

**SELF-HELP IN TRANSLATION: A CASE STUDY OF *THE
SECRET* AND ITS ARABIC TRANSLATION**

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ABSTRACT

Self-help literature has become a global phenomenon over the last twenty-five years. It has crossed geographical, linguistic and cultural boundaries through translation, which not only imported foreign texts to target cultures, but also was a catalyst to create an original self-help genre in receiving cultures. This thesis addresses this overlooked genre, highlights its culture specificity and significance to Translation Studies. It conducts a case study of the 2006 bestselling self-help book *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne and its Arabic translation, with the aim of identifying and describing the translation norms, drawing on Gideon Toury's work. It examines the adopted translation strategies using Lambert & Van Gorp's descriptive approach and Leppihalme's study of allusions. An analysis of the possible forces behind the identified norms is conducted by examining five factors: the text's function, religious considerations, translation policies, consequences and decision making. This analysis is based on a number of theories: Even-Zohar's Polysystem theory, Jacquemond's review of Arabic translation policies and discourse, Pym's work on risk and reward, and Simon's "satisficing" theory.

Key words: Translation Studies, self-help literature, genre, culture, cross-cultural studies, descriptive translation studies, text function.

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Introduction

Self-Help (henceforth: S-H) literature has become a global phenomenon over the last twenty-five years. It has grown significantly from a niche market into occupying a leading position in pop-culture industry. It has its own literature of books, DVD's, as well as lectures, institutions, training groups and pages on social media networks. The S-H phenomenon, with all its products and forms, originated in the United States, yet it was very quickly cloned in various countries of South America, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. It has crossed geographical, linguistic and cultural boundaries through translation. In fact, translation not only imported new foreign texts to these target cultures, but also was a catalyst to create new, original, local S-H books. Translated texts have functioned like original works and become the reference point for many authors. Hence, a new genre was born and added to the literatures of those receiving cultures. It is translation that has established the S-H genre outside the United States.

This thesis is a case study of the 2006 bestselling S-H book *The Secret* by Rhonda Byrne, published by Atria Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, and its Arabic translation published in 2007. The book has created a worldwide sensation and received intensive marketing campaigns both online and offline (T.V., print, and radio). It was promoted by many influential figures such as Oprah Winfrey and Larry King. The work had a strong impact on both the Arab and Western worlds and became a "worldwide phenomenon" (Kelly, 2007, p. 2). Like many other S-H books, *The Secret* revolved around themes of achieving success and improving life, love, health, money and fame.

A year after the book hit the market, the Arabic translation was published by Jarir Bookstore, a well-recognized Saudi-based bookstore and publishing house that has a huge chain across the Gulf area and several Arab countries. It is interesting to note that the translation is anonymous; the name of the translator is not mentioned anywhere in the book. Jarir, like some other private or governmental bodies in the Middle East, published the translation under the institution's name only. Jarir's translation of *The Secret* is the first translation published and the most circulated one.

The "secret" that Byrne reveals is about an ancient metaphysical law called the Law of Attraction. Its basic mechanism is "like attracts like". The human being is seen as a "transmission tower" and as a "powerful magnet" that sends frequencies and signals to the universe (Byrne, 2006, p. 7-10). The universe, which operates like the "Genie" of Aladdin, will always respond and draw events and experiences parallel to these thoughts (Byrne, 2006, p. 46). Thus, Byrne, who became one of the most famous evangelists of positive thinking, argues that one is able to form one's life the way one desires depending on one's "magnetic" thoughts.

However, in the Arabic translation the *universe* is replaced by *God*. The ultimate endless power given to the human being in the original text comes second after God will and power. The Arabic text makes clear wherever necessary that God has the upper hand on the law of attraction and the universe, which are mere creatures he has created and always controls. Human power is still effective but limited, compared to that of God, and any change it is able to achieve is subject to God's permission and will. Such displacement of power in the translated text indicates a different interpretation of the proposed metaphysical law in the original text, to the point of

contradicting it on some occasions. An Arabic reader who is familiar with the original English text can identify the Islamized translation through the most cursory reading. The text has been culturally and ideologically filtered and repackaged/adapted to conform to the Islamic beliefs and culture.

The Secret is a very controversial book in both its culture of origin and in the host culture. Such controversy revolved around both the effectiveness of the law of attraction and the work's approach to several topics, mainly religion. Its translation into Arabic has also received disparate opinions varying from scathing criticism to positive reviews. It also serves as a very rich example for examining translation where cultural and socio-political sensitivities strongly operate. I believe it is an ideal example that will help underscore the instrumental role of translation in forming, shaping or affirming cultural identities and ideologies (Fawcett, 2001, p. 138-144).

Why *The Secret*?

Taking into consideration the abundance of these books in the local and global markets, selecting *The Secret* for this study out of other spiritual books translated into Arabic was not a random choice. There are four reasons behind this choice.

First, the global popularity of the book is of great importance. Selling over twenty million copies around the world, *The Secret* was described as a publishing and cultural phenomenon. Therefore, readers of this thesis can easily identify the book and hence better relate to the arguments I develop. Moreover, the fact that it has been translated into forty seven languages makes this work accessible to a wide number of translation students and persons interested in the field in general, which will allow

them to test the general remarks and conclusions I present in this thesis by examining *The Secret*, and other S-H books, translated into their languages and cultures.

Second, the controversial nature of *The Secret* feeds many recent discussions in translation studies, especially those related to culture, popular culture in particular, and ideology. Based on the discussion of the book's reception and criticism, which I will present in Chapter Three, *The Secret* is no secret. It is definitely not the first or only S-H book to furnish the principle of positive thinking in metaphysical concepts, such as the law of attraction and quantum physics, nor is it the first book to be associated with ideas from New Thought and New Age movements and popular religion. However, promoting the book as harmonious with all beliefs and religions makes it ideologically problematic and translationally challenging to study.

Third, to complicate the issue further, *The Secret* is one of the few S-H books written with an overt and strong intention of reaching the world. In her dedication Byrne says, "May The Secret bring you love and joy for your entire existence. That is my intention for you, and for the world". The website states: " she [Byrne] vowed. . . to carry joy to every corner of the earth, to share this knowledge with billions". Writing the book with international or worldly conscience and to share highly cultural-specific knowledge with "billions" of different backgrounds around the world means that the writing of the book was in itself a translation process. Viewing the process of writing as a translation process is undoubtedly not a new concept. Yet, in the case of *The Secret* the writing/ translation process is intentional, studied and calculated to be suitable worldwide. How suitable the book became in a certain culture is then a question of translation.

