., (2001). *Hands Outstreched: Towards a Re-reading of Su:rat al-Ma:'ida*. Journal of Qur'anic Stdies III[1], 1-19. pp.1-19.

7 CHAPTER SEVEN: TRANSLATION ANALYSIS

7.1 Layout

This chapter is dedicated to a detailed discussion of the five English translations chosen for the purpose of this thesis. They will be analysed and compared with regard to translating certain lexical items that appear in selected verses of the Holy Qur'an which are believed to contain allusions to some scientific facts. The contexts of such lexical items will also be taken into account as far as clarifying the meaning makes this necessary.

7.2 Verses Related to the Creation of the Universe

The verses to be discussed are related to the creation of the universe. The verses analysed in this chapter have been arranged in such a way that verses talking about related aspects are presented in sequence in order to facilitate the discussion.

7.2.1 (10:5)

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَّرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: It is He Who made the sun to be a shining glory and the moon to be a light (of beauty), and measured out stages for her; that ye might know the number of years and the count (of time).

Al-Hilali and Khan: It is He Who made the sun a shining thing and the moon as a light and measured out its (their) stages, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning.

Arberry: It is He Who made the sun a radiance, and the moon a light, and determined it by stations, that you might know the number of the years and the reckoning.

Pickthall: He it is Who appointed the sun a splendour and the moon a light, and measured for her stages, that ye might know the number of the years, and the reckoning.

Shakir: He it is Who made the sun a shining brightness and the moon a light, and ordained for it mansions that you might know the computation of years and the reckoning.

The meaning some traditional commentators understood from this verse was that the light of the sun was stronger than that of the moon. In Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, (vol. 2, p. 118), and Al-Jala:lai:n's Commentary, (p. 769) no clear explanation is given regarding the difference between sun's light and moon's light. It is only suggested that the sun's light is stronger than the moon's light. Al-Zamakhshari: [829] and Ibn 'aṭiyyah[830] also suggest that الضياء is stronger than النور. In Ibn Kathi:r's Commentary (vol. 2, p. 408), he seems to suggest that both the sun and the moon produce light, but their lights are not identical, i.e. God made them different so that they do not get mixed up. However, some other traditional Commentators seem to have an understanding of this phenomenon that corresponds to the

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[829] Al-Zamakhshari:, J. M., (1987). *Tafsi:r Al-kashsha:f 'an Ḥaqa:'iq Ghawa:miḍ Al-Tanzi:l wa 'Uyu:n Al-'Aqa:wi:l fi: Wuju:h Al-Ta'wi:l*. In: Mustafa Husain Ahmad, ed. 3rd edition. Beirut: Da:r Al-Kita:b Al-'Arabi. vol.2, p.329.

[830] ibn Atiyyah, A. M. A. b. G. l., (2001). *Al-Muḥarrir Al-Waji:z fi: Tafsi: Al-Kita:b Al-'azi:z*. Beirut: Da:r al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah. vol.3, p.105.

modern understanding, which will be discussed shortly. In Abu Al-Su'u:d's Commentary, (vol. 4, p. 120), it is explained that the sun's light is stronger than the moon's light. It is also suggested that there is a hint in this verse that the moon acquires its light from the sun. In Al-Shawka:ni:'s *Fath Al-Qadi:r*, (vol. 2, p. 425) and Al-'Alu:si:'s *Ru:h Al-Ma'a:ni:*, (vol. 11, p. 67) there is a similar explanation. Other Commentators have a clearer understanding. In Al-Baida:wi:'s Commentary, (vol. 3, p.186), Al-Baida:wi: mentions that God created the sun as *Nayyirah fi: dha:tiha:* (i.e. producing light by itself), while the moon is luminous because it faces the sun and reflects its light. Ibn Taiymiyyah also in his book *Daqa:'iq Al-Tafsi:r*, (vol. 2, p. 476) seems to suggest that sun's light is different from moon's light as he gives the example of a lamp inside a house, when it lightens the house. The light reflected from the different parts of the house is referred to in Arabic with the word نور, the same word used to refer to moon's light in the Holy Qur'an. In Al-Zarkashi:'s (d. 794 A.H.) *Burha:n*, vol. 3, p. 259, it is suggested that the moon acquires its light from the sun.

In his Commentary, Qutb[831] groups verses 3-6 of this sura[832], in which verse (10: 5) under analysis here appears, under the heading of 'some of God's signs proving His Oneness'. With regard to this verse in particular, he[833] explains that the reference to the sun as ضياء indicates that in it there is burning, and to the moon as نور indicates that in it there is light. Although he does not provide further explanation, the difference in nature he draws between the sun's light and the moon's light is obvious.

Proponents of scientific exegesis claim that this verse contains some scientific facts which were unknown at the time when the Holy Qur'an was revealed fourteen centuries ago. These scientific facts can be observed only through profound contemplation and careful linguistic analysis of certain vocabulary items used in this verse. The verse refers to the sun

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[831] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.3, p.1761.
[832] See the example on page 216.
[833] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.3, p.1765.

as ضياء and the moon as نور. Commenting on the difference between the Biblical and the Qur'anic reference to the light of the sun and the moon, Bucaille (1996) writes:

> This calls for some comment. Whereas the Bible calls the Sun and Moon 'lights', and merely adds to one the adjective 'greater' and to the other 'lesser', the Qur'an ascribes differences other than that of dimension to each respectively. Agreed, this is nothing more than a verbal distinction but how was one to communicate to men at this time without confusing them, while at the same time expressing the notion that the Sun and Moon were not absolutely identical 'lights'?[834]

However, it has been discussed in section 2.5 that there were many scientifically advanced pre-Islamic civilizations in which many of the scientific facts claimed to be the monopoly of the Qur'an were known; and that there were many channels through which scientific knowledge might have entered Arabia. But how they were able to arrive at such conclusions? Linguistic analysis of some of the lexical items in the verse will now follow.

Some proponents of scientific exegesis also claim that this verse alludes to another scientific fact, viz. the light of the sun is actually not a single light, but a collection of lights, i.e. the spectrum. Shaḥa:tah (1980)[835] explains that this can be inferred from the Arabic word ضياء which can be taken as the plural form of the singular noun ضوء.[836]

The meaning of ضوء given in some Arabic-Arabic dictionaries relates to the produced light rather than the reflected light. Among the examples given to explain the meaning of ضوء

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[834] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 154.
[835] Shaha:tah, A., (1980), Op. Cit., p. 81.
[836] See Ibn Manẓu:r's *Lisa:n Al-'Arab*, vol. 1, p. 112, *Al-Mu'jam Al-W'asi:ṭ*, vol.1, p.546. Cf. also Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s Commentary, vol. 3, p.185 where he mentions that ضياء can be the plural of ضوء, Al-Qurṭubi:'s Commentary, vol. 8, p. 309 where he also says that ضياء is the plural of ضوء. Cf. also Abu Al-Su'u:d's Commentary vol. 4, p. 120, Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Faṭḥ Al-Qadi:r* vol. 2, p. 424, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:ḥ Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 11, p.76.

are 'lamp's light' and 'fire's light'[837]. The kind of light referred to here is that produced by the lamp and the fire. In comparison to ضوء, نور, especially when the two terms appear together, means reflected light rather than produced light[838]. For clarification, it is necessary to check other occurrences of the words ضوء and نور in the Holy Qur'an to see if the former always refers to produced light and the latter to reflected light. There are forty-seven [839] verses in the Holy Qur'an in which either ضوء or نور, or both appear in different forms and parts of speech (verb, noun, adjective, singular, plural, etc. e.g.: أضاءت, نور, منير, ضياء, أضاء). Where the reference is made to the light produced by fire (2: 17), lightning (2: 20), the sun (10: 5), (28: 71), or the oil kindled with fire (24: 35), ضوء (in different forms) is used. Where the reference is made to the light of the moon (10: 5), (25: 61), (71: 16) (see the discussion of theses verses below), نور and منير are used. In many verses نور is used figuratively to refer to belief in God (for example (2: 257), (5: 16), (13: 16), (14: 1), (14: 5), (33: 43)). In other verses, نور is also used figuratively to refer to God (24: 35), Divine Books in general, and the Holy Qur'an in particular (for example (3:184), (4:174), (6: 91), (7: 157), (31: 20), (35: 25), (42: 52), (64: 8)), guidance (5: 44), (5:46), (24: 40), (39: 22), and the Prophet ﷺ (5: 15).

The translation of both words will be discussed now. Yusuf Ali translates ضِيَاءً as 'shining glory', and نُورًا as 'a light (of beauty)'. Al-Hilali and Khan's translation is 'a shining thing' and 'a light', Arberry's 'a radiance' and 'a light', Pickthall's 'a splendour' and 'a light', and Shakir's 'a shining brightness' and 'a light', for ضِيَاءً and نُورًا respectively. It seems that 'shining' does not necessarily suggest 'producing light'; it can equally mean 'reflecting

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[837] Ibn Manzu:r, M. M., (1955). *Lisa:n Al-'Arab*. Beirut: Da:r Sa:dir & Da:r Beirut., vol.1, p.112, *Mukhta:r Al-Siha:h*, p. 161, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasi:t*, vol.1, p.546.

[838] See *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasi:t*, vol.1, p.546.

[839] I did this research using the *Sakhr* Holy Qur'an software.

light'[840]. 'Glory' seems to suggest a rather figurative meaning[841], no indication of which can be found in the source text. 'Light', especially when it stands alone as in this translation[842], does not seem to suggest the claimed delicate meaning which the source expression is said to have, namely that the moon only reflects, but not produces light. Yusuf Ali includes the expression 'of beauty', which is an addition. Al-Hilali and Khan's translation uses 'a shining thing' for ضياء, which, it seems, is rather vague. Similarly, it uses 'light' as a translation of نُوراً. Arberry translates ضياء as 'a radiance' and نورا as 'a light'. 'Radiance' suggests producing light, and an expression like 'the radiant sun' is acceptable as literal in English, and gives the meaning of the sun producing light[843]. In Pickthall's translation, 'splendour' is used to refer to the sun's light. It seems that, as was said about 'glory' above, this invokes a figurative meaning not present in the original Arabic text. Shakir's use of 'shining brightness' to translate ضِيَاءً , the sun's light, is no better than Pickthall's. 'Shining', as explained above can mean 'producing light' and 'reflecting light'.

As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned as discussed above, Arberry's translation of ضياء as 'a radiance' is accurate. It reflects the way in which the meaning of this verse has been expanded to suggest that the sun produces light. However, with regard to the moon as reflecting light rather than producing it, while نورا in Arabic may suggest this more clearly,

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[840] See Oxford English Dictionary under 'shine', where among the explanations and examples provided are: "of a heavenly body or an object that is alight: 'To shed beams of bright light, to give out light so as to illuminate..."; "to be bright or resplendent; to gleam, or glitter with reflected light"; "The moon shined bright." Also in Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, the following explanations and examples are given: 'give out or reflect light', 'The moon is shining (through the window).'

[841] Cf. Oxford English Dictionary under 'glory'.

[842] It is to be noted that Arberry also uses 'light' to refer to the light produced by the moon, but the meaning of 'light' in his translation seems to be more oriented towards 'the reflected light', not 'the produced light' as it is contrasted by the reference to the sun's light as 'radiance'. Arberry's translation will be discussed shortly.

[843] Cf. Oxford English Dictionary where the following definitions, explanations, and examples are provided. Under 'radiant': "Sending out rays of light"; "All bodies, whether luminous or non-luminous, are radiants; if they do not radiate light they radiate heat". Under 'radiate': "to emit rays of light"; "Light...as it radiates from luminous bodies directly to our eyes"; "The Sun sends out, or radiates, its light and heat in all directions"; "Stars radiate their heat away..." Under 'radiance': "light shining with diverging rays; hence, brilliant light, vivid brightness, splendour", "When the sun arose the morning star was lost in his radiance".
Cf. also Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary under 'radiant' where the definition 'sending out rays of light' is given with the example: 'the radiant sun'. Under 'radiance', the explanation "warm light shining from sth: the radiance of the sunset" is provided. Also, 'radiant': " giving a warm bright light: The sun was radiant in a clear blue sky."

the English translation 'light' may suggest this only remotely if 'light' is contrasted with 'radiance'. The other translations discussed above seem to either evoke a figurative meaning not originally present, or are too general to make the claimed difference of the two kinds of light sufficiently obvious. However, one may still argue that the scientifically understood implication is far-fetched. This is reasonable, and whether or not a scientific, traditional or metaphorical implication is plausible remains an open question and is left for the reader to judge. Moreover, the understanding that this verse talks about the sun's light and the moon's light using two different lexical items for the purpose of stylistic variation without necessarily suggesting the scientifically claimed expansion of its meaning has not been ruled out in this translation; two English lexical items have been similarly used. What is important from the point of view of translation is that the linguistic meaning should not be neglected. This is a characteristic of semantic translation, which attempts to linguistically report as accurately as possible what the source text says without reading into the translation particular understood implications.

In the following examples some verses in which the Holy Qur'an refers to the sun's light and the moon's light will also be considered to clarify this further.

7.2.2 (25: 61)

﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: Blessed is He Who made constellations in the skies, and placed therein a Lamp and a Moon giving light;

Al-Hilali and Khan: Blessed be He Who has placed in the heaven big stars, and has placed therein a great lamp (sun), and a moon giving light

Arberry: Blessed be He who has set in heaven constellations, and has set among them a lamp, and an illuminating moon.

Pickthall: Blessed be He Who hath placed in the heaven mansions of the stars, and hath placed therein a great lamp and a moon giving light!

Shakir: Blessed is He Who made the constellations in the heavens and made therein a lamp and a shining moon.

This verse has been quoted here to support the discussion in the previous example with regard to the difference between the sun's light and the moon's light. It mentions سراجا and قمرا منيرا. Most Commentators on the Holy Qur'an generally agree that سِرَاجًا – which is linguistically the lamp or the torch that produces light, and is associated with heat, light and flames[844] – is the sun[845], and قمرا منيرا is the moon. However, there are some variations in interpretation with regard to the difference in nature between sun's light and moon's

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[844] See Ibn Manẓu:r's *Lisa:n Al-'Arab*, vol. 2, p. 297. Cf. also Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 9, p. 6.

[845] See Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 226, Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 13, p. 65, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 325, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 6, p. 227, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 374, Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fatḥ Al-Qadi:r* vol. 4, p. 85, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:ḥ Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 19, p. 41, Al-Zamakhshari:'s (d. 528 A. H.) Commentary, vol.3, p.290, Ibn 'aṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.217.

light which resulted in describing the sun as سِرَاجًا and the moon as منيرا.[846] For example, Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, (vol. 6, p. 99) explains that because the sun's light is associated with its immense heat, the sun is described as سراجا. By contrast, the moon is referred to with the word نورا because its light is not associated with heat. Ibn Kathi:r (v. 3, p.325) explains that سراجا refers to the sun which is likened to the lamp illuminating the cosmos. This is a figurative explanation which echoes the suggestion put forward by Robinson in his discussion of verse (78: 13), analysed in example 7.2.4 below, in which the sun is also described as سراجا. As for قمرا منيرا, Ibn Kathi:r explains that it is the moon shining with a light other than that of the sun.

In his Commentary on this sura, Qutb[847] groups verses 45-62, in which verse (25: 61) under analysis here appears, under the heading of 'Cosmic signs proving God's Oneness'. With regard to this verse in particular, he[848] explains that سراجا is used as a reference to the sun because it radiates light to the earth and other planets, while the moon is described as قمرا منيرا because it sends its smooth, pleasant light.

From the perspective of translation, whether the difference in reference to the sun's light and the moon's light is for the sake of stylistic variation or for figurative purposes, or due to the fact that sun's light is associated with heat while moon's light is not, this does not change the fact that 'lamp' is an accurate translation of سراجا as far as the linguistic meaning in concerned. Strikingly, all the five translators use 'lamp' as a translation of سراجا. As for the moon's light, there are a number of differences. As far as the linguistic

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[846] Actually, there are some other variations which resulted from two readings of this verse, with سراجا (singular) in one reading, and سُرُجًا (plural) in the second. However, the majority of the commentators have chosen the first reading with سراجا (singular) as the correct one.
[847] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit.vol.5, p.2567.
[848] Ibid., p.2576.

meaning is concerned, منيرا derives from نور, which, as discussed in the previous example, is associated more with reflected light than produced light. As has been discussed in the previous example, traditional commentators differ with regard to the distinction in nature between the sun's light and the moon's light. Although the five translators use 'lamp' as a translation of سراجا, they differ in choosing a translation to refer to the moon's light. The Arabic phrase reads قَمَرًا مُنِيرًا. Yusuf Ali, Al-Hilali and Khan, and Pickthall translate it as 'a moon giving light'. Arberry translates it as 'an illuminating moon' and Shakir as 'a shining moon'. It seems that the expression 'a moon giving light' may suggest that the moon gives off light of its own. 'Illuminating' also seems to suggest that the object it refers to produces light of its own.[849] What remains is Shakir's translation as 'a shining moon'. As discussed in example 7.2.1 (10:5) above, 'shining' does not necessarily suggest 'producing light'; it can equally mean 'reflecting light'. Thus, as far as the linguistic meaning is concerned, it seems that Shakir's translation is more accurate here especially with the sun being referred to as a lamp. This suggests the idea that the moon shines because it reflects the light produced by the great lamp (the sun). This translation respects more the linguistic meaning, and reflects the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to suggest that the sun produces light, while the moon merely reflects the sun's light. However, the other understandings that this verse uses two different lexical items for the purpose of stylistic variation, or that the sun is figuratively referred to as a lamp are still catered for by this translation. Moreover, one may still argue that the scientifically understood implication is not present in the verse and should not be read back into the translation. This is reasonable, and whether or not a scientific, traditional or metaphorical implication is most plausible remains an open question and is left for the reader to judge. What is important as far as translation is concerned is that the linguistic meaning of the

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[849] Cf. Oxford English Dictionary where the following definitions, explanations, and examples are provided. Under 'illuminate': "To light up, give light to." "God made two great lights...And set them in the Firmament of Heaven to illuminate the Earth", "The mosque is illuminated with a vast number of lamps". Under 'illuminated': "Lighted up; made light, luminous, or resplendent", "Light is emitted from every point of a luminous or of an illuminated body."
Cf. also Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary under 'illuminate' where among the meanings given are "provide (something) with light", and the examples "a football pitch illuminated with floodlights" is given. In the dictionary of the World Book Millennium 2000 Encyclopaedia, under 'illuminate', the following explanation and examples are provided: "to light up; make bright. e.g. The room was illuminated by four large lamps. The big searchlight illuminates a spot a mile away."

source text should be reflected as accurately as possible. This is the main characteristic of semantic translation, which takes care to report linguistically what the source text says without imposing on the translation particular understood implications.

7.2.3 (71: 16)

﴿وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: And made the moon a light in their midst, and made the sun as a (Glorious) Lamp?

Al-Hilali and Khan: And has made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a lamp?

Arberry: And set the moon therein for a light, and the sun for a lamp?

Pickthall: And hath made the moon a light therein, and made the sun a lamp?

Shakir: And made the moon therein a light, and made the sun a lamp?

This verse is a part of the reported speech of Noah's argument with his people. He reminds them of God's favours by directing them to contemplate the signs of God in creating the seven heavens well-structured one above another, the moon as a light, and the sun as a lamp. The two verses read:

أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا(15)وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا(16)

"`See ye not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another, "`And made the moon a light in their midst, and made the sun as a (Glorious) Lamp?" It is explained here that the moon is put as a light, and the sun as a lamp, or a torch in 'the midst of the seven heavens'.

The traditional understanding of the difference between the light of the sun and the light of the moon is mainly similar to that which has been discussed in the two verses quoted in examples 7.2.1 and 7.2.2 above.[850] Qutb [851] does not provide any explanation regarding the

[850] The explanation that the moon is put as a light, and the sun as a lamp, or a torch in 'the midst of the seven heavens' calls for some comment. If it is argued that all man's discoveries in space are within the first or

reference to the sun as سراجا and the moon as نورا, but merely repeats the two Qur'anic words.

As the first verse mentions the 'seven heavens' and the second one, analysed in this example, refers to them by the pronoun هن, a brief discussion of this topic in the light of the claim that this may contradict modern science will be attempted here. This is one of the criticisms put to the proponents of scientific exegesis.[852] A number of such issues have been dealt with in section 2.4.6, and the rest have been left to be discussed in the relevant sections of this chapter. Such an attack on the Qur'anic reference to seven heavens may run as follows:

> ...verse 41:12 [another verse that mentions 'seven heavens'] repeats a popular superstition found throughout the Greco-Persian world of the day: the myth of the seven heavens. This was an inherent component of almost every pagan religion, and also of Judaism and Christianity, and a clear marker of cultural borrowing, with no practical scientific meaning. Thus, we clearly see the Koran in error here, and we can easily account for this error in natural, human terms. There is nothing more to be said. Indeed, the "seven heavens" motif is a false count of the solar bodies, and even implies geocentrism, since "the seven heavens" are traditionally delineated by the seven "planets," i.e. the sun, moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. No one yet knew of Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto, much

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lowest heaven, how can this verse be explained as it refers to the moon and the sun being placed in the 'midst of the seven heavens'? Some commentators (e.g. Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 5, p. 394) explain that they are indeed in the lowest heaven, but the reference is made to all the seven heavens because of the linguistic requirements of *mula:basah* (i.e. paying attention to the linguistic effect of the surrounding structure; to be understood here in that reference has already been made in the first verse to the seven heavens, so if reference is made in the second verse to one heaven only, this will take away of the beauty of the style and the strength of the expression). A similar explanation is provided by some Arabic grammarians of the Basran school who explain that what is actually meant is that they are in the first heaven, but the reference is made to all the seven heavens figuratively, as in saying '*'ataitu bani: tami:m*' I went to Bani: Tami:m, where what is actually meant is that I visited some people of the tribe of Bani: Tami:m, but not all of them (Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 29, p. 97). Another explanation is that both the sun and the moon are in the first heaven, but their light reaches up to the seventh heaven, as if there are seven sheets of glass, and a torch is placed beneath them; it will shine through them all (Al-Suyu:ṭi:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 8, p. 291). A similar explanation is that they are in the first heaven, which is enveloped by the remaining heavens, and they are all translucent. Thus, what is in the first heaven can be seen from the seventh heaven (Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 9, p. 39). In his *Kashsha:f* (vol. 4, p. 618), Al-Zamakhshari: (d. 528 A. H.) explains that the sun and the moon are in the first heaven, but because all the seven heavens are structured one above the other, the verse mentions that they are in all of them. He gives the example of saying that 'something is in the twon', while it is not in all of the twon but in a certain place in the twon. Such remarks question the feasibility of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an, at least in some of the verses.