The fourth and final reason is that *The Secret* gives an interesting opportunity to study whether controversy is a hereditary trait in translation or not, since the book is controversial in its source and target cultures. Does a controversial text necessarily result in a controversial translation? I am aware this big question cannot be answered in one case study, but this thesis will touch upon this point in Chapter Three.

Research questions

As discussed above, the premises of both texts are different. This thesis will examine the ideological shifts and will focus on the strategies applied by the translator on both macro and micro levels. The fundamental questions of this study are: How was *The Secret* translated? What is the translational behavior evident in the Arabic text? Is/are there a specific pattern(s)? If so, what might be the motives for this behavioural pattern? Is it something to do with the Arabic norms of translation and the specificity of the Arab and Muslim culture? Or is it something to do with the very nature of S-H genre and particularly the more spiritual books? Might it be a combination of all these factors?

My hypothesis is that translational shifts or manipulation/adaptation in this translation are mainly influenced by the function of this genre which is first and foremost an operative one (as will be discussed in Chapter Four). The presumed readers of this genre are people seeking help or knowledge about how to improve their lives in certain aspects. How will the average reader relate to the advice and practical solutions provided in the book if they do not apply or conform to his/her own culture? Will they be convincing and effective? Would the results be better if the translator tailored the text for the readers to make it usable and applicable or if this intellectual task was left for the readers?

This genre is very self-oriented and inward looking to its own culture and I am hypothesizing that it might be so in translation. In other words, the imported genre inherits, through translation, some/many of the features of the source genre: its nature, aim, function, even more in-depth characteristics be they thematic, stylistic or linguistic. Examples of this translational inheritance are plentiful. A salient one is Arabic drama which reflected (and still does) the French tradition, since it was introduced to the Arab world during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century (Baker, 2001, p. 419). This study aims to answer these questions and discuss and reflect on the unanswerable ones.

This genre does not hold a high profile in the academic world, and this may explain why it has been overlooked, or ignored, in translation studies. Yet, there is a growing interest in popular culture in the field of translation studies, particularly in genres such as movies, children literature, music, comics and animation, subtitling and surtitling, dubbing and voice-overs (Cronin 2009 and 2000; Orero 2004; Diaz-Cintas 2009; Lathey 2006). However, S-H literature has not yet received attention from translation scholars and researchers and remains ignored or overlooked. The paucity of resources and literature produced on translation in relation to S-H books poses a real challenge for this study. There is certainly a need for more research addressing this phenomenon through a translation studies lens.

In disciplines other than translation studies, the spread of S-H books has caught the attention of numerous researchers who have investigated and analyzed this issue from social, psychological, economic and political perspectives (see McGee 2005; Mur Effing 2009; Salerno 2005). However, it is the studies that focus on the cultural aspect

of this genre that will be the most serviceable for this thesis (see Dolby 2005). Just as S-H literature is entrenched in the notion of culture, so is the translation of this type of literature.

The significance of studying the translation of S-H books resides in their cultural specificity and the nature of the genre in general. The paradox here is the simultaneous universality and specificity of the issues SH books address. Love, fear, confidence, insecurities, health, wealth are basic needs/concerns for all people in all cultures, but as universal and global as they are, they still belong to the nature and conventions of various systems within each culture. Although the universal and specific aspects of these elements are interwoven in a text, browsing some translated texts reveals that translation usually takes the form of what I like to describe as a sifting process. The smooth elements that will pass through the translational net are the universal ones, for they are translatable. However, the elements that will stay in the net are the culture-specific, the untranslatable or the more resistant. They seem to have immunity against translation. But the fact that they stand in the text, too stubborn to be translated, makes them more subject to intervention. In fact, it makes them require manipulation (an approach to translation which applies manipulative strategies to achieve a certain purpose (Shuttleworth & Cowie, 2004, p. 101)). The translator then may reproduce or replace them with the target's cultural and ideological equivalents.

Therefore, these books, embedded in their cultures and ideologies, pose a difficult task for translators and all players in the translation process when rendering texts in the target space. They are a zone where the difference between "us" and the "other" can be highly visible, and ideological tension can be easily spotted. The

translator's task in such situation can be anything but easy; he/she must decide how to deal with this tension. The translator will either keep this tension in order to stick to the source text and, in this case, links and references to the foreign text and culture will be kept. Or he/she will try to attenuate, mitigate or remove this tension in order to prevent foreign elements from seeping into the target culture, and in this case the translator is contributing to the preservation and accentuation of the specificity of the target culture. This difficult task originates, I believe, from the very critical and seemingly contradicted nature of translation. The primary utopian goal of translation is to connect and bring cultures and nations closer by exchanging knowledge. Its nature as a process or as a tool, however, is quite malleable; it lends itself to the translator allowing him/her to freely utilize it to serve the target culture by either ensuring the continuity of its specific features and /or injecting new blood to it. This complex state of translation plays ping pong with the translator who wavers between two options: delivering the message and the cultural spirit of the translated work (i.e. achieving the utopian goal) and/or changing/manipulating that message and spirit to fulfill a certain purpose or end (i.e. taking advantage of the flexible nature of translation). As Peeter Torop puts it, "culture operates largely through the translational activity, since only by the inclusion of new texts into a culture can the culture undergo innovation as well as perceive its specificity" (2002, p. 593). He points out that cultures tend to have translational capacities and these capacities are "important criterion" of the specificity of a culture. The translational capacity can be then conceived as a translational power that influences culture and, at the same time, is a reflection of it. Torop's perspective is built on a cultural understanding of translation and echoes theorists such as Lawrence Venuti

who pioneered discussions on translation's ideological forming power and its instrumental role in the evolution of cultures and literatures.¹

In the Arab world, it is not possible to map the growth of S-H literature through existing scholarly research. Although the S-H movement has become mainstream, very little is known about the size of this industry, or about its consumers, its evolution, the ideology underlying it and the catalyst factors—be they social, economic, cultural or political—that are behind this movement and are constantly forming it. The S-H genre is relatively new to the Arab world; a quick search on the Internet or a short visit to any Arab bookstore will reveal that the Arabic S-H repertoire mostly consists of translations despite the emergence of original Arabic S-H writings. Although there are no studies or statistics on this topic, browsing bookstores' and publishing houses' websites reveals that almost every one includes a section entitled S-H or self development, which carries a number of these books correlating with the size and status of that bookstore or publishing house. There are no studies explaining the reason behind the burgeoning translation of this genre specifically, given the popular argument on the stagnant state of translation into Arabic in general.²

This thesis aims to achieve two main goals. First, to examine the translation strategies followed in the Arabic translation of *The Secret* which highlight the cultural and ideological differences between the two Western and Arab cultures. Second, is to present the S-H genre as a legitimate area of study in the field of translation not only

¹ See *Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* 1998 and *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* 2008.