[851] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.6, p.3714.

[852] See section 2.4.6.

> less the asteroid belt. Nor did anyone yet know that the moon is the only body that actually orbits the earth, and that the sun doesn't orbit at all, and thus neither should be classified with the other planets.[853]

This attack may be challenged by some proponents of scientific exegesis by explaining that it is clearly based on a mistaken equation of 'heaven' with 'orbit'. Referring to the topic of the seven heavens, Al-Sha'ra:wi: criticizes the explanation that it refers to the seven planets known in ancient times, or to their orbits in addition to the orbits of other stars and planets. The Qur'an states that all the stars and planets that man has been able to observe are within the lower heaven.[854] Another explanation of 'seven heavens' is suggested by Al-Ju:hari:[855], who believes that the number of heavens should not be exactly seven, it can be more. For him, it does not matter whether they are seven heavens or a thousand ones, for what is actually important is the fact that Allah is their Creator. Al-Ru:mi:[856] comments that it seems that Al-Ju:hari: denied the literal meaning of 'seven' because he did not distinguish between 'heavens' and 'orbits' of the celestial bodies. Al-Ru:mi: goes on to explain that there are many verses in the Holy Qur'an stating that the number of heavens is 'seven'. Therefore, 'seven heavens' should not be interpreted in a way that is not supported by the evident literal meaning. Moreover, modern science has not been able to recognize the reality of these heavens, as astronomy is still in the very early stages.[857] Some other advocates interpret the seven heavens in terms of the layers of the atmosphere: (Troposphere, Stratosphere, Ozonosphere, Mesosphere, Thermosphere, Ionosphere, and Exosphere)[858]. However, in many verses it is stated that the celestial bodies are located in the first or lowest heaven: ﴿ فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ وَأَوْحَى فِي كُلِّ سَمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ﴾ "So He completed them as seven firmaments in two Days and He assigned to each heaven its duty and command. And We adorned the lower heaven with lights". (41: 12). A more reasonable explanation would be that the 'seven heavens' may be understood literally as referring to seven heavens of which man has only a humble and limited knowledge of the

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[853] http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/islam.html
[854] Al-Sha'ra:wi:, M. M., (1988), Op. Cit.p. 272, 3.
[855] Quoted in Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, p. 664.
[856] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit., vol.2, p. 667.
[857] Ibid., p.668.
[858] Yahya, H., (2001), Op. Cit. p.30.

first one السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا 'the lower heaven'. All man's discoveries in space, different galaxies that he was able to observe, etc. are within the first heaven only. The present and projected future state of scientific or cosmological knowledge cannot reach beyond the limits of the first heaven. In other words, they may argue that the issue of the seven heavens is far beyond the limits of scientific knowledge in the present time. Sayyid Quṭb[859] explains that the exact meaning of seven heaven is known only to Allah. It can be seven groups of galaxies, or groups of stars each one of which may consist of one hundred million stars. It can be also something else; it can be anything in this huge universe of which man has only a very limited and humble knowledge.

Another way of looking at the 'seven heavens' is to understand this description figuratively as indicating the strong structure of the heavens, especially when contrasted with the reference to the earth as a carpet spread out. Robinson (1996) suggests such an understanding when he refers to the way in which God describes the creation and makes the process resemble the pitching of a bedouin tent: "He spread out the earth as a carpeted floor and pegged it in place with the mountains. Above it, instead of the usual double roof, he erected the seven-fold firmament…"[860]

In this verse, as in the previous example, all the five translators use 'lamp' to translate سِرَاجًا. They use 'a light' as a translation for نُورًا, referring to the moon's light. In Arabic, as already noted, سراج is the lamp or the torch that produces light. It is associated with heat, light and flames[861]. The point of resemblance between the sun and the سراج is obvious. As explained in example 7.2.1 (10:5) above, 'light' seems to be a general term that can refer to both, the produced light as well as the reflected light. However, when it is contrasted in this verse by the reference to the sun's light as that produced by 'a lamp', as was said about Arberry's translation in the previous example, its meaning seems to be more oriented towards reflected light. Moreover, it seems that no word can be used here other than

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[859] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.6, p.3805-6.
[860] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.172.
[861] See Ibn Manẓu:r's *Lisa:n Al-'Arab*, vol. 2, p. 297. Cf. also Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 9, p. 6.

'light'. Therefore, translating سِرَاجًا as 'lamp', and نُوراً as 'a light', as done by all the five translators, is accurate as far as the linguistic meaning is concerned. As has been discussed in the previous example, the linguistic difference between سراجا and نورا analysed above, which is transformed in the target text with سراجا being translated as 'lamp', and نورا as light, reflects the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to suggest that the sun produces light, while the moon merely reflects the sun's light. As explained in the previous example, none of the other possible interpretations are ruled out. References to the moon as نور and the sun as سراج may be understood also figuratively in the sense suggested in the quotation from Robinson above, especially given that in the subsequent verses there is a reference to the earth as a 'carpet spread out'. In his *Kashsha:f* (vol. 4, p. 618), Al-Zamakhshari: (d. 528 A. H.) explains that the sun is referred to as سراجا because its light enables people to see just as the lamp's light enables people who are inside the house to see. He goes on to explain that the sun's light is stronger than the moon's light, and refers also to verse (10: 5) discussed in example 7.2.1 above.

7.2.4 (78: 12-13)

﴿وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا (●) وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: And (have We not) built over you the seven firmaments, (●) And placed (therein) a Light of Splendour?

Al-Hilali and Khan: And We have built above you seven strong (heavens), (●) And have made (therein) a shining lamp (sun).

Arberry: And We have built above you seven strong ones, (●) and We appointed a blazing lamp

Pickthall: And We have built above you seven strong (heavens), (●) And have appointed a dazzling lamp,

Shakir: And We made above you seven strong ones, (●) And We made a shining lamp,

It was understood traditionally that سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا, which is translated in some of the translations quoted above as 'blazing' or 'shining lamp', refers to the sun, and that this description conveys intense heat that is associated with light[862]. Qutb[863] provides ample explanation regarding the Qur'anic reference to the sun as سراجا. He points out that it indicates intense heat that is associated with the sun's produced light.

As in the previous example, references to the seven heavens and the sun described as سراجا can also be understood figuratively. Referring to the Signs section of surah 78, which

[862] Cf. for example Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s Commentary, vol. 5, p. 439, Al-Qurṭubi:'s Commentary, vol. 19, p. 172, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 463, Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 30, p. 4, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 9, p. 87, Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 9, p. 6, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p. 310, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:ḥ Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 30, p. 9, Al-Zamakhshari:'s Commentary, vol.4, p.686, Ibn 'aṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.5, p.424.

[863] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.6, p.3806.

includes the two verses quoted above, Robinson (1996)[864] suggests such an understanding when he refers to the way in which God describes the creation and makes the process resemble the pitching of a bedouin tent: "He spread out the earth as a carpeted floor and pegged it in place with the mountains. Above it, instead of the usual double roof, he erected the seven-fold firmament, from which he suspended the sun, figuratively referred to as a lamp."

Proponents of scientific exegesis suggest expanding the meaning of this verse to reflect the scientific fact that the sun is the source of light and intense heat. Such an explanation is suggested by Bucaille, who translates this verse as "We have built above you seven strong (heavens) and placed a blazing lamp." He then comments on this verse and the other verses discussed in examples 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 above in which the comparison is drawn between the sun's light and the moon's light:

> The blazing lamp is quite obviously the sun. Here the moon is defined as a body that gives light (*munir*) from the same root as *nūr* (the light applied to the Moon). The Sun however is compared to a torch (*sirāj*) or a blazing (*wahhāj*) lamp...It is known that the Sun is a star that generates intense heat and light by its internal combustions, and that the Moon, which does not give off light itself, and is an inert body (on its external layers at least) merely reflects the light received from the Sun. There is nothing in the text of the Qur'an that contradicts what we know today about these two celestial bodies.[865]

As mentioned in examples 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 above, سراج in Arabic is the lamp or the torch that produces light. It is associated with heat, light and flames. Now, the different translations used for this word will be discussed and compared. Except for Yusuf Ali, who translates it as 'a Light of Splendour', the other translations use either 'blazing' or 'shining lamp' as a translation for سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا. Pickthall translates it as 'a dazzling lamp'. 'Shining', although it is associated, especially in certain idioms, with the sun, it is related more to the sun's light and bright than to its heat and flames[866]. On the other hand, 'blazing' is stronger

[864] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.172.
[865] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 155.
[866] See footnote 840 page 268.

and invokes the meaning of intense heat.[867] 'Dazzling' is also related more to light rather than heat[868]. As for Yusuf Ali's translation, which reads 'a Light of Splendour', this invokes a figurative meaning, which is not present in the original Arabic text, as was discussed in his translation of verse (10:5) in example 7.2.1 above, where he uses 'shining glory' to translate ضياء. Moreover, his use of capital letters in 'Light' and 'Splendour' adds to the vagueness and figurativeness of meaning. Thus, translating سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا in this example as 'blazing lamp', which is the translation produced by Arberry and Bucaille, is accurate as far as the linguistic meaning is concerned. It reflects the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to suggest that the sun produces light that is associated with intense heat. However, one may argue that the scientifically understood implication is not present in the verse and favour the figurative meaning as suggested by Robinson above, which is not ruled out by this translation. This is plausible. A translator needs to take the linguistic meaning into consideration and leave it then for the target reader to judge whether or not a scientific, traditional or metaphorical understood implication is possible. This is what concerns us here from the perspective of translation. Reading into the translation any of the understood implications at the expense of the linguistic meaning, as has been discussed in chapter four, is a characteristic of the functional approaches. Such approaches aim to direct the translated text to a particular audience who might be interested in the purposes for which the translation has been produced, for example to highlight the proposed scientific aspects, or the metaphorical characteristics, or to see how the Qur'an is interpreted by a certain school of thought. On the other hand, semantic translation endeavours to linguistically report what the source text says without imposing particular understood implications.

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[867] Cf. Oxford English Dictionary where the following definitions, explanations, and examples are provided. Under 'blaze': "A bright glowing flame or fire", "Brilliant light, brightness, brilliancy", "blazing star", "Clear or full light, as of noon", "to burn with a bright fervent flame", "The streets of London blazed with bonfires" "to shine like flame or fire", "The sun blazing over head". Under 'blazing': "a flaming, burning", "A blazing sun upon a fierce August day."
Cf. also Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary under 'blaze' where among the meanings given are 'bright flame or fire', 'very large (often dangerous) fire'.

[868] Cf. Oxford English Dictionary where the following definitions, explanations, and examples are provided. Under 'dazzle': "Of the eyes: To lose the faculty of distinct and steady vision, *esp.* from gazing at too bright light", "To overpower, confuse, or dim (the vision), *esp.* with excess of brightness", "If you come out of the Dark into a Glaring Light, the eye is dazzled for a time", "Light after a time ceases to dazzle".

7.2.5 (21: 33)

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: It is He Who created the Night and the Day, and the sun and the moon: all (the celestial bodies) swim along, each in its rounded course.

Al-Hilali and Khan: And He it is Who has created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each in an orbit floating.

Arberry: It is He who created the night and the day, the sun and the moon, each swimming in a sky.

Pickthall: And He it is Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. They float, each in an orbit.

Shakir: And He it is Who created the night and the day and the sun and the moon; all (orbs) travel along swiftly in their celestial spheres.

7.2.6 (36: 40)

﴿لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: It is not permitted to the Sun to catch up the Moon, nor can the Night outstrip the Day: each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit (according to Law).

Al-Hilali and Khan: It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit.

Arberry: It behoves not the sun to overtake the moon, neither does the night outstrip the day, each swimming in a sky.

Pickthall: It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor doth the night outstrip the day. They float each in an orbit.

Shakir: Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all float on in a sphere.

Traditional Commentators understood يسبحون to mean يجرون , or يسيرون بسرعة 'to move quickly' as someone who swims in water[869]. Al-Qurṭubi: (vol. 11, p. 286) gives an example in which 'swimming' can be used to describe a movement that does not take place in water. He explains that a swift horse may be described as سابح 'swimmer'. He points out that فلك indicates a circular shape and gives the example of a spinning wheel or a grindstone. The plural form is أفلاك, which refers to the rounded courses of the celestial bodies. Another explanation of فلك is مرج مكفوف a 'restrained wave' or 'restrained sea', in

[869] See page 126. See Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 11, p. 286, & vol. 15, p. 33, Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 17, p.24, & vol. 23, p. 6, Al-Suyu:ṭi:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 5, p. 628, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 7, p. 168, Al-Wa:ḥidi:'s (d. 468 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 2, p. 715, & p. 900, Muja:hid's (d. 104 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 1 p. 410, & vol. 2, p. 535, Ibn 'aṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.454.

which case يسبحون 'swim' is to be understood as referring to the actual swimming of celestial bodies in water which is restrained in space so that it does not 'spill' to the earth.[870] Ibn Kathi:r (v. 3, p.179) also cites the example of a spinning wheel in reference to the explanation of فلك. Similarly, Al-Ṯabari: (v.17, p.22) cites the examples of a spinning wheel and a grindstone in reference to the explanation of فلك. He also mentions that another explanation for فلك is the 'restrained wave'. Some commentators report that the Prophet ﷺ was asked about the sky, and answered that it is a 'restrained wave'.[871] Others report another incident in which this description was given to clouds.[872] Thus, the traditional understanding of the verses referring to the movement of celestial bodies in their orbits was that either they move quickly in their rounded courses, or that they swim in a restrained wave.

In his Commentary, Quṭb[873] groups verses 37-40 of this sura, in which verse (36: 40) under analysis here appears, under the heading of 'God's signs in day, night, and space'. Commenting on this verse, Quṭb[874] explains that there is an orbit for each star and for each planet in which it moves. The movements of these celestial bodies in this huge universe, he goes on to explain, resemble the movements of ships inside a vast sea.

As has been mentioned in section 2.4.6, these verses in the interpretation that the celestial bodies swim in a restrained wave, as explained above, are regarded as contradicting modern science. A logical explanation in the view of some proponents of the possible scientific expansion of the meaning of this verse could be that the word يسبحون does not

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[870] See the references mentioned above in addition to Ibn 'aṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.80.
[871] Al-Suyu:ṭi:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 1, p. 109, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 178.
[872] Al-Ṯabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 27, p.216.
[873] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.5, p.2968.
[874] Ibid., p.2969.

necessarily entail the existence of water.[875] It can be argued that this is not taking place in water but in space. There is another verse which uses يسبحون to refer to the movement of angels in space.[876] Moreover, even if it is assumed that some people traditionally understood this verse as indicating the existence of water, it could be said that it appealed to them according to their limited scientific knowledge, but contained the potential to appeal to modern recipients in a different sense as well.

Proponents of scientific exegesis of these verses explain that according to modern astronomy, each celestial body in the sky (the sun, the moon, the earth, etc.) has an orbit in which it moves by means of self-propelled motion (i.e. a movement produced by the object in question). They argue that this verse refers to this fact. Bucaille (1996) explains that the orbit of the sun is referred to in the Holy Qur'an while it was very difficult to imagine in the past that the sun moves and has an orbit, because "we are so used to seeing our solar system organized around it."[877] Such an understanding has been inferred from the linguistic analysis of two lexical items in the verse, i.e. فلك and يسبحون. A linguistic analysis of these two lexical items and their different translations will be attempted now.

Yusuf Ali translates فلك in (21: 33) as 'rounded course', and in (36: 40) as 'orbit'. Al-Hilali and Khan, and Pickthall use 'orbit' as the translation of فلك in both verses. Arberry translates it as 'sky' in the two verses, while Shakir translates it as 'sphere' in the first verse, and 'celestial spheres' in the second. As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned, 'orbit' is an accurate and straightforward translation of فلك as is found in the dictionaries. 'Sky', which Arberry uses, refers to the whole space in which all these celestial objects

[875] See Ibn Manẓu:r's *Lisa:n Al-'Arab*, vol. 2, p. 470, where it refers to the 'swimming' of a camel in the (mirage) in a desert, and the 'swimming' of a swift horse. Cf. also 'sky diving' in English.
[876] Verse (79: 3), quoted in Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.182.
[877] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 160.

move rather than to the course of any one of them[878]. On the other hand, 'sphere', which Shakir uses, refers, at least in some of its senses, to the object itself rather than to its course.[879] 'Rounded course', which Yusuf Ali uses in (21: 33) is a paraphrase of 'orbit', which he uses in (36: 40) although the structure of the phrase in which this word appears in the two verses is almost identical.

As regards يسبحون, Yusuf Ali translates it as 'swim along' in both verses, introducing in the second verse (36: 40) the word 'just' between two parentheses, perhaps to strengthen the effect of the negation expressed at the first part of the verse. Al-Hilali and Khan basically use 'float' as the translation of يسبحون, but with different structures. In (21: 33), they use the present participle form at the end of the sentence: 'each in an orbit floating'. In (63: 40), they use a sentence with simple present form of the verb: "They all float, each in an orbit". Arberry is more consistent as he uses 'each swimming in a sky' in both verses. Pickthall is also consistent as he translates this phrase in both verses as 'They float each in an orbit.' As for Shakir, he exhibits the most inconsistency among the five translators. He translates this phrase in (21: 33) as "all (orbs) travel along swiftly in their celestial spheres", and in (36: 40) he translates the same phrase as "and all float on in a sphere". Thus, he uses the words 'travel along swiftly' to translate يسبحون in the first verse, and the word 'float' in the second.

As is clear, most translations use either 'swim' or 'float' with different structures. 'Float' is the standard translation of the Arabic word طفى, which is a movement not necessarily

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[878] Cf. Oxford English Dictionary where the following definitions, explanations, and examples are provided. Under 'sky': "the upper region of the air; the heavens", "the apparent arch or vault of heaven, whether covered with cloud or clear and blue; the firmament".
[879] See Oxford English Dictionary under 'sphere'. For example, "A body of a globular or orbicular form; a globe or ball", "The surface or material of a circular object", "In the sense of 'having the form of a sphere', as sphere-crystal".

produced or controlled by the object in question, the opposite of which is غرق 'sink'.[880] On the other hand, يسبحون, with 'swim' as its accurate and straightforward translation from the linguistic perspective, has the meaning of a movement produced and controlled by the object in question and indicates the precision in the movement.[881] On the translation of يسبحون, Bucaille (1996) maintains that there is no mistranslation when translators employ this word's original sense 'to swim'[882]. He explains that this kind of movement is produced by the body in question, when it is in water it is 'to swim', in land it is 'to walk', but it is difficult to find a suitable word to describe this motion when it takes place in space.

Therefore, as far as the linguistic meaning is concerned, 'swim' is an accurate translation of يسبحون, and 'orbit' is an accurate translation of فلك. What remains, however, is choosing a stylistically appropriate way of rendering this verse into English. It seems that using a present participle form of the verb is a good choice to reflect the dynamic meaning suggested by the verse which refers to a continuous movement of these heavenly objects. Thus, a structure containing 'swimming' seems to be sought for here. As quoted above, Arberry employs this structure in his translation, "each swimming in a sky". However, his use of the word 'sky', as discussed above, is not accurate, with 'orbit' being a better choice. Thus, one could suggest 'each swimming in an orbit'. An alternative is to use the word order of Al-Hilali and Khan which reflects the original Arabic word order, and suggest translating this part of the verse as 'each in an orbit swimming'. Using a present participle form of the verb in this way, as in the suggested translation, also maintains a single, short sentence in English, as in the original Arabic. This achieves a better stylistic effect. This becomes clearer when the suggested translation 'each in an orbit swimming' is compared with a rather long, and clumsy renderings composed in some cases of more than one phrase, and interrupted with extra explanations between parentheses, such as "all (the celestial bodies) swim along, each in its rounded course", "They float, each in an orbit",

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[880] See *Mukhta:r Al-Siha:h*, p. 166. Another Arabic word that is synonymous with 'سبح' is 'عام'. Cf. Ibn Manzu:r, M. M., (1955), Op. Cit., vol.12, p.432; *Mukhta:r Al-Siha:h*, p.194.
[881] See page 126.
[882] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 162.

"all (orbs) travel along swiftly in their celestial spheres", or "each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit (according to Law)".

The linguistic characteristics of the lexical items يسبحون and فلك, with 'swim' and 'orbit' as their most accurate translations from the linguistic point of view, as has been discussed above, show how those who propose scientific extension of the meaning of these verses were able to draw such conclusions. However, one may still argue that such scientific implications are not present in the verse, and favour other implications. For example, analysing a larger excerpt of verses in which verse (36: 40) appears, Robinson, as mentioned on page 233, suggests a link between the 'floating' of the celestial bodies in their orbits in this verse and the reference to a ship and drowning in subsequent verses. Although he does not provide a translation of these verses, he seems to suggest translating يسبحون as 'float'. Those who suggest scientific expansion of the meaning of this verse explain that translating يسبحون as 'swim' suits their purposes better, as discussed above. From the linguistic perspective, 'swim' is a more accurate translation than 'float'. The movement of ships on the sea may be referred to by 'traverse', or 'plough', which indicates a movement produced and controlled by the ships.[883] On the other hand, a ship can be said to float in the water even if it does not move.

[883] See Wehr, H. and Cowan, J. M., (1974), Op. Cit. under 'بحر'. Cf. also the two Qur'anic verses referring to the movements of the ships and describing them as مواخر: (16: 14): ﴿ وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ مَوَاخِرَ فِيهِ ﴾, (25: 12):﴿ وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ فِيهِ مَوَاخِرَ ﴾ "and thou seest the ships therein that plough the waves".