² According to the 2003 Arab Human Development Report, "the Arab world translates about 330 books annually, one fifth of the number that Greece translates" (p. 93). The data of this report will be further discussed in Chapter One.

because it is a very fertile site where cultural and ideological interactions take place constantly, but also because it showcases the vital role translation played, and continues to play, in exporting this genre to other geographical spaces and participating in the creation of local S-H genres. The field of translation studies has been constantly expanding to cover more areas and genres, including the low or non-canonized ones, which could bring about novel perspectives. Regardless of one's opinion or stance on the S-H literature, whether worthy to read or not, harmful or helpful, one cannot deny the fact that this literature is a flourishing and growing type of writing and it is crossing geographical, cultural and ideological boundaries and hence producing numerous forms and cases of intercultural communication that will enrich translation research. Therefore, I hope for this thesis to create an appetite to conduct more research on this topic.

The idea of this thesis started as a topic for a final research paper for the course "ideology of translation and translation of ideology", created and taught by my supervisor Dr. Lyse Hébert. We were asked to examine a text we had previously read and its translation using an ideological lens. Reviewing the books I had read over the years, I came across *The Secret* which I read only in English in 2007. I clearly remembered that while reading the book I was wondering how it would be translated to Muslim Arabic readers. Although the Arabic translation was on the market in 2008, I did not read it until four years later as a Master's student in Canada for that challenging course.

This thesis consists of four chapters. It starts with the theoretical framework upon which I draw, a discussion on the S-H genre as a system and a cross-cultural

genre, an examination of the data collected from *The Secret's* English and Arabic texts and finally an analysis of the data in light of the theories I used. The thesis adopts a descriptive approach.

In chapter one I present all the theories on which I draw. These pertain to core concepts in translation studies such as the systematic examination of the translation (namely Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystem theory), the question of norms in relation to the translator's choices and decisions (specifically Gideon Toury's work), translation policies and norms within the socio-political context (Richard Jacquemond's work on Arabic translation policies), the functional role of the text and its implications on the translation (namely Katharina Reiss's work), the notion of translational consequences which deals with the personal, professional and cultural outcomes of translation decisions (Anthony Pym's work on risk and reward). I borrowed, however, one theory, that of satisficing by Herbert A. Simon, from the field of administrative behavior and decision making in which I saw an intersection with issues of the translator's behavior. These theories will foreground the questions I intend to answer and will provide a basis for my data examination and analysis. The methodological tools I use to collect, present and examine the data are José Lambert and Hendrik Van Gorp's model for describing translations and Ritva Leppihalme's work on translation allusions. Prior to these tools, however, I use a supplementary initial method I found extremely helpful before any highly structured and systematic method. First, I read the English text fully and highlight every textual element I suspect to cause a translational problem or a certain shift regardless of its type (cultural, linguistic, religious etc...), based on my familiarity with both source culture and especially the target culture, being an Arab Muslim myself. Second, I read the Arabic text and mark all the textual elements I am sure or

suspect only belong to the target culture (Arab Muslim). Third, I compare each element with its translation and examine the translation strategy used. This simple tool will not only facilitate collecting the data according to the more systematic methods I use later, but also allows me to have an initial comprehensive insight of both texts. It might also surprisingly reveal elements not accounted for in the methods used. In other words, searching only for specific textual elements and categories according to a given methodology could blind the scholar from other elements that could be crucial to the translation analysis. Moreover, this method will help confirm or deny the scholar's intuition about a certain idea or perspective; in this sense, it sharpens the scholar's awareness of his/her own engagement in the research and thus improves its descriptive quality.

Chapter Two introduces the S-H genre as a system within the literary polysystem. It addresses the status and significance of this literature in terms of translation and academic translation research. Then it attempts to delineate a historical context for the S-H genre in the Arab world due to the lack of information on it compared to that in the Western world.

Chapter Three starts with a synoptic introduction to the book and a detailed review of the reception of both the English and Arabic texts of *the Secret*. Then I present the examples/excerpts and examine and describe them. I provide back-translation of the Arabic examples which will better highlight the translational interference, and allow access for non-Arabic speakers to engage in the details. The data collected will be organized under three main sections: preliminary data, micro-level and macro-level. I close the chapter with the systemic context, where the

description, identification and analysis of norms will take place, based on the theories I used.

Chapter Four is a post-norm analysis in which I examine the potential factors participating in the rendition of *The Secret's* Arabic translation in its present result. I particularly examine: the textual function of *The Secret*, the genre's connection to religion, the influence of socio-political norms in the Arab world on Arabic translation norms, and issues of translation consequences and decision making. This analysis is based on the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter One.

In my conclusion, I succinctly re-articulate the results and findings of this thesis. I also critically reflect on my study in terms of limitations and potential future research.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

This chapter is an overview of the theoretical framework I will use for my thesis. I will draw on: Itamar Even-Zohar's Polysystem theory (Henceforth: PS) (1990, 1997 & 1999), Gideon Toury's concept of translation norms (1995), Katherina Reiss' text type theory (1989), Anthony Pym's view of the concept of risk and reward (2008), and finally Herbert A. Simon's concept of "satisficing" (1956). As for my methodology, I will use José Lambert and Hendrik Van Gorp's model for describing translations (1985) and Ritva Leppihalme's work on translation allusions (1997). Each theory will help shed a different light on the translation of *The Secret* and the S-H genre in general in order to eventually have a comprehensive analysis.

During the search for a perfect theoretical framework, I did not know which theories to use. But I certainly knew very well the approaches I would not take. Based on the nature of my thesis topic and on my own understanding/stance of translation, I did not want to take the old fashioned prescriptive approach or follow the purely linguistic model of translation research, nor did I want to fall in the trap of the concept of "equivalence" in its traditional use which, although necessary at some points, might reduce my thesis to a merely comparative text study. In what follows, I will introduce each theory I draw on, present its main concepts and explain how relevant and important it is to this thesis.