7.2.7 (31: 29)

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ ...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: Seest thou not that God merges Night into Day and He merges Day into Night;

Al-Hilali and Khan: See you not (O Muhammad SAW) that Allâh merges the night into the day (i.e. the decrease in the hours of the night are added in the hours of the day), and merges the day into the night (i.e. the decrease in the hours of day are added in the hours of night),

Arberry: Hast thou not seen how that God makes the night to enter into the day, and makes the day to enter into the night.

Pickthall: Hast thou not seen how Allah causeth the night to pass into the day and causeth the day to pass into the night,

Shakir: Do you not see that Allah makes the night to enter into the day, and He makes the day to enter into the night,

Most traditional Commentators understood this verse as referring to the phenomenon of the continuous succession of day and night, and the variation in their lengths with the alternation of the seasons.[884] Qutb[885] also provides a similar explanation. Proponents of scientific exegesis accept this interpretation, but they go a step further. They ascribe this phenomenon to the revolution of the earth around its own axis, which is at an angle of 23.5°, and around the sun[886]. Such proposed implications may or may not be assumed plausible; what concerns us here from the viewpoint of translation is that such understood

[884] See for example Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 56, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 453, Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 21, p.83, Al-Suyu:ti:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 6, p. 529, Al-Zamakhshari:'s (d. 528 A. H.) Commentary, vol.3, p.502, Ibn 'atiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.354.

[885] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit.vol.5, p.2796.

[886] Hammud, M. H., (1992). *Geography as a Clue to Faith*. English translation by Ibrahim, A. S. Jeddah: Al-Thaghr Press. p.14.

implications should not be read back into the translation if the translation is not to be directed to a specific audience.

يُولِجُ in Arabic basically means 'enter'[887]. In some dictionaries this verse is quoted with the explanation "increase the length of one by decreasing the length of the other [i.e. day and night]"[888] The quoted translations vary in translating the Arabic verb يولج. While Yusuf Ali and Al-Hilali and Khan render it as 'merge...into', Arberry and Shakir use 'make...enter into'. Pickthall alone uses 'cause...to pass into'. Apart from inserting an interpretation that limits the meaning to the traditionally understood implication, which is also accepted by proponents of scientific exegesis, as Al-Hilali and Khan do, all the words and structures chosen to translate this phrase are acceptable as far as the linguistic meaning is concerned, as discussed above. However, some structures may be preferred to others on a stylistic basis. Thus, it seems that the structure 'merge...into', which Yusuf Ali and Al-Hilali and Khan use, is stylistically better than the other structures 'make...to enter into...', 'cause...to pass into', because it is more economical; two words are used instead of four. Moreover, this structure is quite common and acceptable in English and gives the intended meaning of 'fade or change gradually'.[889]

Quoting this verse here is important for comparing its translations with the translations of verse (39: 5) analysed in the next example, in which the traditional understanding is similar to that of this verse, but the scientifically understood implication is different.

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[887] See Ibn Manzu:r, M. M., (1955), Op. Cit., vol.2, pp. 399-400, *Mukhta:r Al-Siha:h*, p. 306, *Al-Mu'jam Al-wasi:t'*, vol.2, p. 1055, Wehr, H. and Cowan, J. M., (1974), Op. Cit., under ج و ل, Baalbaki, R., (1988). *Al Mawrid: A Modern Arabic- English Dictionary.* Beirut: Dar el-ilm lil-Malayen., p. 1247.
[888] Ibn Manzu:r, M. M., (1955), Op. Cit., vol.2, p. 400, *Mukhta:r Al-Siha:h*, p. 306,
[889] Cf. Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, under 'merge' where the example, 'Twilight merged into total darkness' is given.

7.2.8 (39: 5)

﴿...يُكَوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ ...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: He makes the Night overlap the Day, and the Day overlap the Night:

Al-Hilali and Khan: He makes the night to go in the day and makes the day to go in the night.

Arberry: wrapping night about the day, and wrapping the day about the night;

Pickthall: He maketh night to succeed day, and He maketh day to succeed night,

Shakir: He makes the night cover the day and makes the day overtake the night,

The most widespread traditional interpretations of verse (39: 5), under discussion in this example, as with verse (31: 29) discussed in the previous example, were that day and night continuously succeed each other, and that their lengths vary with the alternation of the seasons.[890]

Commenting on this verse, Qutb[891] explains that although he is keen not to include references to scientific interpretations in his commentary, the linguistic structure and vocabularies of this verse derive him to consider such an interpretation. He refers to the scientific fact regarding the spherical shape of the earth and its rotation around its own axis

[890] See Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fath Al-Qadi:r*, vol. 4, p. 450, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:h Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 23, p. 238, Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 15, p. 235, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 46, Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 23, p.192, Al-Tha'a:libi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p.48, Al-Suyu:ti:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 7, p. 212, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 7, p. 242, Al-Wa:hidi:'s (d. 468 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 2, p. 929, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p.72, Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 7, p. 163, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p. 47, Al-Zamakhshari:'s (d. 528 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.112, Ibn 'atiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.519.

[891] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit.vol.5, p.3038.

and argues that this is the most accurate interpretation as far as the linguistic structure of this part of the verse is concerned.

Some extreme exponents of the scientific exegesis of this verse argue that when the Holy Qur'an was revealed in the 7th century some mistaken beliefs regarding some scientific issues were current among Arabs as well as among other nations. For example, Yahya (2001)[892] points out that the Arabs had many superstitious and groundless beliefs regarding some natural phenomena. He goes on to explain that due to the limited scientific knowledge they had at the time, and because they lacked the technology to examine the universe and nature, the early Arabs believed in legends inherited from past generations. For example, it was then thought that the world was a flat plane, and that there were high mountains at its both ends. It was thought then that these mountains were pillars that kept the vault of heaven high above. Another proponent of the scientific meaning of this verse writes:

> American astronauts have seen and photographed what happens from their spaceships, especially at a great distance from Earth, e.g. from the Moon. They saw how the Sun permanently lights up (except in the case of an eclipse) the half of the Earth's surface that is facing it, while the other half of the globe is in darkness. The Earth turns on its own axis and the lighting remains the same, so that an area in the form of a half-sphere makes one revolution around the Earth in twenty-four hours while the other half-sphere, that has remained in darkness, makes the same revolution in the same time. This perpetual rotation of night and day is quite clearly described in the Qur'an. It is easy for the human understanding to grasp this notion nowadays because we have the idea of the Sun's (relative) immobility and the Earth's rotation. This process of perpetual coiling, including the interpenetration of one sector by another is expressed in the Qur'an just as if the concept of the Earth's roundness had already been conceived at the time – which was obviously not the case.[893]

However, it has been discussed in section 2.5 that there were many scientifically advanced pre-Islamic civilizations in which many of the scientific facts claimed to be the monopoly of the Qur'an were known; and that there were many channels through which scientific knowledge might have entered Arabia. Some proponents of scientific explanation of the

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[892] Yahya, H., (2001), Op. Cit., pp. 11, 21.
[893] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 163.

Qur'an argue that in verse (39: 5) discussed in this example, the expression 'يُكَوِّرُ' appears in the imperfect, active voice structure, which indicates the occurrence of such an event in the present time.[894] Thus, يُكَوِّرُ here, they argue, clearly means to turn something in circular motion. This explanation can be found in some Arabic dictionaries[895]. This implies the roundness of the earth, a characteristic obviously present in the Arabic verb يكور as it is linked to كرة 'ball'. In some Arabic-English dictionaries, the meaning of يُكَوِّرُ is given as follows: "To roll, roll up, coil, roll something into a ball, to wind (the turban); to make round, ball-shaped, to become round, globular, spherical";[896] "to roll, ball, conglobate, conglomerate, agglomerate".[897] Thus, the spherical, round, or ball-shaped surface is, they go on to argue, clearly present in most of these senses. This is how some proponents of scientific explanation of the Qur'an were able to suggest expanding the meaning of this verse to allude to the spherical shape of the earth.

Traditionally, there was some dispute among exegetes and Arab geographers regarding the shape of the earth, whether round or flat, but this dispute was not mainly related to this verse. It was related to the following verses[898]: (50: 7): ﴿وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا﴾ "And the earth;– We have spread it out"; (13: 3): ﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ﴾ "And it is He Who spread out the earth,"; (20: 53) ﴿الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا﴾; "He Who has made for you the earth like a carpet spread out"; (71: 19): ﴿وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا﴾; " 'And God has made the earth for you as a carpet (spread out),'". Some traditional Commentators believed that these verses confirmed the view that the earth was flat, and criticised those who held the opposite view.[899] Ibn 'aṭiyyah favoured the view that the earth is flat, not round, but did not exclude the possibility that

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[894] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 163, Hammud, M. H., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 8.
[895] Cf. *Al-Mu'jam Al-wasi:ṭ*', vol.2, p. 804, Ibn Manzu:r, M. M., (1955), Op. Cit., vol.5, p. 155.
[896] Wehr, H. and Cowan, J. M., (1974), Op. Cit., كور
[897] Baalbaki, R., (1988), Op. Cit., كَوَّر
[898] The translations provided here are Yusuf Ali's; and intended only as guidance.
[899] See Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 9, p. 280, vol. 10, p. 13.

both senses can be combined[900]. Others explained that these verses referred to expanding the earth in two dimensions: length and width, which also, it seems, suggests that they believed that the earth was flat.[901] the Other Commentators also referred to stretching the earth, but they did not mention that it was in two dimensions.[902] On the other hand, there are other Commentators who saw that the references to the earth in these terms (مد، مددناها، بساطا، مهدا) did not actually contradict the view that the earth was spherical, which Arab geographers held in the Middle Ages.[903] They explained that due to the vast size of the earth, it seemed flat. Besides, wherever one went, it was always flat before one's eyes, and this indicated that it was indeed round. This explanation is also suggested by Al-Ra:zi: in his *mafa:tiḥ al-ghaib*[904]. As mentioned in section 2.4.6, some proponents of the scientific explanation of the Qur'an may find logical explanations with regard to some verses which are believed to contradict science. For example, it may be argued that the Qur'an describes the earth as 'spread out like a carpet', which suggests that the shape of the earth is flat. In reply, they may explain that, as discussed above, another traditional understanding of the relevant verses was that the earth was spherical, because wherever one went it was flat before him. This is the explanation provided by some supporters of scientific exegesis.[905]

Such verses may also be understood metaphorically to suggest that the earth has been made a suitable place for living and stability like a paved, flat surface, or like a spread carpet. Robinson as quoted above, suggests such an understanding when he refers to a group of

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[900] ibn Atiyyah, A. M. A. b. G. l., (2001), Op. Cit. vol.3, p.293.
[901] See Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 316, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 2, p. 501, Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 13, p.96, Al-Suyu:ṭi:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 8, p. 390, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 5, p. 3.
[902] See Al-Wa:ḥidi:'s (d. 468 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 1, p. 565, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p.6, Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 4, p. 302, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 2, p. 209.
[903] See Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fatḥ Al-Qadi:r*, vol. 3, p. 64, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:ḥ Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 13, pp. 90, 91. For further information on the contributions of Arab geographers and astronomers in this field see Hitti, P. K., (1960). *History of the Arabs: from the Earliest Times to the Present*. 7th ed. London: Macmillan & Co Ltd., pp. 375, 570.
[904] Al-Ra:zi:, M. b. U. A.-H. F., (2000). *Mafatih Al-Ghaib*. Beirut: Da:r al-Kutub al-'ilmiyyah.vol. 19, p.3, p. 135.
[905] Al-Sha'ra:wi:, M. M., (1988), Op. Cit. p.92.

verses in which one of the verses mentioned above appears. He comments, "He [God] spread out the earth as a carpeted floor and pegged it in place with the mountains.""[906]

Now, the different translations of this part of the verse يُكَوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ will be analysed and compared. 'Overlap', the word Yusuf Ali uses, means "partly cover something by extending over its edge:..[e.g.] *The tiles on the roof overlap one another.*"[907] The meaning of roundness is not available here. Al-Hilali and Khan use "make ....to go in...". Actually, this translation could be accepted as an attempt to translate the phrase " يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ" discussed above in example 7.2.7 (31: 29), but not in this verse. Although Al-Hilali and Khan provide "merge... into..." as a translation for the phrase in 7.2.7 (31: 29), other suggestions include "make...to enter into..." and "cause...to pass into...", which are close in meaning to "make ....to go in...", the translation suggested by Al-Hilali and Khan for 7.2.8 (39: 5). Arberry's translation which reads "wrapping...about..." is closer to the linguistic meaning of يكور. This is because among the meanings suggested by 'wrap' is 'roundness' when it comes attached to round/around: 'wrap something round/ around: wind or fold.'[908] However, 'wrap something about' may seem a little bit odd in English.[909] Moreover, 'wrap' is associated mostly with the meaning of 'complete enclosure', which does not seem to be present in the verse, as it is not plausible that day completely encloses night or vice versa. Pickthall's translation runs, "make...to succeed...". 'Succeed' in such a context translates straightforwardly back into

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[906] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.172.
[907] See Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary under 'overlap'. See also Oxford English Dictionary under 'overlap': "To lap over; to lie or be situated so as partly to extend over and cover part of something else, to overlie partially", "The upper bill of the parrot is so much hooked, and so much overlaps the lower".
[908] See Oxford English Dictionary under 'wrap'.
[909] The most common forms of this verb are 'wrap up/ round/ around'. Although the structure 'wrap about' appears in many instances in Oxford English Dictionary, it seems that most of the examples presented with this structure date back to the 15th – 17th century. For example: "1588 Shakes. *Tit. A.* iv. ii.27 The old man sends the weapons wrapt about with lines, That wound..to the quick", "C1400 *Rom. Rose* 7368 A large couerechief of threde She wrapped all aboute hir heede.", "1560 Bible *Job* viii. 17 The rotes thereof are wrapped about the fountaine", "1681 T. Flatman *Heraclitus Ridens* No. 35 (1713) I. 228 Well; and Conscience ,..when you have once boil'd it tender in the Pipkin of Reformation, it will wrap about your Finger like a Glove." 'Wrap about' does not appear in Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary.

Arabic as يتبع, 'follow', which is clearly not the ideal translation of يكوّر. Shakir uses two different words to translate يكوّر. For the night, he uses "make...cover..." and for the day, "make...overtake...". 'Overtake' means 'come level with and pass'.[910] This basically contradicts another verse in the Holy Qur'an, (36: 40):

﴿لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ﴾

"It is not permitted to the Sun to catch up the Moon, nor can the Night outstrip the Day: each (just) swims along in (its own) orbit (according to law)."[911] So, how can the day pass the night?

Most of the translations discussed above depend on the traditionally understood implications and commentaries on this verse, namely that day and night continuously succeed each other, and that their lengths vary with the alternation of the seasons. However, this was at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning. This in practice resembles functional approaches in translation theory in which the meaning is expressed in the translation according to a particularly understood implication.

Bucaille[912] suggests translating يُكَوِّرُ as 'to coil'. His translation thus reads, "He coils the night upon the day and He coils the day upon the night". As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned as discussed above, this translation is accurate. It reflects the way in which the meaning of this verse has been expanded to suggest the spherical shape of the earth. Moreover, the understanding that this verse talks about the day and the night following each other has not been ruled out in this translation. However, one may still argue that this is a scientifically understood implication not present in the verse. This remains an open question and is left for the reader to judge. What is important from the point of view of translation is that this should not be read back into the translation at the expense of the basic linguistic meaning. Both understandings can be accommodated by this translation. As already noted, this is a characteristic of semantic translation, which takes care to

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[910] See Oxford English Dictionary under 'overtake': "To come up with (a person or thing going or running in front of one and in the same direction); to come up to in pursuit; to 'catch up'. Now esp. of a motorist: to drive a vehicle past another vehicle travelling in the same direction)."

[911] Yusuf Ali's translation. See example 7.2.6 : (36: 40).

[912] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 163.

linguistically report what the source text says without reading into the translation particular understood implications.

7.2.9 (36: 38)

﴿وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: And the Sun runs his course for a period determined for him;

Al-Hilali and Khan: And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term (appointed),

Arberry: And the sun – it runs to a fixed resting-place;

Pickthall: And the sun runneth on unto a resting-place for him.

Shakir: And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it;

Traditionally, there are two main explanations of this verse.[913] According to one interpretation, it refers to a certain place to which the sun reaches. Under this interpretation, there are a number of views regarding this place. Some Commentators maintain that it is a place under God's Throne at which the sun prostrates itself to God every day. Others say it is the furthest point to which the sun can reach in summer, and the furthest point to which the sun can reach in winter. Some believe that it is the place at which the sun will cease to move at the end of the world. According to the second interpretation, the verse talks about the period of time which the sun spends until its life comes to an end, i.e. until the Judgement Day. Among the views proposed for determining the intended place it seems that the one explaining that it refers to a certain place towards which the sun is running, which it will reach at the end of the world, is the most plausible. This is supported by the second interpretation which refers to the period of time the sun spends. Both interpretations seem acceptable and may be combined. It can be said that the verse refers to a certain point in time and place towards which the sun is heading. Actually,

[913] See Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:h Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 16, p. 33, Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 433, Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 15, p. 27, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 572, 573, Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 23, p.5, Al-Suyu:ṭi:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 7, p. 56, 57, Al-Wa:ḥidi:'s (d. 468 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 2, p. 900, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p.12, Ibn 'aṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.454.

one traditional commentator gives an example which could be taken as supporting this interpretation. This is Al-Baiḍa:wi [914] who gives the example of someone who is travelling towards a certain destination, which he will reach at a certain time. Thus, it is a place reached after a certain period of time. However, it seems that this particular verse refers to the point in place rather than the point in time. This is supported by the use of مستقر, which means, among other things, a certain place.[915] Moreover, there are other verses in which the word مستقر, in other contexts, appears which refer to 'places' rather than 'times'. These are (2: 36), (7: 24), and (6: 98). In addition, there are other verses which refer clearly to the period of time related to the sun's life. These are (13: 2, 31: 29, 35: 13, 39: 5), as is shown in the next example, where the sentence

﴿...وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى...﴾

is repeated in all these verses, with 'إلى اجل' in (31: 29) instead of لأجل.

In his Commentary, Quṭb[916] groups verses 37-40 of this sura, in which verse (36: 38) under analysis here appears, under the heading of 'God's signs in day, night, and space'. With regard to this verse in particular, he explains that the sun rotates around its own axis, while it was believed that it was stationary. He also points out that it moves in particular direction towards a certain place at a speed of 12 miles per second, according to astronomers. However, he explains that the exact location of this place, and the time of the sun's arrival in it is known only to God.

In his discussion of the signs verses, Robinson (1996) includes the verse under discussion in this example among the verses stressing that God makes the sun and the moon pursue a regular course.[917]

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[914] Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 4, pp. 433ff.
[915] Cf. Ibn Manzu:r, M. M., (1955), Op. Cit., vol.5, p.84.
[916] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit.vol.5, p.2968.
[917] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.159.

According to those who propose a scientific extension of the meaning of this verse, it states that the sun runs towards a certain place. Some of them even go further by stating where exactly that place is. Bucaille (1996)[918] explains that according to modern astronomy, the sun is heading towards a fixed place. He continues:

> Modern astronomy has been able to locate it exactly and has even given it a name, the Solar Apex: the solar system is indeed evolving in space towards a point situated in the Constellation of Hereules (*alpha lyrae*) whose exact location is firmly established; it is moving at a speed already ascertained at something in the region of 12 miles per second.

Bucaille translates this verse as "The Sun runs its course to a settled place"[919]

Commenting on the same verse, Hammud (1992) writes:

> It has been established today that the sun ... has more than one movement. It rotates round its own axis... Secondly, the sun together with its Milky Way galaxy, revolves in an orbit; it takes 250,000,000 years to complete a single revolution. Within the Milky Way galaxy, our solar system "runs" as the Qur'anic verse puts it - at a speed of 250 kms per second. Thirdly, astronomers have also recently detected another spiral, movement of the sun together with its own group of heavenly objects. In terms of this movement, the sun (and its group) get farther and farther from the galaxy by 12 miles per second heading towards Orion. The astronomer Shapley, who was able to compute the distance between the sun and the centre of the Milky Way galaxy in 1917, has found out the distance to be 3,00,000,000,000,000,000 kms., and that it revolves in a rotating circle.[920]

Whether it is the Solar Apex or Orion towards which the sun is heading, or whether the two names refer to the same thing, what is important from the point of view of translation is that this should not be read back into the translation of this verse. What is stated here is that the sun is moving towards a certain place, and this is what the translation should report. An analysis and comparison of the five translations will now be attempted. Yusuf Ali translates مستقر as 'a period', Al-Hilali and Khan and Shakir as 'a term'. Arberry and

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[918] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 166.
[919] Ibid., p. 165.
[920] Hammud, M. H., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 18.

Pickthall translate it as 'resting-place'. The translation provided by Bucaille for مستقر is 'settled place'. As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned, 'resting-place' and 'settled place' are accurate because it is more plausible that مستقر refers to a certain place rather than to a period of time, as explained above. Such translations reflect the way in which the meaning of this verse has been expanded to suggest that the sun is moving in its own orbit towards a certain place, which proponents of scientific exegesis have also located and given a name. What is important as far as translation is concerned is that such extra-linguistic implications regarding the exact location and name of this place should be kept outside the translation. As has been discussed on page 56, Sayyid Qutb[921], commenting on this verse, explains that what the Qur'an says, Muslims believe, is a statement of fact regardless of the relative and inconclusive measurements suggested by science. On the other hand, linguistic analysis does not support the view that this verse refers to a period of time rather than a certain place. References to periods of time in this context appear in verses (13: 2, 31: 29, 35: 13, 39: 5), as mentioned above. This is to be discussed in the next example.

[921] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit., vol.6, p.3804.

7.2.10 (13: 2, 35: 13, 39: 5)

﴿...وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي لِأَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: (13: 2): He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law)! Each one runs (its course) for a term appointed.

(35: 13): and He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law): each one runs its course for a term appointed.

(39: 5): He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His law): each one follows a course for a time appointed.

Al-Hilali and Khan: (13: 2): He has subjected the sun and the moon (to continue going round)! Each running (its course) for a term appointed.

(35: 13): And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each runs its course for a term appointed.

(39: 5): And He has subjected the sun and the moon. Each running (on a fixed course) for an appointed term.

Arberry: (13: 2): He subjected the sun and the moon, each one running to a term stated.

(35: 13): And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each of them running to a stated term.

(39: 5): And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each of them running to a stated term.

Pickthall: (13: 2): and compelled the sun and the moon to be of service, each runneth unto an appointed term;

(35: 13): He hath subdued the sun and moon to service. Each runneth unto an appointed term.

(39: 5): and He constraineth the sun and the moon to give service, each running on for an appointed term.

Shakir: (13:2): and He made the sun and the moon subservient (to you); each one pursues its course to an appointed time;

(35: 13): and He has made subservient (to you) the sun and the moon; each one follows its course to an appointed time;

(39: 5): and He has made the sun and the moon subservient; each one runs on to an assigned term;

7.2.11 (31: 29)

﴿...وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي إِلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: He has subjected the sun and the moon (to His Law), each running its course for a term appointed;

Al-Hilali and Khan: and has subjected the sun and the moon, each running its course for a term appointed;

Arberry: And He has subjected the sun and the moon, each of them running to a stated term.

Pickthall: and hath subdued the sun and the moon (to do their work), each running unto an appointed term;

Shakir: and He has made the sun and the moon subservient (to you); each pursues its course till an appointed time;

The verses in example 7.2.10 and 7.2.11 have been quoted to further clarify the discussion which started in example 7.2.9 regarding references to the sun's movement towards a certain place compared to its movement for a certain period of time. Traditional Commentators had two main interpretations of the quoted parts these verses[922]. According

[922] See Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:h Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 13, p. 89, vol. 23, p. 239, Al-Baida:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 351, vol. 3, p. 316, vol. 4, p. 415, and vol. 5, p. 58, Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 9, p. 279, vol. 14, p. 78, vol. 15, p. 235, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 453, vol. 4, p. 47, Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 13, p.95, vol. 21, p. 83, vol. 22, p. 124, vol. 23, p. 192, Al-Suyu:ti:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 4, p. 601, vol. 6, p. 529, vol. 7, p. 14, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 5, p. 3, vol. 7, p. 76, Al-Wa:hidi:'s (d. 468 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 1, p. 564, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p.6, Al-Jala:lai:n's Commentary, p. 606, Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 4, p. 301, vol. 7, p. 163,

to the first interpretation, they refer to the period of time which the sun and the moon spend to complete a full course, i.e. one year for the sun, and one month for the moon. According to the second interpretation, they refer to the period of time which the sun, the moon, and the remaining heavenly objects will continue to exist until the end of the world, i.e. until the Day of Judgement. In his Commentary on verse (35: 13), Ibn ʿaṭiyyah[923] adds another interpretation, which is the total period of daytimes and nighttimes. In all cases, the meaning, contrary to verse (36: 38) discussed in example 7.2.9, clearly refers to a certain period of time.

Quṭb[924] interprets the quoted parts of these verses in similar ways to those discussed above. In his commentary on sura 31, Quṭb[925] groups together verses 2-7, in which verse (13: 2) quoted in example 7.2.10 appears, as showing signs of God's power in heavens, earth and life, and condemning the stance of the unbelievers. Similarly, in his commentary on sura 35, he[926] groups verses 9-14, in which verse (35: 13) appears, as showing God's signs in the universe and one own soul to prove God's Oneness.

Proponents of scientific exegesis have their own explanation of the period of time referred to in these verses. For example, some of them interpret this notion in terms of the estimated lifetime of the sun. Bucaille[927] explains that, according to experts in astrophysics, the sun has a lifetime that is estimated to be 10 billion years. At present, it is roughly 4½ billion years old, and therefore has another 5 ½ billion years to live. What is important here, Bucaille argues, is the notion of evolution. That is, the sun, all the stars and planets, and the universe as a whole, each has a determined age, which will definitely come to an end.[928]

This notion, he argues, is clearly expressed in these verses by the expression أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى,

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Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 2, p. 209, Al-Zamakhshari:'s (d. 528 A. H.) Commentary, vol.3, p.502, Ibn ʿaṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.519, p. 354.

[923] ibn Atiyyah, A. M. A. b. G. l., (2001), Op. Cit. vol.4, p.434.

[924] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.4, p.2045, vol.5, p.2935, p.3038.

[925] Ibid., vol.5, p.2796.

[926] Ibid., vol.5, p.2928.

[927] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 165.

[928] Ibid., p. 166.

which has been translated as 'a term appointed', 'an appointed / stated time/ term'. From the perspective of translation, whether it is this scientifically understood implication that is meant or the traditionally understood implications which range from the period of time which the sun and the moon spend to complete a full course, to that time which they will continue to exist until the end of the world, what is important is that none of these implications should be read back into the translation. As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned according to the above discussion, translating أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى as 'a term appointed', 'an appointed / stated time/ term' is accurate. It reflects the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to suggest that it refers to the lifetime of the sun. However, the traditionally understood implications as discussed above have not been ruled out by such translations. By contrast, translating مستقر in the previous verse as 'a period' or 'a term', which does not respect the linguistic meaning, rules out the claimed scientific expansion of meaning together with another major traditional understanding of this verse as referring to a certain place rather than a period of time. As this thesis argues, reporting linguistically what a certain text says without imposing certain understood implications at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning is what semantic translation endeavours to do. On the other hand, adopting a certain understood implication which may not respect the linguistic meaning is a characteristic of the functional approaches which aim to interpret the message of a certain text according to a particularly understood implication and directing the target text to a particular audience. This does not mean in al circumstances elevating semantic translation and underestimating the functional approaches; there are certain cases where functional translation is more appropriate than semantic translation.[929]

[929] See chapter four for full discussion.

7.2.12 (15: 19)

According to some proponents of scientific exegesis, the creation of mountains passes through three stages which are referred to in a number of Qur'anic verses. These stages are explained by Hammud (1992):

> In 1956 A.D., a group of geomorphologists led by the German geomorphologist Wagner demonstrated that the formation of mountains undergoes the following stages: (a) rocks are sedimented upon sea-bottoms; (b) once the sedimentary rocks are subjected to lateral pressure, they are caused to be erected; (c) the mountains are then firmly fixed into the layers of the earth, with roughly four fifths of the heights of the mountain being fixed inside the earth's crust and the remaining fifth above ground ... and with the mountain being more or less like a peg.[930]

In the Holy Qur'an, he[931] argues, there are some verses referring to the above stages: sedimentation, erection, and 'peg-like' fixing. These verses are to be discussed and their translations analysed and compared next.

(15: 19) ﴿وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ ...﴾

Translations:

> **Yusuf Ali:** And the earth We have spread out (like a carpet); set thereon mountains firm and immovable;
>
> **Al-Hilali and Khan:** And the earth We spread out, and placed therein firm mountains,
>
> **Arberry:** And the earth – We stretched it forth, and cast on it firm mountains,
>
> **Pickthall:** And the earth have We spread out, and placed therein firm hills,
>
> **Shakir:** And the earth – We have spread it forth and made in it firm mountains

[930] Hammud, M. H., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 32.
[931] Ibid.

7.2.13 (50: 7)

﴿وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ ...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: And the earth– We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm,

Al-Hilali and Khan: And the earth!; We have spread it out, and set thereon mountains standing firm,

Arberry: And the earth – We stretched it forth, and cast on it firm mountains,

Pickthall: And the earth have We spread out, and have flung firm hills therein,

Shakir: And the earth, We have made it plain and cast in it mountains

7.2.14 (16: 15)

﴿وَأَلْقَى فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَنْ تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: And He has set up on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you;

Al-Hilali and Khan: And He has affixed into the earth mountains standing firm, lest it should shake with you,

Arberry: And He cast on the earth firm mountains, lest it shake with you,

Pickthall: And He hath cast into the earth firm hills that it quake not with you,

Shakir: And He has cast great mountains in the earth lest it might be convulsed with you,

7.2.15 (13: 3)

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ ...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: And it is He Who spread out the earth, and set thereon mountains standing firm,

Al-Hilali and Khan: And it is He Who spread out the earth, and placed therein firm mountains

Arberry: It is He Who stretched out the earth and set therein firm mountains

Pickthall: And He it is Who spread out the earth and placed therein firm hills

Shakir: And He it is Who spread the earth and made in it firm mountains

Proponents of scientific exegesis depend on the linguistic meanings of certain lexical items that appear in the above cited verses and relate these to the findings of modern science. They draw a distinction in linguistic meaning between أَلْقَىٰ/أَلْقَيْنَا on the one hand, and جَعَلَ on the other. The majority of Traditional Commentators did not draw this distinction, and understood all the four verses to simply mean that رواسي are the mountains which were firmly fixed upon the earth's surface to keep it firm and stable.[932]

[932] See Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fath Al-Qadi:r*, vol. 5, p. 72, Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 365, vol. 5, p. 225, vol. 3, p. 390, and vol. 3, p. 317; Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 10, p. 13, vol. 9, p. 280; Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 223; Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 14, p.15, vol. 26, p. 151, vol. 14, p. 90, and vol. 13, p. 96; Al-Tha'a:libi:'s Commentary, vol. 2, p.264; Al-Suyu:ṭi:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 5, p. 118; Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 5, p. 71, and vol. 5, p. 3; Al-Wa:ḥidi:'s (d. 468 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 1, p. 590, and vol. 1, p. 565; Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p.64, vol. 3, p. 6, Al-Zamakhshari:'s Commentary, vol.2, p.598, vol.4, p. 380, Ibn 'aṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.3, p.293, 355, vol.5, p. 157.

Similarly, Qutb[933] does not highlight the difference in meaning between أَلْقَيْنَا/أَلْقَى and جَعَلَ.

He interprets رواسي as the mountains which are fixed in the earth, and refers to their important role in keeping the earth stable and balanced. As explained in example 7.2.10 above, Qutb[934] groups together verses 2-7 of sura 13, in which verse (13: 3) quoted in example 7.2.15 appears, as showing signs of God's power in heavens, earth and life, and condemning the stance of the unbelievers. Similarly, in his commentary on sura 16, he[935] groups verses 1-21, in which verse (16: 15) qutoed in example 7.2.14 appears, as showing some of God's signs in the universe.

It is claimed the first three verses cited above talk about the first stage of mountains formation, as explained above. The Arabic word used to describe this process is أَلْقَى. This description, scientifically oriented exegetes argue, corresponds to the process of sedimentation in which rocks are sedimented. More specifically, sedimentary rocks are formed "when grains of clay, silt, or sand settle in river valleys or on the bottoms of lakes and oceans. Year after year, these minerals collect and form broad, flat layers called beds or strata."[936] Thus, the process of settling grains of clay, silt, or sand in river valleys or on the bottoms of lakes and oceans is believed to be referred to by the word أَلْقَى. In the last verse, جَعَلَ is used. This, it is claimed, is a general reference to the process of forming mountains as a whole.

A linguistic analysis of the lexical items concerned and their translations will now be attempted. أَلْقَى literally means 'to cast, throw, fling, etc.'. جَعَلَ literally means 'to put, set, place, make, etc.'. The English words used to translate these two lexical items are: 'set', 'placed', 'cast', 'made', 'flung', and 'affixed'. Yusuf Ali uses 'set' in (15: 19) and (50: 7)

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[933] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.4, p.2045.
[934] Ibid., p.2044.
[935] Ibid., p.2157.
[936] World Book Millennium 2000 Encyclopaedia, under 'sedimentary rock'.

in which أَلْقَيْنَا appears, while he uses 'set up' to translate ألقى in (16: 15). In (13: 3), in which جَعَلَ appears instead of أَلْقَى , he also uses 'set'. Al-Hilali and Khan use 'placed' in (15: 19), 'set' in (50: 7), 'affixed' in (16: 15), and 'placed' to translate جَعَلَ in (13: 3). Arberry is more consistent than the other translators as he uses 'cast' in all the verses in which أَلْقَى/ أَلْقَيْنَا appear, while he uses 'set' to translate جَعَلَ in verse (13: 3). Pickthall uses 'placed' in (15: 19), 'flung' in (50: 7), 'cast' in (16: 15), and 'placed' again in (13: 3). Shakir uses 'made' in (15: 19) and (50: 7), 'cast' in (16: 15), and he again uses 'made' in (13: 3). Although the same word أَلْقَى or a variant form of it أَلْقَيْنَا appears in three verses, various words have been used by different translators to translate it, as is clear above. Moreover, sometimes the second word جَعَلَ, although its literal meaning is completely different from أَلْقَى, is translated by the same word used to translate أَلْقَى. As explained above, أَلْقَى is claimed to refer to the stage of sedimentation in which grains of clay, silt, or sand are cast upon sea-bottoms. Thus, translating it by a word that does not give its accurate linguistic meaning, such as 'set', 'placed', 'made', etc. will not reflect the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to suggest that it refers to the stage of sedimentation mentioned above. Linguistically, there is a difference in meaning between أَلْقَى and جَعَلَ, which should be reflected in the translation. All the quoted translators, except Arberry, did not, at least in one instance, reflect this distinction. Arberry's translation is the most consistent one as he translates أَلْقَى/ أَلْقَيْنَا as 'cast' in all instances, and جَعَلَ as 'set'. However, he uses 'on' to translate فيها and في, which is not linguistically accurate, because 'on' means على, which may suggest that the mountains are placed over the earth's crust. Proponents of scientific exegesis argue that the findings of modern science that the mountains are deeply embedded in the ground are in agreement with the use of في/ فيها in these verses. They also argue that it has been scientifically proven that most of the mountains' heights are buried under the surface of the earth, which gives the mountains

the shape of pegs, as is mentioned in other verses of the Qur'an.[937] Reference to the shape of mountains will be discussed in example 7.2.18 below. Thus, as far as the linguistic meaning is concerned according to the above discussion, 'cast into' is an accurate translation of أَلْقَىٰ فِي/ أَلْقَيْنَا . It reflects the way in which the meaning of these verses in which this structure appears has been scientifically expanded to suggest that they refer to the stage of sedimentation explained above. Whether this scientifically understood implication is plausible or not remains an open question, and one may still favour the traditional understanding that these verses simply talk about how the mountains were firmly fixed to keep the earth firm and stable. This traditional understanding is not ruled out by this translation.

As regards example 7.2.15 (13: 3), the following observations can be made. With the exception of Yusuf Ali, who uses 'thereon' to translate فِيهَا, all the translators respect the linguistic meaning of فِي and use 'therein' or 'in' to translate this word. As discussed above with regard to translating فِيهَا and فِي in the verses ﴿ وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا ﴾ or ﴿ وَأَلْقَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ ﴾, translating فِيهَا in this verse ﴿ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ ﴾ as 'thereon' as done by Yusuf Ali is not accurate from the linguistic perspective. 'Placed', 'set', or 'made' are used to translate جعل, which are all accurate translations as far as the linguistic meaning is concerned.

In all the above four examples (7.2.12 – 7.2.15), Pickthall's rendering of رواسي, which are the جبال, as 'hills' should be changed to 'mountains' because 'hill' is defined as 'an area of

[937] Ibrahim, I. A., (1997), Op. Cit. p.13.

land that is higher than the land around it, but not as high as a mountain'[938], and translate back into Arabic as تلال not جبال.

[938] See Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary under 'hill'.

7.2.16 (88: 19)

﴿وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: And at the Mountains, how they are fixed firm?

Al-Hilali and Khan: And at the Mountains, how they are rooted and fixed firm?

Arberry: how the mountains were hoisted,

Pickthall: And the hills, how they are set up?

Shakir: And the mountains, how they are firmly fixed,

The traditional understanding of this verse was that the mountains were erected and kept firmly fixed upon the earth's surface so that they do not fall down.[939] As with the verses discussed above, this is to keep the earth firm and stable, and to protect it against shaking and disturbing people's lives.[940]

Proponents of scientific exegesis claim that this verse refers to the second stage of mountains formation, viz. the stage of 'erection' when the sedimentary rocks are subjected to lateral pressure, as discussed above. They have arrived at this suggestion on the basis of the literal meaning of the lexical item نُصِبَتْ which appears in this verse. Among the literal meanings of نصب are: 'to raise, erect, set up, put up, to pitch (a tent), to hoist (a flag)...'[941]

This word has been translated in different ways. Yusuf Ali translates it as 'are fixed firm',

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[939] Ibn 'aṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.5, p.475.

[940] See Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 20, p. 36, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 504, Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary vol. 30, p.165, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 480, Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fatḥ Al-Qadi:r*, vol. 5, p. 431, Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 9, p. 170, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p. 335, Al-Zamakhshari:'s Commentary, vol.4, p.745.

[941] See Baalbaki, R., (1988), Op. Cit. and Wehr, H. and Cowan, J. M., (1974), Op. Cit. under 'نصب'.

Al-Hilali and Khan as 'are rooted and fixed firm', Arberry as 'were hoisted', Pickthall as 'are set up', Shakir as 'are firmly fixed'. Only two translations can be said to respect the literal meaning suggested by the Arabic word نُصِبَتْ. These are Arberry's and Pickthall's.

However, 'hoist', which Arberry uses, suggests 'raising something by means of ropes, special apparatus, etc.: hoist a flag, the sails...'.[942] Bucaille (1996)[943] provides a translation which reads: "... the mountains, how they have been pitched (like a tent)." As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned according to the above discussion, both Pickthall's and Bucaille's translation are accurate. However, as in his translation of رواسي in examples 7.2.12 – 7.2.15, Pickthall's rendering of جبال as 'hills' should be changed to 'mountains' because 'hill' is defined as 'an area of land that is higher than the land around it, but not as high as a mountain'[944], and translate back into Arabic as تلال not جبال. One may initially suggest that the inserted explanation between parentheses 'like a tent' which is found in Bucaille's translation seems to be unnecessary. However, this explanation distinguishes this sense of 'pitch' from 'pitch' in the sense of 'throw'[945], which is present in examples 7.2.12 – 7.2.14 discussed above, where it was suggested that the Arabic words 'ألقى' and 'ألقينا' are better rendered as 'cast'. One, however, would suggest using the past form of the verb rather than the present or present perfect, because the verse talks about an event that took place in the past and uses the past form of the verb in the Arabic text. Thus, 'were set up/ were pitched (like a tent)' are accurate translations of نُصِبَتْ as far as the linguistic meaning is concerned. They reflect the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to suggest that it refers to the second stage of mountains formation. However, the traditional understanding that this verse talks about God's beneficence in creating the mountains and erecting them as firmly fixed upon the earth's

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[942] See Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary under 'hoist'. Among the explanations and examples provided under 'hoist' in Oxford English Dictionary are: "to raise aloft; to set or put up; to place on high", "esp. a flag, colours, or the like", "English vessels hoisted the flag of the States for a dash at the Spanish traders", "to raise by means of tackle or other mechanical appliance".
[943] Bucaille, M., (1996), Op. Cit., p. 181.
[944] See Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary under 'hill'.
[945] I owe this remark to James Dickins.

surface so that they do not fall down in order to keep the earth stable is also still present in these translations. Of the two translations suggested above, 'were set up/ were pitched (like a tent)', one may favour the second one as it also suggests another implication related to the natural and cultural world of the first recipients, especially when looking at the group of verses in which this verse appears as a structural whole. That is to say, this group includes four verses pointing to some of God's signs that were particularly relevant to the first recipients of the Qur'an in seventh-century Arabia:

﴿أَفَلَا يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَى الْإِبِلِ كَيْفَ خُلِقَتْ(17)وَإِلَى السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ رُفِعَتْ(18)وَإِلَى الْجِبَالِ كَيْفَ نُصِبَتْ(19)وَإِلَى الْأَرْضِ كَيْفَ سُطِحَتْ (20)﴾

"Do they not look at the Camels, how they are made? And at the Sky, how it is raised high? And at the Mountains, how they are fixed firm? And at the Earth, how it is spread out?" (88: 17-20)[946]. Thus, people then might have drawn a figurative link between the erection of mountains and the erection of a tent. Robinson (1996) includes this group of verses under the heading of third-person signs controversies.[947]

In his Commentary, Qutb[948] groups the same verses 17-20 of this sura, in which verse (88: 19) under analysis here appears, under the heading of 'an invitation to contemplate God's signs in the universe'. He explains that these four short verses join together the boundaries of the world of the Arabs – the first people to be addressed by the Qur'an. Commenting on the image of the universe portrayed in these verses, he writes, "The scene portrayed includes the elevated heaven and the out stretched earth. Across such a boundless horizon stand the mountains. They are not described as firmly-rooted, but "hoisted". The camels also stand with their upright humps. It is a majestic scene, vast and infinite, with merely two horizontal lines and two vertical ones."[949] Thus, he relates the use of the word نُصِبَتْ in this verse rather than أَلْقَى or أَرْسَاهَا to the scene as a whole portrayed in this group of verses.

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[946] Yusuf Ali's translation.
[947] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.112. See page 230 for more details.
[948] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.6, p.3898.
[949] Qutb, S., (1979). *In the shade of the Qur'an.* London: MWH.vol.30, p.151.

The remaining three translations use either 'fixed firm' or 'firmly fixed'. These are the same words used in four translations of the verse discussed in the next example although the Arabic word that appears there, أَرْسَاهَا, differs in meaning from نُصِبَتْ.

7.2.17 (79: 32)

﴿وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَاهَا﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: And the mountains hath He firmly fixed;

Al-Hilali and Khan: And the mountains He has fixed firmly;

Arberry: And the mountains He set firm,

Pickthall: And He made fast the hills,

Shakir: And the mountains, He made them firm,

Quoting this verse is important to make the contrast in meaning between أَرْسَاهَا and نُصِبَتْ, discussed in the previous example, with regard to translation clearer. All traditional Commentators agree that this verse refers to the great benefit of the mountains in keeping the earth stable and balanced as they have been firmly fixed in the earth.[950]

Qutb[951] includes verses 27-33 of this sura, of which verse (79: 32) is discussed here, under the heading of 'some of God's signs in heavens and earth'. With regard to this verse in particular, he[952] connects it with the verses preceding it and explains that the reference to setting the mountains firm is a result of the shaping of the surface of the earth.