1. Itamar Even-Zohar: Polysystem Theory

In translation studies, PS theory is an approach first introduced to the field by the translation scholar Itamar Even-Zohar in the 1970s under the influence of Russian

formalism. It aims to study the operation, function and evolution of literary systems. In Even-Zohar's words, a polysystem is "a multiple system, a system of various systems which intersect with each other and partly overlap, using concurrently different options, yet functioning as one structured whole, whose members are interdependent" (1990, p. 11). In other words, PS accounts for heterogeneous hierarchized stratification of systems constantly interacting to compose one large polysystem. Subsequently, literature is viewed as a polysystem encapsulating in its turn all the different systems that make it up, i.e. the various literary writings and works, traditions and genres. He argues that the dynamic relations between these systems are the stimuli that shape a given literature in a given culture.

The concept of PS was introduced to the field of translation studies in Even-Zohar's article "The position of translated literature within the literary polysystem" (1999). Translated literature was viewed as a system in its own right operating dynamically within the literary polysystem. To put it in Even-Zohar's words: "I conceive translated literature not only as an integral system within any literary polysystem, but as a most active system within it" (1999, p. 193). PS was particularly influential in translation studies for it shifted the view of translated literature from sporadic individual works into a legitimate system with its own "cultural and verbal network of relations" (Even-Zohar, 1999, p. 192), putting translated literature on par with original literature. Based on this view, it is possible to look at the S-H genre as an example of "the existence of translated literature as a particular literary system" (Even-Zohar, 1999, p. 192). Translated S-H texts constitute a (sub-) system on their own within the literary system of translated works. Even-Zohar further posits that the nature of translated literature correlates with and is dependent on its position in the literary

polysystem. He explains how we tend to wrongly assume that translated literature permanently occupies a peripheral position based on its marginal presence in historical accounts of literature. But in fact it is in constant struggle with other literary systems or genres over the central position. Even-Zohar outlines three situations or conditions in which translated literature assumes a central position. First: when a given literature is "young" and has not been fully established. In this case translated literature serves it and fulfills its need of various literary types and traditions by bringing in borrowed literary models and experiences (1999, p. 194). Second: when a given literature is "peripheral" or "weak", as is the case for some small nations in comparison to larger nations whose literature assumes the central position in the literary hierarchy (p. 194). By the same token, translated literature fills the whole or partial lack of that literature which tends to "depend on import alone" (p. 194). Third: when a given literature witnesses "turning points" or "historical moments" in which established models are no longer acceptable. This leads to a literary "vacuum" and translated literature is to fill it with foreign or external models, assuming in this way a central position" (p. 194).

This question of positionality is the main reason I chose to draw on PS theory. I have noted in my introduction that this thesis aims to study the behavior demonstrated in *The Secret's* translation, and postulate on the influence of Arabic S-H translations on original Arabic S-H works. This thesis also attempts to locate the position of the S-H (sub-) system in the Arabic literary polysystem. It examines the relation between the position translated S-H literature occupies (central or peripheral) and its implications for the original S-H genre of the receiving culture, its nature and features. In other words, there is a strong correlation between the way this genre has been translated and the nature and features of the relatively new born local genre.

Depending on the position of translated literature, two different forces come into play: "innovatory" (primary) and "conservatory" (secondary) (Even-Zohar, 1999, p. 193). The former applies when translated literature is centrally positioned and "participates actively in shaping the centre of the polysystem." (p. 193) In other words, it introduces new genres, forms and techniques, follows foreign models and expands the target culture's repertoire. The latter, on the other hand, applies when translated literature lies in the periphery of the literary PS and has no influential role in the changing processes of the PS. Instead, it conforms to and insures the continuity of conventional, long-established norms in the target literature becoming a "major factor of conservatism" and a "means to preserve traditional taste" (p. 195). Hence, the innovatory-conservatory struggle is in some way a by-product of the centre-periphery struggle. This holds true for literary genres or works in terms of their status, whether high/canonized literature (when they occupy a central position) or low/non-canonized (when in a peripheral position). PS theory gave legitimacy to non-canonized works since "the term **genre** is understood in its widest sense" (Baker, 2001, p. 231).

According to Even-Zohar, the position of translated texts will influence the translational result; if they occupy a central position, the translation will be adequate (source-oriented), but if they occupy a peripheral one, the translation will be appropriate (target-oriented) (1999, p. 196-197). Polysystem theory will allow me to set this genre in its historical, cultural and literary context. It will also help illustrate its nature, features and behavior within the network of its relation to "home co-systems" (1999, p. 193).

Another point worth mentioning is that since PS is a theory of systems, it resulted in a shift from studying individual texts to examining collections of texts, or

conducting corpus studies.³ This thesis, however, is a case study focusing on one book, *The Secret*. But since the genre has not yet been discussed in translation studies, as I explained in my introduction, I believe it is important to examine the various systemic relations and dynamics even though it is one single text. I shall also add that PS theory will only serve as the starting point for my analysis because it lacks a methodology that allows the scholar to conduct a systematic research.⁴

2. Gideon Toury: Translation Norms

Gideon Toury, the founder of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), was the first to introduce translation as a norm-governed activity in his pioneering work *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (1995). His work, however, is deeply rooted in the PS approach in terms of drifting away from evaluative comparative approaches, and expanding the circle of translation research from the basic source vs. target texts into a network of systemic relationships, not only between source and target cultural systems, but also target-target relations between texts and their collective function (Baker, 2001, p. 214). Drawing on social theory, Toury defines norms as "the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community—as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate—into performance instructions appropriate and applicable to particular situations, specifying what is prescribed and forbidden as well as what is tolerated and

³ Sara Laviosa for example writes: "Another significant development that supports corpus work is the growing influence of polysystem theory in literary and translation research... Some fundamental changes have been brought about by this new belief. There has been a shift away from the traditional analysis of individual source texts *vis-à-vis* their translations to the study of large numbers of translated texts" (2002, p. 19).