Proponents of scientific exegesis, as explained in the above quotation from Hammud, claim that this verse refers to the third stage of mountains formation in which the

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[950] See for example Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fath Al-Qadi:r*, vol. 5, p. 379, Al-Baidа:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 5, p. 449, Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 19, p. 205, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 1, p. 69, vol. 2, p. 566, vol. 4, p. 469, Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 30, p.47, Al-Suyu:ti:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 8, p. 411, Al-Jala:lai:n's Commentary, p. 790, Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 9, p. 23, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p. 315, Al-Zamakhshari:'s Commentary, vol.4, p.697, Ibn 'atiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.5, p.434.

[951] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.6, p.3816.

[952] Ibid.

mountains are firmly fixed inside the layers of the earth, with roughly four fifths of the heights of the mountain being fixed inside the earth's crust and the remaining fifth above ground. This results in the mountain being looks like a peg. The reference to the shape of the mountain will be considered in the next example.

The word أَرْسَاهَا is driven from رسو, which literary means 'to be firm, stable, steady, fixed, firmly established'.[953] All the translations provided for this word are within the boundaries of this meaning; preferring one translation to another, therefore, remains a matter of stylistic choice. However, 'fast', which Pickthall uses, may get confused with the other homonymous[954] word 'fast' meaning 'quick'. Moreover, as explained in the above examples, Pickthall's rendering of الجبال, as 'hills' should be changed to 'mountains'. Thus it can be said that both the traditional understanding and the claimed scientific expansion of the meaning of this verse are catered for in the translations provided. This is because they respect the linguistic meaning of the lexical item أَرْسَاهَا, which has not been skewed beyond its literal meaning to reflect certain understood implications. This is a characteristic of semantic translation in which the linguistic meaning is reported in the target text without reading into the translation a certain understood implication at the expense of this more obvious linguistic meaning.

[953] See Baalbaki, R., (1988), Op. Cit. under 'رسي', Wehr, H. and Cowan, J. M., (1974), Op. Cit. under 'رسو'.
[954] See Crystal, D., (1991), Op. Cit., p. 167.

7.2.18 (78: 7)

﴿وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: And the mountains as pegs?

Al-Hilali and Khan: And the mountains as pegs?

Arberry: And the mountains as pegs?

Pickthall: And the high hills bulwarks?

Shakir: And the mountains as projections (thereon)?

Traditionally, most Commentators understood the reference to the mountains as pegs as indicating the role mountains play in keeping the earth fixed and stable[955]. Some Commentators gave the example of how a tent's pegs keep the tent stable[956].

As discussed on page 58, Qutb[957] explains that perhaps people earlier were able to see the mountains as looking like pegs, but now we can have more knowledge of the mountains' important role in keeping the earth balanced and stable. As usual, he groups verses talking about similar issues together under a suitable title. Here, he describes verses 6-16 as reminding those who deny Resurrection of some of the Signs of God's power and beneficence.

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[955] See Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fath Al-Qadi:r*, vol. 5, p. 364, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:h Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 30, p. 6, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 463, Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 30, p.3, Al-Suyu:ti:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 8, p. 390, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p.436, Al-Jala:lai:n's Commentary, p. 787, Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 9, p. 5, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p. 310, Ibn 'atiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.5, p.424.

[956] See Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fath Al-Qadi:r*, vol. 5, p. 364, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:h Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 30, p. 6, Al-Jala:lai:n's Commentary, p. 787.

[957] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit., vol.6, p.3804.

Proponents of scientific exegesis argue that with recent developments in geological science, it has been discovered that the mountains physically look like pegs, because most part of the mountain is buried under the surface of the ground. Ibrahim (1997) quotes Professor Emeritus Frank Press (1982)[958] who explains in his book *Earth* that mountains have underlying roots, which are deeply embedded in the ground. Thus, mountains have a shape like a peg[959]. Commenting on the Qur'anic word that is used to describe this fact, Ibrahim (1997) writes, "...the most suitable word to describe mountains ... is the word 'peg,' since most of a properly set peg is hidden under the surface of the ground."[960] On the role of the mountains as described as pegs in keeping the earth firm, Hammud (1992) writes:

> In view of the rotation and revolution of the earth, there would be considerable turbulence in the earth's crust had it not been for the presence of deeply-rooted continental blocks to counterbalance the earth. Technically speaking, the earth's crust consists of two main layers: (a) Sima, an extremely dense layer constituting sea-bottoms; (b) Sial, a far less dense layer constituting continents (e.g. mountains, plateaus, etc.). Where oceans and continents are adjacent to each other, there would be turbulence due to differences in density between the Sima and the Sial. As a matter of fact, such turbulence does not occur, because the relatively larger blocks of mountain provide a sort of balance to counteract the greater density of the Sima constituting sea bottoms.[961]

Thus, according to the linguistic meaning of the Arabic word أَوْتَادًا as discussed above, translating it as 'bulwarks' as in Pickthall's translation, or 'projections' as in Shakir's translation is not accurate, while 'pegs', as in the remaining three translations, is linguistically an accurate translation. It reflects the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to suggest that it goes in line with the scientific fact explained above. On the other hand, the traditional understanding is still also accommodated by this translation. Moreover, one may still also favour another figurative implication; for example, as in the sense suggested by Robinson (1996)[962] as discussed in example 7.2.4 above. Discussing the Signs section of this sura which includes the verse

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[958] Quoted in Ibrahim, I. A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 11.
[959] Ibid.
[960] Ibrahim, I. A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 13.
[961] Hammud, M. H., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 34.
[962] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.172.

under analysis here, Robinson (1996)[963] refers to the way in which God describes the creation and makes the process resemble the pitching of a bedouin tent: "He spread out the earth as a carpeted floor and pegged it in place with the mountains." Thus, there could be a figurative link between keeping a bedouin's tent stable by the use of pegs, and describing the mountains as pegs that keep the earth stable. In his *Kashsha:f* (vol. 4, p. 685), Al-Zamakhshari: (d. 528 A. H.) also explains that the earth has been pegged in place with the mountains just as the tent's pegs keep the tent stable. Actually, some other traditional Commentators, as mentioned above, gave this example also. All these implications can be accommodated by this translation which respects the linguistic meaning. By contrast, translating أَوْتَادًا as 'bulwarks' or 'projections' will not open the door for all these possible implications. Thus, it is the translation which linguistically reports what the source text says that can achieve most flexibility of meaning if such a property is present in the source text. This is a characteristic of semantic translation. Reading into the translation, for example, the traditionally understood implication that this verse merely refers to the role of mountains in keeping the earth fixed and stable at the expense of the linguistic meaning may result in a translation such as "and kept it firmly stable by means of mountains". It can be said that such a translation is a functional one which is directed towards a certain audience who might be interested in gaining an understanding of how people at a certain time and place interpreted this verse.

Although the mountains are firmly fixed, and they keep the earth stable, they are believed to be actually moving. This is to be discussed in the next example.

[963] Robinson, N., (1996), Op. Cit. p.172.

7.2.19 (27: 88)

﴿وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ صُنْعَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَتْقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: Thou seest the mountains and thinkest them firmly fixed: but they shall pass away as the clouds pass away: (such is) the artistry of God, Who disposes of all things in perfect order.

Al-Hilali and Khan: And you will see the mountains and think them solid, but they shall pass away as the passing away of the clouds. The work of Allah, Who perfected all things,

Arberry: and thou shall see the mountains, that thou supposest fixed, passing by like clouds—God's handiwork, who has created everything very well.

Pickthall: And thou seest the hills thou deemest solid flying with the flight of clouds: the doing of Allah Who perfecteth all things.

Shakir: And you see the mountains, you think them to be solid, and they shall pass away as the passing away of the cloud – the handiwork of Allah Who has made everything thoroughly;

Traditional Commentators understood this verse as referring to an event that will happen in the Hereafter. Many of them explained this verse in the light of the meaning of other verses describing the horrors of the Day of Judgement, when "the mountains will fly hither and thither" (52: 10), "and the mountains shall vanish, as if they were a mirage" (78: 20), "and the mountains will be like carded wool" (101: 5), "And the mountains shall be crumbled to atoms, Becoming dust scattered abroad" (56: 5, 6), "They ask thee concerning the Mountains: say, 'My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust; He will leave them as plains smooth and level; Nothing crooked or curved wilt thou see in their place." (20: 105-107).[964] Thus, they understood this verse to mean that all the mountains will be

[964] Yusuf Ali's translation. See Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 13, p. 242, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 379, Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary vol. 20, p.21, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 6, p. 304, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 432, Al-Jala:lai:n's Commentary, p. 505, Ibn 'aṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.273.

grouped together in preparation for the events described in the other verses explaining what will happen to the mountains in the Hereafter, as quoted above. To explain how the mountains can be moving while man looks at them and thinks that they are not, some of them gave the example of a great army marching forward when observed from a close distance[965]. Others explained this by saying that when huge objects move together, one can hardly observe that they are moving.[966]

Qutb[967] also holds that this verse describes an event in the Hereafter. He explains that this is one of the horrors of the Day of Judgement, when even the firmly fixed mountains will fly like clouds, as if they were terrified by the horrible events of this Day. He[968] includes verses 82-90 of this sura under the title 'scenes from the Day of Judgement'.

Proponents of scientific exegesis have another explanation. They believe that this verse describes a situation in this earthly life, rather than the Hereafter. Commenting on this verse, Ha:fiz[969] explains that Imam Muhammad Ibn 'Ashu:r, who is one of the 20th century Qur'anic exegetes who were interested in the scientific explanation of some verses of the Holy Qur'an, believes that the traditional explanation of this verse as referring to an incident in the Hereafter is not satisfactory. This is because it does not provide a reasonable explanation regarding the likeness of the mountains' movement to the movement of clouds. Moreover, there is no adequate explanation of the concluding part of this verse, which seems to suggest that it refers to the perfection of God's creation in this world, which reads : ﴿ صُنْعَ اللَّهِ الَّذِي أَتْقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ﴾. If this verse, according to their belief, refers to a situation in this earthly life, how is the movement of the mountains explained? The explanation is that mountains do not move by themselves, but because of the rotation of the

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[965] Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 13, p. 242, Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary vol. 20, p.21, Al-Zamakhshari:'s (d. 528 A. H.) Commentary, vol.3, p.387.
[966] Al-Baida:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 280.
[967] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.5, p.2668.
[968] Ibid., p.2666.
[969] Ha:fiz, U., (2000). *Nazrat 'a:lim li Al-'i'ja:z Al-'ilmi: fi: Al-Qur'an.* Al-'i'ja:z Al-'ilmi: 6. Jeddah: The Commission on Scientific Signs in the Qur'an and Sunnah., p. 64.

earth itself. Commenting on this verse and the traditional understanding of its meaning, Ahmad (1998) writes:

> If the mountains are declared to be in constant motion, then the only logical inference to be drawn from this would be that the earth is also rotating along with them. But thanks to the masterly language of the Quran this observation went unnoticed. They [the first recipients of the Holy Qur'an] had the impression, shared with the rest of mankind, that the earth was stationary and it was this false impression that was not obtrusively challenged. If they had read with care the end of the same verse they would have been left with no room for any misunderstanding. It ends with a lasting tribute to the creative faculty of God...[970]

Such an interpretation of this verse was also proposed by Hanafi: Ahmad in 1954, quoted in Jansen (1974)[971]. Jansen (1974) then quotes another writer, Abd al-Wahhâb Hamuda, who criticises such a scientific interpolation on the grounds that the verses preceding and following this verse talk about events in the Hereafter. However, if the whole context (verses 27: 82-93) is taken into consideration, one can see that there are also other verses preceding and following this verse which clearly refer to events and situations in this life. Moreover, some proponents of scientific exegesis explain that verses referring to the events of the Hereafter usually describe terrifying and horrible situations, whereas there is nothing terrifying in this verse if people look at the mountains which are actually moving but they are not aware of their movement. Perhaps this is another reason why some proponents of scientific exegesis suggest such an interpretation. It can be inferred that this scientific explanation is based on the linguistic meaning of two important lexical items, 'جامدة' and 'تَمُرُّ', together with analysing the concluding part of this verse as referring to the perfection of God's creation in this world. The following discussion will linguistically analyse and compare the five translations of this verse, particularly with regard to these two lexical items.

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[970] Ahmad, M. T., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 308.
[971] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.49.

While Arberry translates جامدة as 'fixed', Yusuf Ali uses 'firmly' to qualify 'fixed'. The other three translations use 'solid' as the translation of جامدة. Although 'solid' may be one of the literal meanings of جامد, it does not seem to be a suitable sense of this word in this particular context. This is because it does not make sense to think of the mountains as not 'solid', while they are built up of solid rocks. Moreover, in the verse one can identify a contrasting relationship between two opposing descriptions, viz. one sees the mountains and thinks that they are 'جامدة', but on the contrary, they 'تمر مر السحاب'. Thus, if 'solid/ fixed', 'passing away/ by' are accepted as translations of جامدة and تَمُرُّ respectively, this contrastive element will be obscured. Aeroplanes are solid and they can fly and pass through the air. 'Fixed' is not actually an adequate translation of جامد; it translates back most typically into Arabic as ثابت، راسخ (firm, firmly established, etc.), which is the translation given in the verses quoted above for أرساها والجبال , رواسي, etc.[972] Among the other literal meanings of جامد are: static, stiff, stagnant, hard, dull, rigid.[973] None of these seems to give the intended meaning of this word in this particular context. Translating جامدة as '(firmly) fixed' will bring about an apparent contradiction with the other verses quoted above which assert that the mountains are 'firmly fixed'. It seems that جامد means in this context the opposite of متحرك (moving, movable, mobile, etc.), so perhaps the suitable corresponding expression in English is 'stationary', or 'motionless', which are other literal meaning of this word.[974] Actually, even some traditional Commentators who explain that

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[972] See examples 7.2.12- 7.2.17.

[973] See Baalbaki, R., (1988), Op. Cit., under 'جامد', Wehr, H. and Cowan, J. M., (1974), Op. Cit., under 'جمد'.

[974] Ibid.

what is stated in this verse will take place in the Hereafter interpret حامدة as looking 'standstill', 'stationary', 'motionless'.[975]

'Pass away', which is used as a translation of the Arabic verb تَمُرُّ in three of the translations quoted above, viz. Yusuf Ali, Al-Hilali and Khan, and Shakir, is euphemistic of 'die', thus suggesting, if anything, a figurative meaning not present in the Arabic text. 'Pass by' is a more aureate translation of تَمُرُّ. Moreover, all three translations employ 'shall', which indicates a future reference; thus the translation reads 'shall pass away'. These translations are based on the traditionally understood implications and commentaries on this verse. In a footnote, Yusuf Ali comments on this verse saying, "this is so in the present phase of phenomenal things, both literally and figuratively. There seems nothing more firm or fixed or permanent than the 'eternal hills': yet when the new order of things comes and the new World is brought into being, they will be as flimsy and unsubstantial as clouds."[976]

Thus, according to the above discussion, a translation of this part of the verse as, "and you see the mountains, thinking that they are stationary, yet they pass by like the clouds..." may be suggested. As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned, this translation is accurate. It reflects the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to suggest that mountains are in constant motion in this earthly life, rather than in the Hereafter. On this basis, it has also been suggested that they do not move by themselves, but because of the rotation of the earth itself. However, one may still argue that this is a far-fetched scientifically understood implication that is not present in the verse. This remains to be an open question and is left for the reader to judge. Nevertheless, there is nothing in this translation which rules out the possibility that this event may take place in the Hereafter, as was traditionally assumed. What is important from the point of view of translation is that any understood implication is not read back

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[975] Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 13, p. 242, Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary vol. 20, p.21, Al-Suyu:ṭi:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 6, p. 385, Al-Zamakhshari:'s (d. 528 A. H.) Commentary, vol.3, p.387.
[976] Ali, A. Y., (1983), Op. Cit., p. 998.

into the translation at the expense of the linguistic meaning. This is a characteristic of semantic translation, which takes care to linguistically report what the source text says without reading into the translation particular understood implications. By contrast, the five translations analysed above have read into the translation the traditionally understood implications at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning, and thus have ruled out the claimed scientific expansion. This is a characteristic of functional translation as discussed in a number of the examples analysed above, and in more detail in chapter four.

7.2.20 (24: 40)

﴿أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُجِّيٍّ يَغْشَاهُ مَوْجٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهِ مَوْجٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرَاهَا وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: Or (the Unbelievers' state) is like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed with billow topped by billow, topped by (dark) clouds: depths of darkness, one above another: if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! For any to whom God giveth not light, there is no light!

Al-Hilali and Khan: Or [the state of a disbeliever] is like the darkness in a vast deep sea, overwhelmed with a great wave topped by a great wave, topped by dark clouds, darkness, one above another, if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! And he for whom Allâh has not appointed light, for him there is no light.

Arberry: or they are as shadows upon a sea obscure covered by a billow above which is a billow above which are clouds, shadows piled one upon another; when he puts forth his hand, wellnigh he cannot see it. And to whomsoever God assigns no light, no light has he.

Pickthall: Or as darkness on a vast, abysmal sea. There covereth him a wave, above which is a wave, above which is a cloud. Layer upon layer of darkness. When he holdeth out his hand he scarce can see it. And he for whom Allah hath not appointed light, for him there is no light.

Shakir: Or like utter darkness in the deep sea: there covers it a wave above which is another wave, above which is a cloud, (layers of) utter darkness one above another; when he holds out his hand, he is almost unable to see it; and to whomsoever Allah does not give light, he has no light.

The traditional understanding of this verse was that the state of the unbelievers and their deeds are likened to the phenomenon of darkness found above sea level when there are great waves and clouds covering the sky. This is because they did not believe in God, so all their deeds will not benefit them in the Hereafter. There deeds will be like the phenomenon of a mirrage, as mentioned in the verse preceding this one (24: 39) (see below), or as dark as the type of utter darkness explained in this verse to suggest metaphorically that these

deeds will not be acceptable. Thus, the layers of darkness recognised traditionally refer to the darkness of the sea, the darkness of the waves, and the darkness of the clouds.[977]

Qutb[978] also interprets this verse metaphorically as referring to the state of the unbelievers and their deeds. He draws a link between this verse and verse (24: 35) referring to God as the Light of heavens and earth in that disbelief is like a piece of utter darkeners, isolated from God's Light that fills all the universe.

Proponents of scientific exegesis believe that there are other layers of darkness which can be recognised through the help of modern scientific knowledge. They argue that this is alluded to by this verse as it refers to layers of darkness ظ, i.e. 'in' or 'inside' this type of sea, not merely above sea level.[979] This scientific interpretation runs as follows. Beneath the seawater, there are different layers of brightness, i.e. a few metres under the surface of seawater, there is full light and divers can see clearly without the help of artificial light. Subsequently this brightness gradually dims until it becomes totally dark at the depth of 1000 metres. The scientific explanation of this is that the sunlight can penetrate through seawater until a certain depth after which light cannot go deeper. The sun's light is composed of different lights (the spectrum); each light has its own wavelength and energy. This makes the different lights differ in their ability to travel deep into the seawater to various levels. Thus, red light can travel up to approximately 10 metres deep, orange to a few metres more, yellow light can go a number of metres deeper than orange, and so on. Thus, different depths of darkness are formed in each stage until utter darkness prevails at the depth of 1000 meter.[980] In other words, there is plurality of darkness in such seas. Moreover, proponents of scientific exegesis believe that there is another subtle meaning of

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[977] See Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 12, p. 285, Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 18, p.150, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p.350, Al-Jala:lai:n's Commentary, p. 465, Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 6, p. 50, Al-Zamakhshari:'s (d. 528 A. H.) Commentary, vol.3, p.244, Ibn 'atiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.187.

[978] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.4, p.2521.

[979] Ibrahim, I. A., (1997), Op. Cit. p.20.

[980] Ibid.; *Silsilat Al-'Ija:z Al-'Ilmi: fi: Al-Qur'an Al-Kari:m- Al-Qur'an Wa Al-Bahr* (Series of Scientific Miracles in the Holy Qur'an- The Qur'an and Sea). Al-Turath Centre for Computer Research, Amman.

the plurality of darkness referred to, i.e. the structure of the Arabic word ظُلُمَاتٌ indicates the plural of paucity (used for numbers 3-9), whereas for more than nine ظُلَمْ is used.[981] This refers to the seven layers of darkness caused by the seven lights of the spectrum; the other two are the darkness of the waves and the darkness of the clouds.

It is believed also that there is another scientific fact alluded to in this verse, i.e. in some extremely deep seas, there may be different layers of waves between various bodies of seawater, i.e. the phenomenon of 'internal waves'.[982] Moreover, these bodies of seawater are separated from each other by means of a 'barrier'.[983]

In this verse, four lexical items carry much of the meaning load as discussed above. These are ظُلُمَاتٌ, فِي, لُجِّيٍّ, and مَوْجٌ. Linguistic analysis of these words together with their different translations will now be attempted.

ظُلُمَاتٌ in Arabic, as explained above, is plural. The corresponding word in English, 'darkness' is uncountable. Three translations use singular forms to render either the first occurrence, or both occurrences of ظُلُمَاتٌ. Al-Hilali and Khan use 'darkness' in both cases. Their translation of the part containing the second appearance of ظُلُمَاتٌ, which reads ظُلُمَاتٌ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ, is 'Darkness, one above another'. As is clear, there is a clash between 'darkness' on the one hand, and 'one above another' on the other. Pickthall uses 'darkness' in the first case, and 'layer upon layer of darkness', thus giving a sense of plurality, in the second. Shakir uses 'darkness' qualified by 'utter' for the first, and '(layers of) utter

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[981] According to Al-Zinda:ni:, in a TV interview on Al-Jazi:rah satellite channel on 24. 2. 02, ظلمات is جمع القلّة (plural of paucity) used for the plural 3-9.
[982] Ibrahim, I. A., (1997), Op. Cit. p.21. See also *Silsilat Al-'I'ja:z Al-'Ilmi: fi: Al-Qur'an Al-Kari:m - Al-Qur'an Wa Al-Bahr* (Series of Scientific Miracles in the Holy Qur'an- The Qur'an and Sea), Al-Turath Centre for Computer Research, Amman.
[983] See examples 7.2.21 and 7.2.22.

darkness' for the second. His use of parentheses, however, suggests that the plural form may be done without. Yusuf Ali and Arberry are able to use the plural form. The former uses 'depths of darkness' to translate both occurrences of ظُلُمَاتٌ, while the latter uses 'shadows'. 'Depths of darkness' is a quite acceptable translation[984]. The use of 'layer', as in Pickthall's and Shakir's translations, is also a possible solution to the problem of producing a plural form for 'darkness'. It seems, however, that 'depths of darkness' is better used in the first part of the verse because it coincides better with 'depth of seawater' inside these kinds of deep, fathomless seas. 'Layer upon layer of darkness' can be used in the second part of the verse to achieve the stylistic variation which English favours, and to capture the added meaning suggested by modern science that there are actually countable 'layers' of darkness in such seas.