⁴ PS theory received a number of criticisms. Chief among them, according to Edwin Gentzler (2001), is its focus on abstract models vs. real-life situations and the generalizations stated on translation universal laws with insufficient evidence.

permitted in a certain behavioural dimension." (1995, p. 55) I understand Toury's translational norms as the underlying force that shapes the regularities of translational behaviour manifested in the options, decisions and tendencies translators opt for regularly over a given time in a given culture. This view of translation treats it as a process of decision-making on multiple levels and considers the translator as a social actor working within the conventions/rules of a given community. It is important to note that norms are not synonymous with regularities. When examining a text, "whatever regularities are observed, they themselves are not the norms. They are only the external evidence of the latter's activity" (Toury, 1998, p. 15). As Toury explains, the investigation of norms is a purely descriptive process and therefore should not begin with priorities based on the scholar's own perception of translation or what he/she believes to be the ideal model of translating. Hence, two main points are to be borne in mind: (a) norms and regularities exist independently of the translation scholar/observer and (b) a norm-based research depicts the actual translation reality manifested in the material under study. The rationale for drawing on Toury's norms in my analysis is to examine translational regularities evident in *The Secret* in an attempt to discover the underlying translational norms exercised in this text. As Toury explains, translational norms are active during the act of translation itself; "what is actually available for observation is not so much the norms themselves, but rather norm-governed instances of behaviour. To be even more precise, more often than not, it is the products of such behaviour" (1995, p. 65). In other words, translational norms are the hidden part of the iceberg, and in order to see and reach it, the scholar has to use and study what is observable and available. The translated text then should be studied in reverse. As Toury points out:

There is an interesting reversal of direction here: whereas in actual practice, it is subjugation to norms that breeds norm-governed behaviour which then results in regularities of surface realisations, the search for norms within any scholarly programme must proceed the other way round. . . . For the researcher norms thus emerge as *explanatory hypotheses* (of observed [results of] behaviour) rather than entities on their own right. (1998, p. 16-17)

Moreover, Toury divides translational norms into three main categories: initial norms, preliminary norms and operational norms. The Initial norm refers to the primary choice the translator makes of whether to subscribe to the norms realized in the source text, or to the norms of the target culture hosting the source text. Adhering to the source norms results in an "adequate" translation of the source text, while adhering to the target norms results in an "acceptable" translation for the target culture. Preliminary norms refer to the factors governing the choices of the text type or the individual text to be translated in the first place (i.e. translation policy), and to considerations about the usage of mediating languages other than the ultimate source language (i.e. directness of translation). Operational norms refer to the decisions made during the process of translation which will affect the matrix of the translated text in terms of the target language material, its location and the textual segmentation (i.e. matricial norms), and also refer to the selection of linguistic material that will formulate the translated text (i.e. textual linguistic norms) (1995, p. 58-59). The three categories are complementary and comprehensive as they look into the process of translation in all stages. I will use Toury's three categories of norms to analyze the data I examine in Chapter Three.

Since the concept of norms contextualizes the translated text systemically, it is by default not acceptable for this research to only rely on data from the source and

target texts. Toury states that there are two sources of information; "textual" and "extratextual" (Toury, 1995, p. 65). The former refers to the text itself and its analysis, while the latter pertains to the extra information surrounding the text such as translators' prefaces, authors' statements, reviews, etc. For this thesis, my textual sources will be the original English text and the Arabic translation of *The Secret*, while the extratextual will derive from Byrne's preface to her book, the reviews and critiques of her work in the West and the Arab world, reviews of the Arabic text and issues of production and reception of the book in both cultures.

Another Tourian revolutionary concept is his view and use of equivalence theory.⁵ Instead of leaving out or abandoning this notion from translation theory and research, he retained, yet decentralized it by positing that "it is norms that determine the (type and extent of) equivalence manifested by actual translation" (Toury, 1995, p. 61). The concept was turned "on its head", as Shuttleworth & Cowie note (1997, p. 51), because Toury treated equivalence as a feature or a manifestation of norms rather than a criterion which a translation must fulfill, shifting the angle of looking at equivalence from prescriptive into descriptive. The main point here is the interdependence of these concepts: norms determine the type and extent of equivalence, and this in turn will determine the type of translation decisions to make and strategies to follow. Therefore, my examination of the type and extent of equivalence evident in the translated text of *The Secret* is an inevitable task.

⁵ Equivalence has been a controversial yet central concept in translation studies since the 1950s and 1960s in both theory and practice. It assumes an equivalent relationship between the source and target texts on various levels. To put it briefly: linguistic (to keep parallel form, style, grammatical structure, etc.), semantic (to keep parallel meaning or message) and functional (to keep parallel function or effect). Translation theorists have provided different perspectives aiming to identify equivalence and define its nature (for more detail see Baker 2001; Munday 2008; Shuttleworth & Cowie 1997).

Translational norms, in the light of descriptive translation studies, have incorporated a methodological feature which PS theory lacked. The concept of norms is seen as a theoretical and methodological model that allows to test "research-oriented set of hypotheses" suitable for translation research as a cultural phenomenon (Baker, 2001, p. 171).

3. Richard Jacquemond: Translation policies and Discourse in the Arab World

In translation studies, over the past two decades, translation has been viewed as a cultural phenomenon in the sense that the translation act does not occur in a vacuum or in isolation of its environment. It is constantly interacting with other forces within the cultural ambience in a given area at a given time (see Bassnett & Lefevere 1990, and Lefevere 1992, for example). Hence, examining the nature of this interaction is key to have a clearer understanding of translated texts and the norms they demonstrate. To this end, I draw on translation policies in the Arab world within the socio-political landscape.

So far, there have been few academic studies on translation policies in the Arab world. A seminal article on this topic, however, was undertaken by Richard Jacquemond in 2009 entitled "Translation Policies in the Arab World: Representations, Discourses and Realities". I decided to draw on this work particularly because of the comprehensive and critical review he provides. Not only does he thoroughly analyze the translation policies set up in the Arab world taking into consideration the historical, ideological and political contexts, but he also scrutinizes the dominant popular discourse on Arabic translation, both locally and

internationally, and compares it to concrete realities of translation. Jacquemond traces three patterns of translation: (a) translation as a tool serving the occupying powers during the colonization of the Arab world (religious translations were the most notable), (b) translation as a major tool for "state-building and development in the hands of [Arab] political and intellectual elites" who aimed to build a modern Arab state and realized the modernization needs (2009, p. 15), and (c) translation as a tool for fulfilling the "tastes, needs or expectations of a new reading public" which followed the "emergence of press and publishing industry" (2009, p.16). Jacquemond then explains that it is the first two patterns (translation as an instrument for state-building and power assertion for colonial forces) that shaped the development of translation programmes in the Arab world after the end of the Second World War and the independence of several Arab countries. This development, in Jacquemond's words, "characterized both the translation programmes initiated by Arab states, as part of their linguistic (Arabization) and cultural policies, and those initiated by foreign states, as part of their development aid policies, and at the same time, as a tool of cultural diplomacy" (2009, p. 16). Among the foreign programmes, the American, French and Soviet had the strongest impact in the region; each had a different orientation and varied in scope and method, yet all aimed to increase cultural and diplomatic exchange, and "underline what has often been referred to as the competition of two universalisms, after the collapse of the third universalism that marked the 20th century in its turn, that of the USSR" (2009, p. 23).⁶ As for the indigenous Arab programmes, translation was in service of a pan-Arab nation-building project. Translation policies were an implementation of the linguistic policies