The second important word to be discussed here is لُجِّيٍّ, because it describes the nature of the sea in which these depths of darkness and waves are found. In Arabic, بَحْرٌ لُجِّيٌّ means 'deep, vast see, fathomless sea (of tremendous depth)'.[985] Yusuf Ali translates this phrase as 'in a vast deep ocean', which is the same translation provided by Al-Hilali and Khan except that the latter use 'sea' instead of 'ocean'. Arberry translates it as 'upon a sea obscure', Pickthall as 'on a vast, abysmal sea', and Shakir as 'in the deep sea'. All these translations, except Arberry's, reflect in one way or the other the notion of the tremendous depth by which this type of sea or ocean is characterised. In Arberry's translation, لُجِّيٌّ is translated as 'obscure', which means in this context 'dark', rather than 'deep'. Moreover, he uses 'upon' to translate في, the third important lexical item. 'Upon' corresponds to على

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[984] Cf. Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary under 'depth', where the example 'depths of darkness' is given. Among the explanations and examples provided under 'depth' in Oxford English Dictionary are: "of physical qualities or conditions, as silence, darkness, colour: Intensity." 'Depth of darkness' appears also in Oxford English Dictionary under 'bulb': "The ray of the electric bulb, so sharply defined that all beyond its pencil falls into depth of darkness".

[985] See Ibn Manẓu:r's *Lisa:n Al-'Arab*, vol. 2, p. 355, *Mukhta:r Al-Siha:h*, p. 247, Baalbaki, R., (1988), Op. Cit., and Wehr, H. and Cowan, J. M., (1974), Op. Cit., under ج.

rather than في, while in the Arabic text, the preposition في is used. Similarly, Pickthall uses 'on' to translate في.

The fourth key word is مَوْج. Yusuf Ali and Arberry use 'billow' to translate this word. Al-Hilali and Khan, Pickthall, and Shakir use 'wave'. All these translations use the singular form while the original Arabic text has موج, which, although its plural form is أمواج, is itself the plural of موجة[986]. The singular form موجة corresponds to the given translations, either 'a billow' or 'a wave'. Referring to the notion of collective plurals in Arabic, Holes (1995) writes:

> There exists a separate category of collective noun which is used...to refer to uncountable nouns or to plural entities...as an undifferentiated group. For example *naxl* is a collective used when reference is made to 'palm-trees' in general, whereas *naxi:l* means, '(particular) palm-trees'. From the collective is derived the instance noun by the suffixation of the feminine ending *-a*, e.g. *naxla* 'a (single) palm-tree'. The same procedure is applicable to (some) uncountable nouns: *laḥm* 'meat' is used to refer to meat as an undifferentiated, mass substance, from which an instance noun *laḥma* 'a piece of meat' is formed. The broken plural form, *luḥu:m,* refers to 'meats' considered as separate categories – beef, lamb, etc.[987]

Similarly, in this example, موج can be considered as the collective plural, the singular of which is derived by the suffixation of the feminine ending *-a*, موجة. The broken plural form أمواج, on the other hand, can be thought of as referring to 'billows / waves' considered as separate categories – Red Sea waves, Mediterranean waves, etc. Thus, according to this linguistic analysis, using the plural form 'billows' or 'waves' as a translation of موج is more accurate. Translating موج as 'waves' seems, however, more appropriate than

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[986] See *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasi:t*, vol.2, p.891.
[987] Holes, C., (1995), Op. Cit., p. 133.

'billows' because the latter is a rather archaic equivalent of 'large wave'[988]. Moreover, it seems to collocate more with smoke, fog in the sense of a moving mass or cloud of smoke, steam, etc. like a wave[989].

According to the above discussion, one could suggest the following translation for this part of the verse:

> "Or as the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, covered by waves above which are waves above which are clouds, layer upon layer of darkness, ...".

As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned according to the above discussion, this translation is accurate. The linguistic meanings of the four key lexical items analysed above have been accounted for in this translation, which reflects the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to suggest that these layers of darkness exist inside this type of sea, where there are also internal waves. However, this translation does not exclude the traditional understanding, and one may still argue that the scientifically understood implication is far-fetched and not present in the verse. As elsewhere, this is left for the reader to judge; what concerns us here is that the linguistic meaning has not been neglected. By contrast, some of the analysed translations do not respect the linguistic meaning in which the plurality of darkness and waves are clearly stated, perhaps to figuratively stress that it is utter darkness. Still, one may highlight another aspect of meaning in this verse, which is the figurative aspect. The situation of the unbelievers is likened to the situation of someone who finds himself engulfed by utter darkness like the type described in this verse. It is not important how many layers of darkness there are, but the fact that it is a situation of complete darkness to the extent that if one stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it. To gain a better understanding, the verse preceding the one discussed in this example may be quoted. It states,

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[988] Cf. Oxford English Dictionary under 'billow'. Among the definitions and explanations given: "The swell on the ocean produced by the wind, or on a river or estuary by the tide", "a great swelling wave of the sea, produced generally by a high wind; but often used as merely = Wave...".
[989] Cf. Oxford English Dictionary: "A great wave of flame, air, sound...".

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْآنُ مَاءً حَتَّى إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا...﴾. 'But the Unbelievers,– their deeds are like a mirage in sandy deserts, which the man parched with thirst mistakes for water; until when he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing...' (Yusuf Ali's translation). Thus, their deeds and state are likened to the phenomenon of a mirage or the phenomenon of darkness in the vast deep sea. However, one may also argue that the state of the unbelievers (immaterial) is likened to the phenomenon of a mirage, or the phenomenon of darkness found in this type of sea (material). This means that it is also plausible to highlight the literal meaning of the second part of each verse which gives a material example for the sake of clarification.

7.2.21 (25: 53)

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَحِجْرًا مَحْجُورًا﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: It is He Who has let free the two bodies of flowing water: one palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter; yet has He made a barrier between them, a partition that is forbidden to be passed.

Al-Hilali and Khan: And it is He Who has let free the two seas (kinds of water), one palatable and sweet, and the other salt and bitter, and He has set a barrier and a complete partition between them.

Arberry: And it is He Who let free forth the two seas, this one sweet, grateful to taste, and this salt, bitter to the tongue, and He set between them a barrier, and a ban forbidden.

Pickthall: And He it is Who hath given independence to the two seas (though they meet); one palatable, sweet, and the other saltish, bitter; and hath set a bar and a forbidding ban between them.

Shakir: And He it is Who has made two seas to flow freely, the one sweet that subdues thirst by its sweetness, and the other salt that burns by its saltness; and between the two He has made a barrier and inviolable obstruction.

7.2.22 (27:61)

﴿...وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا ...﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: and made a separating bar between the two bodies of flowing water?

Al-Hilali and Khan: and has set a barrier between the two seas (of salt and sweet water).

Arberry: and placed a partition between the two seas.

Pickthall: and hath set a barrier between the two seas?

Shakir: and placed between the two seas a barrier.

These two verses mention that there is some kind of barrier between two seas. The interpretation of the notion of the barrier between the two seas has taken different forms. Traditionally, most Commentators understood the first verse as referring to a kind of barrier created by God to separate the salty water from the sweet water, preventing them from getting mixed, although they may mingle.[990] Some of the Commentators gave the example of the Tigris River as it mingled with the salty water of the Arabic Gulf.[991] Although the Tigris River water travelled for many miles inside the seawater, it kept its own characteristics, sweetness, etc.; i.e. the two bodies of water could be distinguished. This was, they explained, a sign of God's mercy so that sweet water could keep its sweetness and be suitable for drinking and watering plants. Other traditional Commentators explained the barrier in terms of a piece of land separating two bodies of

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[990] See Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 224, Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 13, p. 59, Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 19, p.24, Al-Suyu:ṭi:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 6, p. 266, Al-Ṣan'a:ni:'s (d. 211 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 70, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 6, p. 225, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p.373, Al-Zamakhshari:'s (d. 528 A. H.) Commentary, vol.3, p.287, Ibn 'aṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.214.

[991] See Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 224, Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 19, p.25, Al-Suyu:ṭi:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 6, p. 266.

water, i.e. a 'spit'.[992] Most traditional Commentators explained the second verse (27: 61) in terms of the first one, that there existed some kind of barrier between salty and sweet water.[993] However, the verse does not specify the types of seas as the first verse does.

As explained in example 7.2.2, Qutb[994] includes verses 45-62, in which verse (25: 53) analysed here appears, under the heading of 'Cosmic signs proving God's Oneness'. Under a similar title he includes verses 59-64 of sura 27, in which verse (27: 61) discussed here also appears. With regard to these two verses in particular, he[995] explains that both of them refer to a barrier separating the salty water from the sweet water. The explanation he provides for this barrier is that it refers to the fact that riverbeds are always higher than the level of the seawater. In this way, seawater never mingles with river water, which is vital for the life of people because they use it for drinking and watering their crops. On his Commentary on verse (27: 61), he[996]adds that even in rare cases when riverbeds are lower than the level of the seawater, this barrier still exists due to the differences in their density.

Linguistically, بحر in Arabic can mean both sweet as well as salt water. [997] Thus, البحرين in (27:61) could equally mean two salty seas, one body of salty water and another of sweet water, or two bodies of sweet water. On this basis, in addition to the fact that the second verse quoted above does not specify the types of seas as the first one does, proponents of scientific exegesis propose that the barrier can also exist between two salty or two sweet bodies of water, as will be discussed below.

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[992] See Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:h Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 19, p. 34, and Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 323, Ibn 'atiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.4, p.266.

[993] See Al-Baida:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 273, Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 13, p. 222, Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p.20, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 6, p. 295, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p.425, Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fath Al-Qadi:r*, vol. 4, p. 146, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:h Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 20, p. 6, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 371, Al-Wa:hidi:'s (d. 468 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 2, p. 807, Al-Jala:lai:n's Commentary, p. 502, Ibn Al-Jawzi:'s (d. 597 A. H.) *Za:d Al-Masi:r*, vol. 6, p. 186, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 3, p. 219.

[994] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.5, p.2567.

[995] Ibid., p.2572, p.2657.

[996] Ibid., p.2658.

[997] Cf. the Holy Qur'an (25: 53), Ibn Manzu:r's *Lisa:n Al-'Arab*, vol. 4, p. 41.

In the modern age, scholars who support scientific expansion of the meaning of these verses differ in their interpretation of this notion. For example, one interpretation is provided by Ibrahim (1997), who writes:

> Modern Science has discovered that in the places where two different seas meet, there is a barrier between them. This barrier divides the two seas so that each sea has its own temperature, salinity, and density. For example, Mediterranean sea water is warm, saline, and less dense, compared to Atlantic ocean water. When Mediterranean sea water enters the Atlantic over the Gibraltar sill, it moves several hundred kilometers into the Atlantic at a depth of about 1000 meters with its own warm, saline, and less dense characteristics. [998]

Even if the "two seas" refers to the sweet water of rivers, lakes, etc. on the one hand, and sea, and ocean salt water on the other, there is also a barrier between them.[999]

A similar explanation is provided by Hammud who maintains that, "the salt water of seas and oceans and river-water, owing to differences in their density, do not mix together when they are allowed to merge together. Rather, the particles of each kind of water contract, producing tension on the surface of each and thus resulting in the formation of some transparent partition that sets off, though invisibly, one kind from the other."[1000]

Another explanation for the barrier between the two seas is suggested by Shaḥa:tah (1980)[1001]. It is similar to the explanation provided by Quṭb as discussed above. Shaḥa:tah believes that the 'barrier' refers to the fact that riverbeds are always higher than the level of the seawater. In this way, seawater never mingles with river water, which is vital for the life of people because they use it for drinking and watering their crops.

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[998] Ibrahim, I. A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 17.
[999] Ibid., p. 19.
[1000] Hammud, M. H., (1992), Op. Cit. p.44.
[1001] Shaha:tah, A., (1980), Op. Cit., p. 191.

Another extreme scientific explanation is provided by Ya'qu:b Yusuf, quoted in Al-Ru:mi: (1997). Ya'qu:b Yusuf believes that this verse refers to the scientific fact discovered by the joint team of the expedition of Sir John Imri and the Egyptian University. This discovery is that there is a barrier which exists three hundred metres under the sea level. Its height is more than one thousand metres, and is found at the point where the Red Sea water mixes with the Indian Ocean water to the south of Aden.[1002] Al-Ru:mi: criticizes this explanation as being obviously far-fetched.[1003]

Different translators may differ in adopting one interpretation or the other of the nature of this barrier, and some of them comment on this in their footnotes. For example, in his commentary on the first verse, Yusuf Ali (1983)[1004] explains that the two bodies of flowing water refer to the sweet water with rain water as its origin, i.e. rivers, lakes, springs, etc. on one hand, and sea or ocean salt water on the other. He points out that those two bodies of flowing water "in a sense ... do mingle, for there is a regular water-cycle:... [sea, clouds, rain or hail or snow, rivers, and sea again,] and the rivers flow constantly to the sea". Then he explains the 'barrier' as follows: "The laws of gravity are like a barrier or partition set by God, by which the two bodies of water as a whole are always kept apart and distinct." What is important here from the perspective of translation is that reading into the translation a certain understood implication can sometimes be at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning. This is what Al-Hilali and Khan do in their translation of verse (27: 61) as quoted above, which reads: "and has set a barrier between the two seas (of salt and sweet water)." This in effect, as this thesis argues, is a characteristic of the functional approaches to translation in which the meaning of a certain text is interpreted according to a particularly understood implication and the target text is directed accordingly to a particular audience. As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned according to the above discussion, such translations of verse (27: 61) as "and placed a partition/ a barrier between the two seas", "and placed between the two seas a barrier/ a partition" are accurate. They reflect the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to

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[1002] Quoted in Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.628.
[1003] Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.628.
[1004] Ali, A. Y., (1983), Op. Cit., p. 939.

suggest that the barrier can also exist between two salty or two sweet bodies of water, as has been discussed above. However, the traditionally understood implications as discussed above have not been ruled out by such translations. The types of seas and the nature of the barrier can be commented on outside the body of the translation. One may even suggest figurative extensions and propose other extra-linguistic implications. For example, Yusuf Ali in the footnote commenting on both verses quoted above goes further to suggest that there is another figurative meaning for sweet water and salt water. He proposes that sweet water refers to the wholesome spiritual desires of man fed by the rain of God's Revelation, whereas salt water is the bundle of worldly desires, ambitions, passions, and motives of man. Although the two may seem to mingle, they are always distinct, and there is impassable barrier between them.[1005] There are different views as to the extent to which such figurative explanations of some verses of the Holy Qur'an may be legitimate within different schools of thought. However, all this can be discussed outside the boundaries of translation.

[1005] Ali, A. Y., (1983), Op. Cit., pp. 939, 993.

7.2.23 (86: 11)

﴿وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الرَّجْعِ﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: By the Firmament which returns (in its round),

Al-Hilali and Khan: By the sky (having rain clouds) which gives rain, again and again

Arberry: By heaven of the returning rain

Pickthall: By the heaven which giveth the returning rain,

Shakir: I swear by the raingiving heavens,

The main traditional understanding of this verse, upon which most translations depended as is clear in the translations quoted above, is that الرجع means 'rain'. Al-Zamakhshari: explains that المطر is called رجع because it is believed that clouds carry water from the seas and then return it to the earth in the form of rain[1006]. However, some traditional commentators give other possibilities for the meaning of الرجع. For example, among the meanings suggested by Al-Baiḍa:wi [1007] is that the verse talks about the sky as a whole returning to the point from which it started its movement in each course. This meaning is not clearly explained, though. Perhaps this is the interpretation that Yusuf Ali adopts in his translation. Al-Baiḍa:wi also says, as most commentators do, that الرجع could mean 'rain',

[1006] Al-Zamakhshari:'s Commentary, vol.4, p.736.
[1007] Al-Baiḍa:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 5, p. 477.

in which case السماء would mean 'clouds'. Reference to السماء in the sense of 'rain' is also possible in Arabic. It is related that the Prophet (ﷺ) was once in the market. He saw a person selling some food. He put his hand inside the heap of food and found it wet from inside. He asked that person why was the food wet from inside? The man replied, ' أصابته السماء يا رسول الله' (lit. 'The sky hit it')'It got wet in the rain'. The Prophet (ﷺ) then told him to put the wet side on top so that people could see it, and commented that whoever cheated was not to be considered among the Muslims[1008]. Besides 'rain', which is also considered the main meaning of الرجع by Al-Qurtubi:[1009], he also suggests other possible meanings such as 'benefit', 'spring plants', 'the sun and the moon; each rising from a certain point in the sky and returning to the same point', and 'the angels returning to the sky with the records of people's deeds'. Ibn Kathi:r[1010] also refers to 'the stars and the moon returning in the sky to the places from which they started their movements'. Al-Tabari:[1011] and Ibn 'atiyyah[1012] also mention the possible meaning of 'the sun, the moon, and the stars; each rising from a certain point in the sky and returning to the same point'. Although some traditional Commentators refer to some other explanations of the meaning of الرجع as explained above, they agree that the main meaning is 'rain'.

Qutb[1013]also believes that الرجع is the rain which comes from the sky again and again.

However, the reference to the rain is not stated directly in the verse, but by the use of الرجع. This has enabled some proponents of scientific exegesis on the basis of a linguistic analysis of this verse, as will be discussed below, to argue that limiting the meaning to this

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[1008] Muslim, I. A., (1954). *Sahih Muslim*. In: Abdulba:qi:, Muhammad Fu'a d, ed. Beirut: Da:r 'ihya' al-Tura:th al-'arabi., Hadi:th No. 7322, vol.1, p.99.
[1009] Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 20, pp. 10, 11.
[1010] Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 499.
[1011] Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 30, p.148.
[1012] Ibn 'atiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.5, p.466.
[1013] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit.v ol.6, p.3880.

particular understanding only is not plausible. Proponents of scientific exegesis believe that this verse, which comes in the context of an oath, refers to an important characteristic of the sky. This feature is the reflecting function of the sky. In a lecture delivered in English, Professor El-Naggar explains that when a Qur'anic verse comes in the context of an oath, this is a way of directing our attention to the importance of the matter by which the oath is given. He goes on explaining that early commentators understood the meaning of returning in this verse to refer mainly to rain, because it was the most valuable thing that returns from heavens to earth. He believes that this is true from the scientific point of view and provides a scientific explanation of this interpretation in terms of the water-cycle.[1014] However, he also believes that limiting the meaning of this verse to this explanation only is not plausible,[1015] because if it means only 'rain', why does not it say that directly? The reason, he argues, is that there is more than rain in the sky that returns. El-Naggar explains that it has been discovered recently that the atmosphere of the earth has several protective layers that protect life on the surface of the earth. Each of these layers has got the capacity to return down to earth useful forms of matter and energy and expel away from earth harmful forms of matter and energy. El-Naggar gives some examples of the things encompassed by the meaning of 'returning in the sky'. The first form of returning is echo, which is caused by certain physical and chemical characteristics found in the lower atmosphere. Secondly, there are the clouds, which do not send down rain only, but also heat. That is, he goes on to explain, the earth is heated during the daytime by the sun, and most of that energy is absorbed by the rocks of the earth. Once the sun sets, this energy is irradiated once more, and the clouds send 97 per cent of that heat back to earth. Clouds also send away from us excessive, harmful sunrays. Above the clouds there is the ozone layer that expels ultraviolet radiation, which is absolutely lethal to life on earth. This is a way of 'return' to outer space. Above the ozone layer, there is the ionised layer of the atmosphere, which is called the 'ionosphere'. This layer is charged by electrical particles. It sends down to earth radio waves, and repels from us cosmic particles that travel at fantastic speed and could be absolutely destructive to life on earth. Having explained this verse in the light of modern science with all these suggested meanings of الرجع, El-Naggar

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[1014] In a lecture given in Dubai in Dec 2000 (Ramadhan 1421), during the Dubai International Competition for Memorizing the Holy Qur'an.
[1015] See section 5.6.

proposes the following translation: "By the Firmament (or the sky or the heaven) that has got the capacity to return". Hammud (1992)[1016] provides a similar scientific explanation of this verse as discussed above and suggests translating it as, "By the sky which is characterized by sending back."

Thus, it is claimed that all these meanings can be inferred from the Arabic word الرجع, especially when it is recognized that in Arabic, the word سماء does not necessarily mean 'sky' or 'heaven' only, but can also refer to anything that rises above us.[1017] So it can refer to the sky, its different layers, clouds, etc. The meaning of الرجع given in some Arabic-Arabic dictionaries encompasses, among other senses, a wide range of meanings related to returning. For example, returning to life after death[1018], the reply to a letter sent earlier[1019], anything that returns[1020], echo[1021]. Other meanings include benefit (in the general sense of usefulness)[1022], spring plants[1023], manure[1024]. In some Arabic-English dictionaries, the meaning of الرجع is given as 'coming back', 'return', 'echo'[1025]; 'returning', 'coming back', 'going back', 'reversion', 'recurrence'.[1026] There is no mention of the sense 'rain' in these Arabic-English dictionaries. Moreover, ذات in Arabic means 'the possessor of something, whether material (e.g. money: ذو مال) or immaterial (e.g. knowledge, good manners, etc. ذو

[1016] Hammud, M. H., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 48.
[1017] See Ibn Manzu:r's *Lisa:n Al-'Arab*, vol. 14, p. 397, *Mukhta:r Al-Siha:h*, p. 133.
[1018] Ibn Manzu:r, M. M., (1955), Op. Cit., vol.8, p.114; *Mukhta:r Al-Siha:h*, p.99.
[1019] Ibn Manzu:r, M. M., (1955), Op. Cit., vol.8, p.117.
[1020] *Mukhta:r Al-Siha:h*, p.99.
[1021] *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasi:t*, vol.1, p.331.
[1022] Perhaps the meaning of returning is also present here: some money, time or effort is invested in the hope that it returns some benefit.
[1023] Here also the meaning of returning could also be imagined when the leaves of the trees and plants in general are renewed during the spring season.
[1024] Ibn Manzu:r, M. M., (1955), Op. Cit., vol.8, p.120; *Mukhta:r Al-Siha:h*, p.99, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasi:t*, vol.1, p.331.
[1025] Wehr, H. and Cowan, J. M., (1974), Op. Cit., under رجع.
[1026] Baalbaki, R., (1988), Op. Cit., p. 579.