⁶ For more details on these foreign programs, see Jacquemond's review (p. 21-24).

of fostering Arabic (Arabization) and the cultural policies which aimed to promote reading. Jacquemond further explains:

these policies are articulated around two complementary logics: a humanistic one, where the aim is to translate into Arabic the 'masterpieces of world literature and thought' in order to secure for the Arabic language a place within the main modern literary languages – to 'accumulate literary capital' in Pascale Casanova's terms (Casanova 2005), and a developmentalist one, where the aim is to make the most recent scientific developments available to the Arab readership and to contribute to the modernization of the Arabic language. (2009, p. 24)

These two logics have featured in the major translation projects, especially those launched in Egypt (such as the Thousand Books project of 1955, the Second Thousand Books of 1986, and the National Project for Translation of 1995), and in Syria (such as the Syrian Ministry of Culture project of 1960) (2009, p. 24-29).⁷ In fact, these logics are clearly and repeatedly expressed through the objectives of these projects. To give an insight in this articulation, I shall include the following quote, translated and examined by Jacquemond, from a forward written by Jabir Usfur for a catalogue of the 1000 books printed under the National Project for Translation.

No matter what we say about the importance of self-fashioning, of intellectual independence, no matter how far we go in developing our own capacities and searching for a specific identity for ourselves, we cannot achieve any concrete results as long as we ignore the necessity of opening ourselves to the world around us, of mastering the secrets of its progress and of adopting those of its achievements that will push

⁷ Despite the differences between these projects, Egypt and Syria are known to maintain the most consistent translation policies. Iraq and Kuwait also have significant translation work and more recently Lebanon and United Arab Emirates. For more details see Jacquemond (p. 24-31).

us forward and raise us from necessity to freedom, from backwardness to progress. (As cited in Jacquemond, 2009, p. 26-27)

In this sense, translation is deemed not only as the means for cultural formation and development, but also as a key for finding and shaping Arab identity and locating its position in the modern world. These statements and objectives about translation in the Arab world, and even the very reason for conducting both foreign and indigenous translation support programmes, are arguably derived from what Jacquemond calls a "crisis discourse", a dominant discourse which states that "the Arabic translation movement is strikingly weak, a blatant illustration of the cultural lag of Arab societies and their faulty insertion in the international economy of knowledge" (2009, p. 16). The author attributes this discourse to the 2003 3rd Arab Human Development Report entitled *Building a Knowledge Society*, which has been officially cited and repeatedly reproduced.⁸ In a nutshell, the report's discourse revolves around "topoi of 'lack' and 'loss' ", to use Jacquemond's words. The "lack" refers to the number of translations which is too small (quantitative aspect), and the "loss" refers to the quality of the selected material, i.e. translations themselves, and the fact that they do not revive the lost Arab heritage to which the world's and the West's modernity is attributed, according to the authors of the report (2009, p. 21). Jacquemond notes that it is essential to place the discourse of lack and loss in its ideological and political context (colonial, and post-colonial and post-modernist) in order to understand the emergence, motif and evolution of translation projects in the Arab world.

⁸ This is the report which stated that "the aggregate total of translated books from the Al-Ma'moon era to the present day amounts to 10,000 books - equivalent to what Spain translates in a single year" (2003, p. 67). However, Jacquemond questions the accuracy of the report's statements and statistics, arguing that it is "based on antiquated and incomplete data", and provides different estimated figures based on his personal research that greatly differ from that of the report (2009, p. 15 and see p. 17-19).

4. Lambert and Van Gorp: A Model for Describing Translations

I was searching for a methodology that operates within the descriptive approach in order to be compatible with my theoretical framework. Hence, I will use José Lambert and Hendrik Van Gorp's work entitled "On Describing Translations" which is based on PS and DTS. It provides a "hypothetical scheme" that helps scholars conducting case studies (Lambert & Van Gorp, 1985, p. 43).⁹ The scheme is based on three parameters: the text, the author and the reader. It examines the relationships between them within each system, the source and target individually, and between the two systems mutually. Thus, both binary and complex relations are taken into account. The relation between source and target systems is seen as open and interactive. Therefore, this method is not a mere confrontation between the source and target texts.

The authors divide their scheme into four sections: preliminary data (e.g. title, author's and translator's name, general strategy), macro-level (e.g. text's sections, narrative structure, authorial comment), micro-level (e.g. word choices, grammatical patterns, style, forms of speech) and systemic context (intertextual and systemic relations, genre) (1985, p. 52-53). These sections will form the skeleton of my analysis in Chapters Three and Four as will be elaborated below. Their comprehensive approach to translational analysis allows for spinning a translational web of relationships, yet "it is the scholar's task to establish which relations are the most important ones" (1985, p. 44). Another advantage of using this method is that "the heuristic stage receives a central place within the methodology itself" (Delabastita, D'hulst, and Meylaerts, 2006, p. 13). It provides a "very practical procedure for translation analysis, proposing a

⁹ The word "scheme" is the authors' own.

number of successive steps and checklists" (p. 13) to consider in order to avoid intuitive, subjective work and cherry-picking evidence.

I have noted earlier that the work of both Even-Zohar and Toury is better suited to corpus studies. This, however, does not preclude the researcher from conducting a case study focusing on one text alone. Yet, it requires a more precise application of these two approaches, which is something achievable by drawing on Lambert and Van Gorp's methodology. As they clearly note: "it is not at all absurd to study a single translated text or a single translator, but it is absurd to disregard the fact that this translation or this translator has (positive or negative) connections with other translations and translators" (1985, p. 45).

Because this method is based on the work of Even-Zohar and Toury, the questions this method poses also revolve around the notions of systems and norms. For example, Lambert and Van Gorp give special focus to the examination of norms and strategies when studying translation phenomena and consider it a priority. As they clearly state: "since translation is essentially the result of selection strategies from and within communication systems, our main task will be to study the priorities- the dominant norms and models- which determine these strategies" (p. 40). Since the pivotal question this thesis addresses is that of strategies and norms governing the production and reception of *The Secret's* Arabic translation, I believe this method is compatible with the kind of concepts and questions proposed. Central to this method as well is the question of equivalence; it is a concept inseparable from that of strategies and norms and in fact they lead to one another in a translation research, as discussed above. The authors ask: "what kind of equivalence can be observed between both communication schemes, or between particular parameters between them?" (p. 40),

asserting the importance of examining equivalence on both micro and macro levels. One then can better understand or reach the motive behind opting for certain strategies and eventually be able to analyze the findings. Studying the type of equivalence, however, cannot be complete without taking into account the type of text the researcher is working with and the nature and function(s) it plays in a certain space. In other words, when tracing the strategies and equivalence type(s) in a text and finally attributing them to certain norms, one must not ignore that a text's function is a main consideration to take into account in translation analysis, for it influences the choices of translational equivalence and strategies. Therefore, a functionalist approach is necessary.

5. Katharina Reiss: Text Type and Function

The direct connection between text type/function and the way a translation will be processed by a translator was first introduced by the Vienna-based scholar Katharina Reiss. Reiss's main contribution was the fact that she developed the concept of equivalence and moved it from the level of the word or the sentence into the overall textual level. Her work was the seed of the functional and communicative approach that started in the 1970s and was later built on by many scholars such as Mary Snell-Hornby (1988), Hans J. Vermeer (2000) and Christiane Nord (1997). Drawing on her work, I will examine the text type of *The Secret* as a factor that might have played a role in delivering the Arabic text in its final result. In her article "Text types, translation types and translation assessment", Reiss, as the title suggests, posits an interdependent relation between the type of text and both its translation and evaluation. Her work is based on the German psychologist and linguist Karl Bühler's Organon model of

language functions, which proposes three functions: representation, expression and appeal (Nöth, 1990, p. 185). Reiss used this model and provided a tripartite taxonomy of text types: informative, expressive and operative.¹⁰ A text is considered informative when its main function is to communicate content (e.g. facts, information, news, etc.); it is considered expressive when its main function is to communicate creative and artistic content; and finally, a text is operative when it is persuasive in nature and intends to influence the behavior of the reader (Reiss 1981, 1989). Text varieties or genres (e.g. a poem, documentary, advertisement etc.) are associated either strongly to a specific type, or tend to be a “host of hybrid of types” (Munday, 2008, p. 72). Reiss further argues that “the primary function of a translated text clearly affects how the translator will operate”, i.e. the strategies and techniques he/she will use (1989, p. 105). The translation method for an informative text is plain prose and should focus on “sense and meaning” to insure the “invariability of the content” (p. 127). The translational mode for an expressive text, on the other hand, is carried on by “identification. . . . with the artistic and creative intention of the SL author in order to maintain the artistic quality of the text” (p. 128), while the translation of an operative text “must be capable of triggering off analogous impulses of behavior in the TL reader” (p. 129).

Thus, the reason I chose to draw upon this theory can be summed up this way: the text's function is essential to address in my quest of the norms governing the Arabic translated text for it could be a possible factor of delivering the translation the way it was delivered. Therefore, I intend to examine how the function of *The Secret* informed

¹⁰ Reiss also added an additional type in a later work (1981): the audio-medial text.

translator's strategies and methods in producing the Arabic text. This theory will help me answer three questions:

- 1- What is/are the function(s) of *the Secret*?
- 2- Did the Arabic translation maintain that function and by what means?
- 3- What are the strategies and techniques adopted by the translator(s) and do they correlate with the function?

Text type theory, however, received some criticism, that Jeremy Munday briefly summarizes (based on Fawcett's discussion in 1997), which questions Reiss's whole theory as to "whether text types can really be differentiated. . . . Co-existence of functions within the same ST [source text] and the use of the same ST for a variety of purposes are evidence of the fuzziness that fits uneasily into Reiss's clear divisions" (2008, p. 75). Therefore, the question that poses itself in this regard is: where to place *The Secret* according to Reiss's functional classification, given the rigidity of her categories? S-H books are texts with multiple hybrid themes: they cover a wide array of social, political, spiritual, religious and psychological topics. This adds to the complexity of their nature and, in turn, of their translation. This complexity is twofold: it has to do with the particularity of the genre (i.e. the interdisciplinary nature of its themes and variety of its content, its structure, writing modes and stylistic features), and it has to do with the reader's own usage of the text as a S-H text as will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Hence, how would the translator/scholar deal with the slippery nature of the S-H genre? The problem of the fluidity of textual boundaries, their potential functions and, consequently, the possibility of various different and distinct translations was more or less resolved by the translation scholar Mary Snell-Hornby who suggests in her

seminal work, *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach* (1995), the non-separation of areas of translation by employing the concept of "cline"¹¹ forming a horizontal spectrum in order to abandon definite divisions between areas of translation in favor of "the notion of gradual transition" which allows more flexibility to accommodate different translations (1995, p. 31). Thus, she replaces Reiss' rigid text types with "prototypes" and constructs a diagram which can accommodate more kinds of translation and take into account the context of texts. Although Snell-Hornby's theoretical principle could be a solution to avoid these clear-cut functional classifications, this thesis will rather focus on Reiss's text types to carry out the analysis for two main reasons. First, Snell-Hornby's integrated approach erases the demarcation between text types and genres, yet does not add much beyond that. As Ernst-August Gutt explains:

While one sympathizes with Snell-Hornby's criticism and rejection of category-and typology- based approaches, it is not clear what is gained, in the final analysis, by the changeover into prototypology. Recognizing the existence of "blurred edges and overlappings" is commendable, but without further explication the translator is left to his own devices as how to move along the cline between the prototypes". (1990)

Second, there is a crucial point in Reiss's work which I believe is the key to step out of Reiss's tripartite deadlock, i.e. her statement about the simultaneous presence of the three communicative forms or what she calls "mixed forms". She stresses this point in a

¹¹ The concept of cline was first introduced by the linguist Michael Halliday (Snell-Hornby, 1995, p. 37).

later and more detailed work, under the title "Type, kind and individuality of text: Decision making in translation" (1981), and states:

If we accept the three types, the informative, expressive and the operative type, as the basic forms of written communication (intercultural), it should be taken into account that these types are not only realized in their "pure" form, that is, that they do not always appear in their "fully realized form"; and it should also be considered that, for a variety of reasons (change in the conventions of a text variety, or if we have to do with plural intentions) the communicative intention and communicative form cannot be unambiguously adapted to each other. (p. 124)¹²

Based on this coexistence of the three types in a text, *The Secret* then, like other texts, consists of the three forms. Yet, Reiss argues that in each text there is a dominant form on which a decision is made since "form and function of language signs do not show a relation of 1:1" (1981, p. 129). Now, the question that poses itself is how to apply Reiss's theory to this case? In other words, how exactly can one systemically decide a text's function and a suitable translation method? What methodology does she provide? Reiss distinguishes between two phases the translator is expected to go through:

1. The translating process or "the phase of analysis" where the function of the source text is to be clarified in three stages: "the establishment of text type", "the establishment of text variety" and "the analysis of style" (1981, p. 124-127).