خُلق /علم)'. It is used to form an adjectival structure in Arabic.[1027] Thus, ذات الرجع is a description of the sky, which suggests that the sky itself is characterised by sending back. On the other hand, الرجع can be also understood as a reference to the things which the sky return or reflect. On the basis of these linguistic features, proponents of scientific exegesis have been able to suggest such expansions of the meaning of this verse. Among such things which the sky sends back or reflects to the earth, according to proponents of scientific exegesis as discussed above, are radio waves, heat, echoes, etc., and to outer space are harmful solar rays, ultraviolet radiation, cosmic particles, etc.

Now, a linguistic analysis of the verse, together with an analysis and comparison of the different translations, will be attempted. All the quoted translations except Yusuf Ali's have adopted the traditionally understood implication that الرجع means 'rain'. Yusuf Ali's translation "By the Firmament which returns (in its round)" has not adopted this particular interpretation.[1028] It is a more open translation and the phrase 'which returns' can be understood as a description of the sky. Moreover, it can mean that the sky itself returns (intransitive), or that it returns/sends back things (transitive). However, the insertion 'in its round' is rather confusing, and Yusuf Ali adds a comment in a footnote, which suggests that his translation means that the sky itself as a whole moves and returns. This is not clearly explained, though. On the other hand, the translations suggested by proponents of

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[1027] Ibn Al-Sarra:j, M. A., (1965). *Al-Mu:jaz fi: Al-Nahw*. In: Al-Shshwi:mi:, Mustafa and Salim, Damirji, ed. Beirut: A. Badran & Co., p. 63, Nasr, R., (1967). *The Structure of Arabic from Sound to Sentence*. Beirut: Librairie du Liban., p. 213.

[1028] But Cf. Yusuf Ali's comment (p. 1720) on this verse which suggests that his translation means that the sky itself moves and returns. Although, according to the current astronomical theory, the universe as a whole is moving by expansion continuously as a result of the Big Bang, the meaning of 'returning' is difficult to account for here, unless it is accessed through reference to another theory concerning the end of the universe when its expansion stops at a certain point and it starts going back or returning to its original starting point to end up with the Big Crunch (see Polkinghorne, J., (1998), Op. Cit., p. 23). I believe that this meaning is somewhat far-fetched in this context, especially with the conjunction of the following verse والأرض ذات الصدع, which suggests a reference to a characteristic of the sky as الصدع is a characteristic of the earth or, equally justifiable, something found in the earth, such as 'cracks', etc. Yusuf Ali's comment on this verse runs "The Firmament above is always the same, and yet it performs its diurnal round, smoothly and punctually. So does God's Revelation show forth the Truth, which like a circle is ever true to its centre, which is ever the same, though it revolves through the changing circumstances of our present life."

scientific exegesis such as Hammud's (1992)[1029] "By the sky which is characterized by sending back", or El-Naggar's: "By the Firmament (or the sky or the heaven) that has got the capacity to return" read into the translation the scientifically understood implications and orient the meaning exclusively towards this interpretation. They exclude the traditional interpretations, which were also achieved by virtue of the linguistic structure itself, as الرجع can mean 'rain' in addition to the other possible meanings claimed by proponents of scientific exegesis. To suggest a translation that could possibly reflect the way in which those who suggest scientific expansions of meaning were able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of the linguistic characteristics of this verse as discussed above, the following translation may be proposed, "By the returning sky". As far as the linguistic meaning is concerned according to the above discussion, this is an accurate translation and a more flexible one. It may, although remotely, allude to the traditionally understood meaning of 'rain'. This is based on the fact that سماء in Arabic can also refer to clouds, just as 'skies' in English may refer to weather and climate. A footnote may be added to explain the various shades of meaning and justify the choice of this translation with regard to the difficulties involved. This translation keeps the ambiguity which الرجع suggests in the ST, as it can be either a property of the sky itself or an object in the sky (see above). So, the translation 'the returning sky' can be understood as that which itself returns (intransitive), or that which returns/reflects things (transitive). Moreover, the present participle structure suggests the dynamic nature of this event as the sky continuously returns (things). Neither the traditionally understood implications nor the scientific ones, which may legitimately be assumed far-fetched, have been read back into this translation; rather, the linguistic meaning has been reflected as accurately as possible. One may also propose that this verse may suggest further figurative extensions.[1030] All these implications may be suggested and discussed outside the body of the translation. Thus, it can be said that the suggested translation adopts the semantic translation approach, while the five published translations and the translations suggested by El-Naggar and Hammud adopt the functional approach, as discussed in the above examples.

[1029] Hammud, M. H., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 48.
[1030] Cf. the comment which Yusuf Ali puts in a footnote (mentioned above).

7.2.24 (86: 12)

﴿وَالْأَرْضِ ذَاتِ الصَّدْعِ﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: And by the Earth which opens out (for the gushing of springs or the sprouting of vegetation),

Al-Hilali and Khan: And the earth which splits (with the growth of trees and plants)

Arberry: by earth splitting with verdure,

Pickthall: And the earth which splitteth (with the growth of trees and plants)

Shakir: And the earth splitting (with plants);

The majority of traditional Commentators interpret this verse as referring to the rupturing of the soil with the growth of plants.[1031] Besides this interpretation, Ibn 'aṭiyyah[1032] presents another one which states that الصدع can refer to all that in the erath of fractures, trences, cracks, etc. He concludes that the second interpretation suits better the explanation that الرجع can mean 'the sun, the moon, and the stars; each rising from a certain point in the sky and returning to the same point', as discussed in the previous example.

[1031] See Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 20, p. 11, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 499, Al-Ṭabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary vol. 30, p.149, Al-Ṣan'a:ni:'s (d. 211 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 3, p. 365, Abu Al-Su'u:d's (d. 951 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 9, p. 142, Al-Wa:ḥidi:'s (d. 468) Commentary, vol. 2, p. 1193, Al-Baghawi:'s (d. 516 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 474, Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fatḥ Al-Qadi:r*, vol. 5, p. 420, Al-Jala:lai:n's Commentary, p. 803, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:ḥ Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 30, p. 100, Al-Zamakhshari:'s Commentary, vol.4, p.736.

[1032] Ibn 'aṭiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.5, pp.466, 467.

Qutb[1033]also believes that الصدع is a reference to the vegetation which splits the earth and springs out. He draws a metaphorical link between the reference to water which pours down from heaven (verse 86: 11) and verdure which springs out from the earth (verse 86: 12) on the one hand, and the reference to the creation of man from emitted sperm, which is described in verse (86: 6) as مَاءٍ دَافِقٍ 'gushing water':

> Water which pours down from heaven and verdure which springs out from the earth, are akin to the water gushing between loins and the breast bones and to the embryo springing out from the darkness of the womb. It is the same life, the same scene, the same movement. It is one system indicating a Maker Who has no competitors. [1034]

El-Naggar[1035] provides an explanation of the first understanding of الصدع, as referring to the rupturing of the soil with the growth of plants, from the scientific point of view. He maintains that when the soil is watered, it expands and bulges upwardly until it thins tremendously. This causes it to crack to allow a free passageway for this tender, gentle green shoot coming from within a germinating seed. "If this tender shoot hits one sand particle", he goes on explaining, "it could be destroyed. Without this fracturing of the soil, the earth could have never been suitable for any plantation." This was the traditional understanding of this verse upon which most translations depended as is clear in the translations quoted above. However, El-Naggar argues that nothing in the verse suggests limiting its meaning to this particular understanding, and proposes other interpretations according to the findings of modern science.

El-Naggar[1036] explains that there exist deep faults within the sea bottoms. These faults extend for tens of thousands of kilometres in length, and range in depth between 65 kilometres and 150 kilometres. Hammud[1037] explains that the earth's crust is full of faults

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[1033] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.6, p.3880.
[1034] Qutb, S., (1979). *In the shade of the Qur'an*. London: MWH.vol.30, p.126.
[1035] In a lecture given in Dubai in Dec 2000 (Ramadhan 1421), during the Dubai International Competition for Memorizing the Holy Qur'an.
[1036] In a lecture given in Dubai in Dec 2000 (Ramadhan 1421), during the Dubai International Competition for Memorizing the Holy Qur'an.
[1037] Hammud, M. H., (1992), Op. Cit. p.36.

which, according to geology, lead to the formation of horsts (massive blocks of the earth's crust lying between two faults and being higher than the surrounding land) and grabens (depressions of the earth's crust between two parallel faults). The meaning of this verse, El-Naggar and Hammud suggest, can be expanded to include such interpretations.

As explained in example 7.2.23, when a Qur'anic verse comes in the context of an oath, this is a way of directing our attention to the greatness of the matter by which the oath is given. El-Naggar clarifies the importance of these deep faults:

> Scientists today realise the fact that without these faults the earth could have exploded at the first moment of consolidation of its outer crust as a huge atomic bomb. This is because in the crust, and below the crust there are immense radioactive materials that decay spontaneously, emanating immense heat. Unless that heat finds a safe passageway through which it can be released, it could have exploded the earth.[1038]

El-Naggar concludes his comment on this verse by suggesting the following translation: 'by the earth that is deeply rifted/ faulted/ fractured'.[1039] Among the three suggested words for translating الصَّدْع, one can assume that 'fault' may be chosen because this expression is the one usually used in geological register to refer to such a phenomenon, 'faults in the earth's crust, etc.'[1040] However, 'faulted' has the unfortunate alternative interpretation in English of 'imperfection or flaw', (cf. the collocation 'deeply flawed').[1041] Thus, if this word is used in the translation, it may be misunderstood in this way, especially as many people who would read the translation may not be aware of the geological meaning. Moreover, using 'deeply' will exclude the traditional interpretation that الصدع means the splitting with verdure, which does not necessarily have to be 'deep'. So, one would suggest translating this verse as 'by the fractured earth'. As far as the linguistic meaning is

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[1038] In a lecture given in Dubai in Dec 2000 (Ramadhan 1421), during the Dubai International Competition for Memorizing the Holy Qur'an.
[1039] In a lecture given in Dubai in Dec 2000 (Ramadhan 1421), during the Dubai International Competition for Memorizing the Holy Qur'an.
[1040] See example 7.2.17.
[1041] I owe this remark to James Dickins.

concerned according to the above discussion, this translation is accurate. It reflects the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded to suggest that it can range from the minute fractures of the soil for the germinating seed which are only a few millimetres in length to the deep faults inside the sea bottoms which extend for tens of thousands of kilometres. Thus, contrary to the translation suggested by El-Naggar, "by the earth that is deeply fractured", the traditional understanding has not been ruled out by this translation. On the other hand, all the five translations quoted above read into the translation the traditionally understood implications at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning of the verse. Thus, it can be said that the suggested translation adopts the semantic translation approach, while the five published translations and the translation suggested by El-Naggar adopt the functional approach.

7.2.25 (52: 6)

﴿وَالطُّورِ(●) وَكِتَابٍ مَسْطُورٍ(●) فِي رَقٍّ مَنْشُورٍ(●) وَالْبَيْتِ الْمَعْمُورِ(●) وَالسَّقْفِ الْمَرْفُوعِ (●) وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ(●)﴾

Translations:

Yusuf Ali: By the Mount (of Revelation); (●) By a Decree inscribed. (●) In a Scroll unfolded; (●) By the much-frequented Fane; (●) By the Canopy Raised High; (●) And by the Ocean filled with Swell;

Al-Hilali and Khan: By the Mount; (●) And by the Book Inscribed. (●) In parchment unrolled. (●) And by the Bait-ul-Ma'mûr (the house over the heavens parable to the Ka'bah at Makkah, continuously visited by the angels); (●) And by the roof raised high (i.e. the heaven). (●) And by the sea kept filled (or it will be fire – kindled on the Day of Resurrection). (●)

Arberry: By the Mount and a Book inscribed in a parchment unrolled, by the House inhabited and the roof uplifted and the sea swarming,

Pickthall: By the Mount, (●) And a Scripture inscribed. (●) On fine parchment unrolled, (●) And the House frequented, (●) And the roof exalted, (●) And the sea kept filled, (●)

Shakir: I swear by the Mountain, (●) And the Book written. (●) In an outstretched fine parchment, (●) And the House (Kaaba) that is visited, (●) And the elevated canopy. (●) And the swollen sea. (●)

The verse to be discussed in this example is (52: 6):

﴿وَالْبَحْرِ الْمَسْجُورِ﴾

The reasons for quoting the context in which this verse appears will be explained below. The traditional understanding of this verse will be discussed first. To facilitate the discussion, it is important to start with a linguistic analysis of the word الْمَسْجُورِ.

Linguistically, سجر mainly has two meanings: to fire up, heat (a furnace, an oven, etc.); and to fill up (e.g. a container) with water, to cause water to overflow, etc, with the first

meaning being the most straightforward meaning[1042]. Traditional commentators had two main interpretations of this verse according to the two meanings of الْمَسْجُورِ explained above. With the first meaning, 'to fire up, or heat to red hot', they had to interpret this verse in terms of another verse, because there was an apparent contradiction between سجر with this meaning, and بحر (sea): fire and water are incompatible, so how could the seas be set on fire? The other verse expresses a similar meaning, but in the Hereafter: ﴿وَإِذَا الْبِحَارُ سُجِّرَتْ﴾[1043]. Thus, they interpreted (52: 6) according to the meaning inferred from the second verse (81: 6)[1044]. The second interpretation was according to the other meanings of سجر. Among such meanings are, as mentioned above, 'filled up with water, to cause water to overflow', 'filled up with water and restrained from further encroachment over land'. They interpreted this verse in different ways in terms of these meanings. Chiefly amongst such interpretations one can mention the following: 'a kind of sea under the Throne of God'[1045], 'the restrained sea'[1046], 'the sea filled up with water'[1047], with the last interpretation as the most commonly accepted one.

The interpretation which Qutb[1048]provides for this verse is mainly similar to that recognised traditionally. He explains that it could be 'the sea filled up with water', 'the sea

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[1042] Cf. Baalbaki, R., (1988), Op. Cit., p. 624, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Wasi:t*, vol.1, p.417, Ibn Manzu:r's *Lisa:n Al-'Arab*, vol. 4, p. 345.
[1043] The Holy Qur'an (81: 6).
[1044] Cf. for example Al-Baida:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 5, p. 245, Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 17, p. 61, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 241, Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 27, p.19, Al-Zamakhshari:'s Commentary, vol.4, p.408, Ibn 'atiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.5, p.186.
[1045] Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 17, p. 62, Ibn Kathi:r's (d. 774 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 4, p. 241, Al-Suyu:ti:'s (d. 911 A.H.) *Al-Durr Al-Manthu:r*, vol. 7, p. 629.
[1046] Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 13, p. 65, Al-Tha'a:libi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p.214, Al-Shawka:ni:'s (d. 1250 A. H.) *Fath Al-Qadi:r*, vol. 5, p. 94, Al-'Alu:si:'s (d. 1270 A.H.) *Ru:h Al-Ma'a:ni:*, vol. 27, p. 28, Ibn 'atiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.5, p.186.
[1047] Al-Baida:wi:'s (d. 791 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 5, p. 245, Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 17, p. 61, Al-Tabari:'s (d. 310 A. H.) Commentary, vol. 27, p.19, Al-Zamakhshari:'s Commentary, vol.4, p.408, Ibn 'atiyyah's (d.546 A. H.) Commentary, vol.5, p.186.
[1048] Qutb, S., (1993), Op. Cit. vol.6, p.3393.

which will be fire – kindled on the Day of Resurrection', or another type of sea known only to God.

Proponents of scientific exegesis believe that the context of this verse indicates that it refers to an existing sea, and they propose that this is plausible even with the first and most straightforward meaning of سجر, 'to fire up, or heat to red hot'. This is to be discussed next.

Proponents of scientific exegesis argue that the word المسجور comes in the context of reference to some phenomena in this world not in the Hereafter as was traditionally assumed. To shed some light on this, the context in which this verse appears has been quoted above together with the translations. According to *Silsilat Al-'I'ja:z Al-'Ilmi: fi: Al-Qur'an Al-Kari:m- Al-Qur'an Wa Al-Bahr* (Series of Scientific Miracles in the Holy Qur'an- The Qur'an and Sea)[1049], the context of this verse indicates the existence of this sea now. This is because the Book has already been inscribed, the House is already being visited, and the roof has already been uplifted. Similarly, the sea mentioned in this context refers to an existing sea, and not to the state of seas on the Day of Judgement, as was understood traditionally. Realizing this, they claim, will open the door for a translator to consider the findings of modern science in revealing the correct meaning of such a verse. As agreed by most traditional Commentators, الطور is Mount Sinai on which Prophet Moses (ﷺ) received the revelation from God.[1050] كتاب مسطور, according to the majority of Commentators, is the Holy Qur'an. Some Commentators maintain that it refers to all the Divine Books revealed by God.[1051] As for البيت المعمور, some Commentators explain that it refers to the Ka'aba at the Holy Mosque in Makkah; others say it refers to الضُراح, which is

[1049] Al-Turath Centre for Computer Research, Amman.
[1050] Al-Zar'i:, M., (No date). *Al-Tibya:n fi: 'Aqsa:m Al-Qur'an.* Beirut: Da:r Al-Fikr., p. 165. See also Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 17, p. 58, Al-Tha'a:libi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p. 213, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p. 183.
[1051] Al-Zar'i:, M., (No date), Op. Cit., p. 166. See also Al-Qurtubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 17, p. 59, Al-Tha'a:libi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p.214, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p. 183.

the Holy Mosque in Heaven, parallel to the Holy Mosque in Makkah, and visited by Angels.[1052] السقف المرفوع is the sky.[1053] Thus, all these signs already exist. Similarly, proponents of scientific exegesis argue, البحر المسجور is currently present with the first and most straightforward meaning of سجر, 'to fire up, or heat to red hot'.

Professor Zaghlu:l El-Naggar explains that beneath the oceans and the seas there are faults in the earth's crust. These rifts act as free passageways to release immense quantities of magma that emanate at temperatures of more than 1000 degrees centigrade at the bottom of oceans. In this way, he goes on to explain, the bottoms of these oceans and seas are actually physically set on fire. Neither can the immense quantity of heat evaporate that water completely, nor can the immense quantity of water quench that fire.[1054] Thus, the translation he suggests for this verse is, 'By the sea physically set on fire'.

Now, the different translations provided for this verse in terms of the above discussion will be considered. As is clear from the translations provided for the word المسجور, although there are some differences among them, all the translators take the meaning of 'filled up with water' as the meaning of مسجور. There is a clear dependence in all these translations on the views of traditional commentators. Al-Hilali and Khan present the two most repeated interpretations in the work of the traditional Commentators: 'the sea kept filled', and 'the sea which will be fire – kindled on the Day of Resurrection'. Thus, the obvious meaning of 'fire up, or heating to red hot' is not accounted for in any of these translations except Al-Hilali and Khan's, but they link this meaning to the Hereafter, as traditional commentators do.

[1052] Al-Zar'i:, M., (No date), Op. Cit., p. 167. See also Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 17, pp. 59-60, Al-Tha'a:libi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p.214, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p. 183.
[1053] Al-Zar'i:, M., (No date), Op. Cit., p. 167. See also Al-Qurṭubi:'s (d. 671 A.H.) Commentary, vol. 17, p. 61, Al-Tha'a:libi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p.214, Al-Nasafi:'s Commentary, vol. 4, p. 183.
[1054] In a lecture given in Dubai in Dec 2000 (Ramadhan 1421), during the Dubai International Competition for Memorizing the Holy Qur'an.

In light of the previous discussion, it can be said that the published translations analysed above have adopted the traditionally understood implications of and commentaries on this verse. On the other hand, the translation suggested by El-Naggar neglects one of the main traditional understandings of this verse, المملئ ('filled', 'full'), and introduces the word 'physically' in the translation, while there is no actual or suggested presence of it in the original Arabic text. Therefore, it can be said that both, the published translations and the one suggested by El-Naggar, do not fully respect the linguistic meaning of الْمَسْجُورِ, but attempt to read into the translation a certain understood implication, traditional in the first case, and scientific in the second. As this thesis argues, this is a characteristic of functional approaches which aim to interpret the message of a certain text according to a particularly understood implication and direct the target text to a particular audience.

A suggested translation of this verse which attempts to be as accurate as possible with regard to the linguistic meaning of الْمَسْجُورِ is 'and the swelling sea set on fire'. In this way, the two meanings are accounted for, and a desirable alliterative sound effect in 'swelling', 'sea', and 'set' is introduced. The suggested translation keeps various possibilities open, while reflecting the way in which the meaning of this verse has been scientifically expanded as discussed above. However, one may still argue that the scientifically understood implication is far-fetched. As elsewhere, this is left for the reader to judge. Nevertheless, there is nothing in this translation which rules out the possibility that this event may take place in the Hereafter, as was traditionally assumed. Moreover, further clarification may be provided in a footnote. One may even favour a figurative interpretation and understand this verse as a metaphor, "Looking at it from an English point of view, one might see a raging stormy sea as like a roaring fire (that is, this could be a metaphor). Just as a roaring fire shoots up the uncontrolled 'waves' of flame, so a roaring sea has violent, uncontrolled waves."[1055] As will be discussed in the conclusion, metaphorical interpretations can also be catered for by adopting a fairly literal translation. As this thesis argues, reporting linguistically what a certain text says without imposing

[1055] James Dickins, (personal communication).

certain understood implications at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning is a characteristic of semantic translation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Since the view that there can be scientific extensions of the meanings of some verses is held by many Muslim scholars and writers in the present age, and since it is gaining support, it is reasonable to see how the translation of the relevant verses could possibly reflect the way in which these conclusions have been arrived at. This thesis has attempted to tackle this issue and show the way in which those who suggest scientific expansions of meanings have been able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of certain linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned. Most of the widely used translations of the Qur'an have been mainly based on the traditionally understood implications and commentaries of these verses, which to a great extent rule out the possible scientific expansions which are claimed to be present in them. Five of the most widely used translations have been selected to be analysed in this thesis for certain reasons outlined in the introduction, and particularly because they are among the translations that readers are most likely to consult, regardless of the school of though to which their producers belong. It can be said that other translations which are based solely on scientific exegesis with regard to the discussed verses are not neutral with regard to this topic. This will not give an English-speaking reader the chance to see how linguistically the original text can contain the potential for achieving this (claimed) expansion. Translating according to a method in which the traditionally or scientifically understood implications and commentaries are read back into the translations is in practice similar to the dynamic equivalence approach, albeit that does not always respect the more obvious linguistic meaning. This work is an attempt to fill this gap in Qur'anic translation methodology and it has endeavoured to suggest a method for translating these verses in a way that can give an English-speaking reader a chance to evaluate these proposals and arguments for and against the scientific content of the Qur'an.

To show that there are varying extents to which different scholars have claimed that scientific knowledge maybe employed in relation to the Qur'anic text, and to consider whether it is appropriate to interpret a certain verse scientifically or to expand its traditionally understood meaning to include possible scientific interpretations, or to argue for the Divine origin of the Qur'an, it was necessary to carry out a review of the different trends. Writing this thesis has been a daunting task. It has been a multi-disciplinary endeavour in which investigations into translation theory, theology, and science were made. Its main focus, however, has been translation. The thesis has aimed to answer the central question of how to translate the relevant verses in a way that could possibly show how those who have suggested scientific expansions of the meanings of certain verses were able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of certain linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned. This was done in a way that does not exclusively endorse either traditional or scientifically understood implications at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning, but attempts to represent the source text as neutrally as possible in the target language. To this end, the main research work has been done in translation theory; the translation of these verses according to one particular understood implication, whether traditional or scientific, has been equated with the dynamic equivalence approach. On the other hand, semantic translation, which takes care to report what the source text says without reading into the translation particular understood implications, is recommended for translating these verses. This approach makes it possible even in the translated text to see how the moderate scholars were able to suggest these expansions.

It is not necessarily the case that the position of those who suggest such expansions is endorsed here; many extremists' views have been criticized. Some specific suggested translations based on scientific exegesis have also been criticized. In some cases, the suggested or selected translations of the discussed verses happen to coincide with the proposed scientific expansion. This does not mean that the scientific interpretation has been approved and the translation representing it has been selected. It is, rather,

simply because the literal meaning happens to coincide with the scientific interpretation.

Regarding the issue of which translator has been more successful in his translations of these examples, the following general observations may be provided.[1056] Arberry's translations of 14 examples out of the discussed 25 examples are acceptable in terms of the proposals developed in this thesis. These are: 7.2.1, 7.2.3, 7.2.4, 7.2.9, 7.2.10, 7.2.11, 7.2.12, 7.2.13, 7.2.14, 7.2.15, 7.2.17, 7.2.18, 7.2.21, and 7.2.22. However, certain modifications need to be made in his translations of three examples of these: (7.2.12, 7.2.13, and 7.2.14) to be more accurate from the linguistic point of view as discussed in the relevant examples.

Shakir occupies the second place with his linguistically acceptable translation in terms of the proposals of this thesis of 10 examples out of the 25. These are: 7.2.2, 7.2.3, 7.2.10, 7.2.11, 7.2.13, 7.2.14, 7.2.15, 7.2.17, 7.2.21, and 7.2.22. His translation of one example has to be modified, though. This is example 7.2.14.

Yusuf Ali and Pickthall come third with 8 examples out of 25 accurately translated from the linguistic point of view. For Yusuf Ali, these are: (7.2.3, 7.2.7, 7.2.10, 7.2.11, 7.2.17, 7.2.18, 7.2.21, and 7.2.22). For Pickthall, these are: (7.2.3, 7.2.9, 7.2.10, 7.2.11, 7.2.14, 7.2.16, 7.2.21, and 7.2.22). Pickthall's translation of examples 7.2.14 and 7.2.16 needs to be modified, though.

Al-Hilali and Khan's translation of 7 examples out of the analysed 25 can be said to be accurate as far as the linguistic meaning is concerned. These are: 7.2.3, 7.2.10, 7.2.11, 7.2.15, 7.2.17, 7.2.18, and 7.2.21.

[1056] For full details, see chapter seven.

None of the five examined translations provided linguistically accurate translations of 8 examples out of the 25: (7.2.5, 7.2.6, 7.2.8, 7.2.19, 7.2.20, 7.2.23, 7.2.24, and 7.2.25). Suggested translations were provided for six examples out of these eight: (7.2.5, 7.2.6, 7.2.19, 7.2.20, 7.2.23, and 7.2.25). Bucaille has suggested accurate translations from the linguistic perspective of example 7.2.8. He has also provided linguistically generally accurate translations of three other examples 7.2.4, 7.2.9, 7.2.16, though his translation of example 7.2.16 needs a slight modification. El-Naggar has provided a generally accurate translation of example 7.2.24, but this needs some modification as well.

As is clear from the above discussion, Arberry has been more successful in his translations as far as reflecting the linguistic meaning is concerned according to the discussion in chapter seven. This could be attributed to the fact that although he consulted the traditional Commentators, he did not use interpolated interpretations and notes to skew the text towards a particular understanding. However, where difficulties have arisen due to differences in understanding a certain word or a phrase on the part of traditional Commentators, he has adopted an eclectic approach that must have taken account of the linguistic aspect of the text. Thus, his interpretation is "eclectic where the ancient commentators differ in their understanding of a word or a phrase, unannotated because notes in plenty are to be found in other versions, and the radiant beauty of the original is not clouded by such vexing interpolations"[1057]. Moreover, he is a native speaker of English and a well-versed Arabist, which has given his translation a special status on the stylistic level. Gätje (1971)[1058] remarks that Arberry's translation, "Accurately reflects the Arabic text, including ambiguity in some places." Arberry has attempted to strike a balance between the linguistic aspect and the stylistic aspect of the Qur'anic text. He has attempted to produce a stylistic effect echoing, as far as possible, that of the original, since "in no previous rendering has a serious attempt been made to imitate, however imperfectly, those rhetorical and rhythmical patterns which are the glory and sublimity of the

[1057] Arberry, A. J., (1980). *The Koran Interpreted.* London: Allen & Unwin., p. 28.
[1058] Gätje, H., (1976), Op. Cit., p. 291.

Koran"[1059]. On the beauty of its style, Wilfred C. Smith of Harvard University has remarked that Arberry's translation of the Holy Qur'an is "certainly the most beautiful English version, and among those by non-Muslim translators the one that comes closest to covering the impression made on Muslims by the original."[1060] However, in certain cases Arberry did not depend on the language of the text itself and resorted to the understanding of the ancient Commentators, even though it neglected the literal meaning of certain words. This occurs in examples 7.2.23, 7.2.24, and 7.2.25.[1061]

At the other end of the scale, Yusuf Ali and Pickthall have accurately translated eight examples, and Al-Hilali and Khan seven examples only of the analysed 25 examples. The reason for this is that they depended to a great deal on the particularly understood implications and commentaries of certain traditional Commentators of the Holy Qur'an, and not on the language of the Qur'anic text itself in many cases. In this regard, Gätje (1971)[1062] comments on Pickthall's translation, "...often reflects traditional Muslim interpretation rather than literal meaning of Arabic text." Al-Hilali and Khan have adopted Al-Tabari:'s and Ibn Kathi:r's Commentaries, and Pickthall has depended on Al-Baida:wi:'s and Al-Zamakhshari:'s Commentaries, and, during the work of revision, on the brief Commentary of Al-Jala:lai:n[1063]. While Al-Hilali and Khan hardly translate any verse without interpolated interpretations and also provide numerous footnotes, Pickthall has kept these to a minimum.

Another particular issue evoked by the present research is that of metaphorical interpretation of the Qur'anic text. Clearly this issue needs a whole Ph.D. thesis to be discussed. However, some general observations may be provided here. There are many schools of thought about the extent to which metaphorical explanation of the

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[1059] Arberry, A. J., (1980), Op. Cit., p. 25.
[1060] Quoted in El Shiekh, A., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 66.
[1061] See the discussion of these examples in chapter seven for full details.
[1062] Gätje, H., (1976), Op. Cit., p. 292.
[1063] Pickthall, M. M., (2000), Op. Cit., p. 3.

Holy Qur'an is legitimate. Therefore, incorporating the metaphorical interpretations into the body of the translation would mean producing as many translations as there are metaphorical extensions of the meaning. However, even if the translator does not want to exclude metaphorical interpretations of the meaning, neither does he want to specifically adopt any of them. Accordingly, a fairly literal translation seems the best strategy. In most of the examples discussed in chapter seven, the literal translation has produced fairly concrete terms, which provide very good bases for more abstract extensions of the meaning – metaphorical, allegorical or scientific. Orienting the translation exclusively to reflect the understood implications and commentaries of a particular group of people, whether traditional or scientific, and reading them back into the translation at the expense of the more obvious linguistic meaning of the text will rule out any other possible interpretation. A semantically oriented translation of the text, which is as literal as possible with respect to the linguistic meaning, is the suggested approach. This aims to reflect the original text in the target text, leaving the latter open to one or more interpretations in the same way as is the original. For if the verses under study here can be assumed to be open for scientific or metaphorical expansions of meaning, this is a result of the linguistic structure itself. Goatly (1997) remarks that, "Metaphor is located at the interface between the stability and unity of the language system and the mutability and diversity of its operational use in context"[1064]. Usually, metaphoric language starts from the literal level, and with the continuous use of particular forms as metaphors, they enter the dictionary, sometimes eventually crossing the borderline from the metaphorical dimension into the literal one. In this regard, Goatly explains,

> Metaphors are constantly being coined to meet the demands of experience on language, either obviously, through the process of metaphorical transfer, or less clearly through the narrowing or extending of senses. Such metaphors, over time, become relatively Inactive and less original, and if used frequently may become part of the lexicon of the language. So there is a scale of Inactive metaphors stretching from the Dead and Buried at one extreme, through the Sleeping and merely Tired, to the novel and original. This scale suggests that what were once unconventional

[1064] Goatly, A., (1997). *The Language of Metaphors*. London: Routledge., p. 23.

> metaphorical language uses can acquire new, conventional and lexical status, in time becoming less reliant on pragmatics and more incorporated in semantics.[1065]

Thus, a translation of the verses discussed in this research which respects the linguistic aspect of the text seems the best strategy. This is because whether scientific or metaphorical expansions of meaning can be assumed to be present in these verses, this is so only thanks to the linguistic meaning of these verses. This is in line with the conclusion drawn at the end of chapter four that the semantic approach, which pays due attention to both, the literal meaning of words and the context, is most appropriate for handling the translation of the verses discussed in this thesis. This is because, while communicative translation means communicating the understood meaning of the text even if it does not coincide with the literal meaning, semantic translation takes care to report what the source text says, and leaves it then for the target readers to interact with the text and achieve their own understanding. Communicative translation can achieve adequate results in certain text types where the original function of the ST can be identified. The intended communicative function of the ST in this case is supposedly to achieve a range of different interpretations with the passage of time. Applying communicative translation, which depends on determining the function of the ST and then transferring it to the TT, in translating these verses would result in limiting the meaning to the understanding of a particular (group of) recipient(s), whether traditional or scientific. This is what happened when certain translators depended on the understood implications and commentaries of the traditional Commentators of certain verses, and when also some proponents of scientific exegesis provided translations that exclusively represent their views, neglecting in both cases the more obvious linguistic meaning of the key lexical items.

The researcher would like also to highlight another important issue. It is hoped that this and similar works of research which involve a comparison of different

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[1065] Goatly, A., (1997), Op. Cit., p. 38.

translations of the Holy Qur'an have hopefully produced valuable results that could benefit future works on translating the Holy Qur'an. It is recommended, therefore, that such works be consulted by organizations and committees undertaking the task of producing translations of the Holy Qur'an into English. The researchers' findings can be compared and contrasted to yield helpful guidelines. Moreover, different researchers have discussed different issues related to translating the Holy Qur'an, which can all contribute to producing better translations of the Holy Qur'an in the future. Earlier translations of the Holy Qur'an can form the starting point for producing new translations rather than starting from scratch. What is needed is to combine all the merits of the best translations available. It remains to be determined which translation can be chosen as the main source for producing a new, improved, and perhaps an 'authorised' translation of the Holy Qur'an. As the results of the present work have shown, the researcher would like to recommend Arberry's translation for this position. Although this translation has many merits, it is by no means a perfect model. It inevitably contains a number of drawbacks. Nevertheless, it has been recommended by other researchers[1066] for this purpose.

The work of revision, modification and improvement should be ideally a teamwork task, not undertaken by individual efforts. It is not surprising that the Authorised Version, like many other translations of the Bible, was the result of teamwork[1067]. It is also not surprising that in their model for translating the Bible, Nida and Taber suggest that a team, including an editorial committee, a review committee, a consultative group, and a stylist, whose total number could be up to 66 members, should undertake this task[1068]. As for the team undertaking the task of translating the Holy Qur'an into English, it should not contain only religious scholars; it should also contain other scholars from the various fields related to this issue, such as linguistics,

[1066] See, for example , El Shiekh, A., (1990), Op. Cit., p. 284.
[1067] Dayras, S., (1993). *The Knox Version, or the Trials of a Translator: Translation or Transgression?* In: Jasper, David, ed. Translating Religious Texts: Translation, Transgression, and Interpretation. 44-59. New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press., p. 44.
[1068] Nida, E. A. and Taber, C. R., (1969), Op. Cit., p. 175.

Arabic literature and rhetoric, and English language and literature, in addition to translation.

An area that can be recommended for further investigation is the possible relationship between different text types in the Qur'an and translation method. In translation theory, it is believed that different text types need different treatments. Explaining how different text types need different treatments in translation, Hervey and Higgins (1992)[1069] propose "a scale or continuum defined by the relative importance of explicit literal meaning at one extreme, and of implicitly conveyed connotative and/or stylistic meaning at the other." They explain that texts like scientific or legal documents, or textbooks stand at one end of the scale. In translating such texts, priority should be maximally given to precision in literal meaning rather than to 'aesthetic' or stylistic effects. "At the opposite end of the scale", they go on to argue, "are texts that depend maximally on subtle nuances of non-literal meaning and aesthetic effect, and minimally on explicit, literal meaning."[1070] They name 'poetry' as the type of genre standing at this extreme, where "understanding the literal content of sentences is often no more than perceiving the outer garb of a more subtle textual meaning, no more than a stepping-stone towards sensing a 'deeper' message-content of which the literal meaning is a symbol."[1071] It is because poetry has such characteristics that they believe it is often said to be untranslatable. As has been discussed in this thesis, there are different text types in the Holy Qur'an. It would be interesting if this issue were investigated further to see whether or not different translation methods may be called for in dealing with different text types in the Holy Qur'an (argumentative, narrative, instructive, descriptive, etc.) (cf. House's (1981) overt vs. covert translations, and Nord's (1991) documentary vs. instrumental translation).

[1069] Hervey, S. G. J. and Higgins, I., (1992), Op. Cit., p. 144.
[1070] Ibid.
[1071] Ibid..

There is another area of possible further investigation. As mentioned in the introduction, verses claimed to contain scientific allusions in the Holy Qur'an are divided into two main types: those talking about some aspects of the creation of the universe and those referring to some aspects of the creation of man[1072]. Verses dealing with the creation of man would also provide interesting discussions. Initially, I intended to include both types in the present work, but due to the limitations of time and space, I have confined myself to examining verses talking about certain aspects of the creation of the universe. Among the interesting findings I came across in discussing some verses of the second type in earlier drafts of the present thesis, for example, relate to one lexical item that describes a particular stage of embryological development. This is the Arabic word علقة *'alaqah* found in verses such as (40: 67), (23: 12-14), and (22: 5), which has various shades of meaning and poses a serious challenge to translators. I touched upon this issue in my MA dissertation, and it would be very interesting to pursue the discussion of this and other lexical items found in verses that address the issue of the creation of man from the perspective of translation. This is an area I recommend be investigated in future research.

In the conclusion of his article entitled *The Qur'an and Science: The Debate on the Validity of Scientific interpretations* in which he reviews the different trends with regard to scientific exegesis, Khir[1073] writes:

> A careful consideration of the arguments presented in the debate by the various trends seems to suggest that a distinction needs to be drawn between exegeses of the Qur'an and commentaries on it. The former are those immediate meanings of the text that are understood from linguistic usage and the explanations given to them in the transmitted traditions. All other additions to those meanings necessarily reflect human knowledge that is available to the commentator. If scientific interpretations are viewed in the light of human constructions, there will be no objection in principle against them. However, the extent to which they are accepted as an approximate rendering of the original meaning of the Qur'anic text depends on how valid and sound they are and what evidence supports them. Although in all cases

[1072] See page 10.
[1073] Khir, B. M., (2000), Op. Cit. p.30.

> they will be open-ended, and not conclusive, it is possible yet to use them in our understanding of the Qur'an or as proof of its truths.

This thesis is an endeavour to complement such attempts. It discusses this important issue from the viewpoint of translation to suggest a method for translating these verses in a neutral way so that an English-speaking reader who does not understand Arabic can see how those who suggest such extensions were able to arrive at their conclusions on the basis of specific linguistic characteristics of the verses concerned.

A by-product of the current research relates to the issue of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an. There should be a distinction between extreme scientific exegesis, and possible scientific expansion of the meaning of certain verses. The first, for example, is what is practised by Al-Ju:hari:, Al-Kwa:kibi:, or Naufal, who twist the meanings of the verses and force them to say things which the great majority of Muslim scholars regard as not present nor alluded to in the verse in any way; for example, explaining وما تحت الثرى as the ancient Egyptian Civilization[1074], or the verse about shadows as referring to photography[1075], or *nafs* and *zaw:j* as electron and neutron[1076]. Scientific expansion – as oppsed to extreme scientific exegesis – of the meaning is that in which the traditional understanding is not altogether neglected and accused of being 'incorrect', but kept as a possible understanding which was achieved thanks to the linguistic structure itself. If a certain scientific fact happens to coincide with what is linguistically said in a particular verse then it is possible to expand the meaning of that verse so that it is also open to be understood in this way. This is the stance of the moderate scholars. As discussed in section 2.4.2, some people argue that the trend of scientific exegesis of the Qur'an began as an attempt to

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[1074] Al-Ju:hari:, quoted in Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit., vol.2, p.669.
[1075] Al-Kwa:kibi:, quoted in Al-Dhahabi:, M., (1995), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.537.
[1076] Naufal, quoted in Al-Ru:mi:, F., (1997), Op. Cit. vol.2, pp. 633-34.

encourage Muslims to seek knowledge and achieve scientific development[1077]. However, with the overemphasis on the scientific content of the Qur'an, and the involvement of many participants in the field regardless of their academic qualifications, there is a growing danger that this trend has become mainly an apologetic practice. When Muslims achieved their remarkable progress in different fields of scientific knowledge, the approach of scientific exegesis was not apparent. It was only in the nineteenth and twentieth century that this trend gained prominence. It is important, therefore, to deal with this issue carefully and neutrally, and not to let personal belief cause one to support far-fetched claims regarding the scientific content of the Holy Book of Islam. Many reputable Muslim scholars argue that it would be better for Muslims to refrain from engaging in this approach altogether. One may even argue that the Qur'an cannot be scientifically proven to be Divine. By extension, religion cannot be scientifically proven to be true, because one cannot reasonably deny a well-established scientific fact, while the choice of a religion has to be according to one's own free will. The noble aim which caused some scholars to use the proposed scientific content of the Qur'an to call others to Islam can be appreciated, but, as some other scholars have noted, this is not the best way to achieve this aim[1078]. The Qur'an itself tells us that it can offer guidance only to those who seek guidance, without necessarily being scientifically miraculous and convincing[1079].

To conclude this research, it must be remembered, as Newmark (1988)[1080] has remarked, that "Translation is for discussion...All one can do is to produce an argument with translation examples to support it. Nothing is purely objective or subjective. There are no cast-iron rules. Everything is more or less. There is an assumption of 'normally' or 'usually' or 'commonly' ... qualifications such as 'always' 'never', 'must' do not exist – there are no absolutes. "

[1077] Jansen, J. J. G., (1974), Op. Cit. p.43, Ansari, Z. I., (2001), Op. Cit. p.92, Iqbal, M., (2002), Op. Cit. p.280.
[1078] Al-Dhahabi:, M., (1995), Op. Cit. vol.2, p.530.
[1079] The Qur'an (2: 2), (19: 76), (47: 17), (17: 82), (41: 44).
[1080] Newmark, P., (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. New York: Prentice Hall., p. 21.

It is hoped that this thesis has come up with useful findings, and has suggested some possible further avenues of research.

APPENDIX 1: VERSES DISCUSSED

﴿هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ ضِيَاءً وَالْقَمَرَ نُورًا وَقَدَّرَهُ مَنَازِلَ لِتَعْلَمُوا عَدَدَ السِّنِينَ وَالْحِسَابَ ...﴾ 264

﴿تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا﴾ 270

﴿وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسَ سِرَاجًا﴾ 274

﴿وَبَنَيْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شِدَادًا (●) وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا﴾ 279

﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ﴾ 282

﴿لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ﴾ 283

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ ...﴾ 289

﴿...يُكَوِّرُ اللَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ النَّهَارَ عَلَى اللَّيْلِ ...﴾ 291

﴿وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ لَهَا ...﴾ 298

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