¹² It is important to note that for Reiss, mixed forms are exceptional or problematic cases. Snell-Hornby, on the other, hand criticizes this point, for she considers them the normal cases. She states: that "blend-forms are part of the conceptual system and not the exception" (p. 31).

2. The phase of “reverbalization” where the suitable translation method is matched with the decided text type and text variety accordingly (p. 127).

These stages and steps are meant to aid the translator in the first place, yet they are equally beneficial for the translation scholar. The main difference is that the scholar in the phase of reverbalization is producing a form of translation analysis of the target text rather than actually producing it. In my case, I am producing a “description” of the target text since I am following the descriptive approach. Although text type theory belongs to the prescriptive school, given Reiss’s fixed instructive and evaluative approach, I think it is possible to draw on it from a descriptive perspective by reading and analyzing *The Secret* with no pre-judgment or pre-expectation of its textual type and the method the translator has opted for. It is essential to use text type theory in my analysis for it highlights the importance of the communicative purpose of translating *The Secret*. I intend to examine whether the translator preserved the communicative purpose of the source text or appropriated it. This question, however, is a complex one since it pertains to many factors; central to them are cultural considerations and ideological constraints. This leads me to my next two theories on cultural allusions and the notion of ideology.

6. Ritva Leppihalme: Allusions as Culture Bumps

Because the S-H genre is culture-oriented, as I pointed out in the Introduction and will further discuss in Chapter Two, translation problems related to cultural codes are all but surprising. Therefore, highlighting the cultural value of the text and studying the way the translator dealt with the cultural references is at the core of this case study. In her book entitled *Cultural Bumps: An Empirical Approach to the Translation of Allusions*

(1997), Leppihalme expands the concept of allusion beyond its literary sense and extends it into translation studies. She defines translational allusions as "the variety of uses of performed linguistic material (Meyer, 1968) in either its original or modified form, and of proper names, to convey often implicit meaning" (1997, p. 3). Allusions are therefore conceived as translational problems that require strategies to solve them, mainly because the recognition and understanding of allusions require translators that are bi-cultural, not only bilingual. The author studies the types of allusions (i.e. proper-name and key-phrase, regular or modified in terms of the degree of fidelity), their sources (historical, religious, literary and political), forms (expression of comparison and modified allusions), functions (thematic allusions like parody and irony) and uses of translational allusions (characterisation and indicating interpersonal relationships) (1997, p. 10-62). However, she does not provide typologies for allusions. To put it in her words: "I tend to agree with Pasco (1973: 467) that classifications of allusions are inadvisable: they may foreground what is external rather than the importance of the context for each allusion" (p. 10). Instead, Leppihalme limits the terminology to: (a) allusions proper (i.e. proper name and key phrase allusions) and (b) stereotyped allusions (i.e. "allusions in frequent use that have lost their freshness and do not necessarily evoke their sources; also clichés and proverbs") (p. 10). In this thesis, I will use the same terminology.

Most importantly, however, the author provides lists of potential strategies for dealing with allusions according to their type. For example, there are three main strategies for translating proper-name allusions: retention, replacement or omission of names. Each strategy is described in detail; for example, if the translator chooses to keep the name unaltered, he/she can use either the name as it is, and add some guidance

or insert a detailed explanation in a footnote (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 78-79). Strategies for key phrase allusions, however, are slightly different for they "require a change in wording. . . . Also, in the case of unfamiliar KP [key phrase] allusions, there is commonly no single standard translation for a KP" (p. 78). Given this distinction, Leppihalme provides a separate list of strategies for key phrase allusions such as the use of standard translation, minimum change, extra-allusive guidance, re-creation and omission, to name a few (p. 83-84). However, it is worth noting that the three strategies of retention, replacement and omission form the base of both lists.

Such detailed discussion of strategies of cultural references is crucial to my analysis of the strategies followed in *The Secret*. Another reason for choosing Leppihalme's work is her emphasis on the fact that recognizing these cultural allusions and references in texts by translators is as important as focusing on how to deal with them. Translators might miss many allusions in the text since recognizing them depends first and foremost on familiarity, which is reinforced by exposure and repetition. She delineates keys for enhancing the translator's ability to spot allusions, among these are: deviation in spelling, lexis, grammar and style, introductory phrases, extra-allusive devices (e.g. quotation marks) and rhyme (p. 62-66). These cultural attention enhancers are as helpful for the scholar as they are for the translator. Therefore, being culture-specific themselves, allusions are at the center of this thesis, as they will highlight the translator's strategies I aim to discover, examine and analyze. Allusions, however, are only one means by which culture is manifested in a text. There are many non-allusional textual elements which embody a culture and when examined reveal a certain ideology, a notion I discuss below.

7. Translation Strategies and Consequences

One of the questions I ask in this thesis is: could *The Secret* be translated differently? It may appear naive to ask whether there is another way of translating a text because the answer is almost always “yes”. Yet, this question becomes more significant when dealing with a text, or parts of texts, where religion, cultural taboos or sensitive subjects are involved, as in *The Secret*. To what extent is the translator willing to risk going against mainstream conventions? What may be the results or the consequences if he/she breaks or deviates from the prevailing socio-cultural tenets? How would his/her alternative translational behavior be received? Would it be accepted, rejected, celebrated or penalized? Translation strategies, from this perspective, are influenced, if not determined or controlled, by the consideration of the aftermath of the translator's deviant or normative behavior. Therefore, the concept of the translational consequences is crucial not only in the act of translating, but also in the examination of the translational methods and strategies and cannot be ignored.

8. Anthony Pym: Risk and Reward

In his 2008 article "On Toury's laws of how translators translate", Anthony Pym provides an interesting discussion on translational consequences in relation to strategies through two main concepts: risk and reward. The strategies Pym discusses are Gideon Toury's law of increasing standardization and the law of interference in comparison with Mona Baker's translation universals. I will refrain from going through his detailed analysis of these strategies because the crucial point he makes that is relevant to my work is that he views translators' strategies as "risk-averse strategies, and that their status as possible laws thus depends on the relative absence of rewards for translators

who take risks" (p. 311). He further states: "If translators are going to be rewarded (financially, symbolically or socially) for taking risks, then they are likely to take risks, rather than transfer them. Translators may then have an interest in breaking all the maxims, norms, laws or universals that theorists throw at them." (p. 325) Pym goes on to posit a "law-like formulation" that "Translators will tend to avoid risk . . . if and when there are no rewards for them to do otherwise" (p. 326). Therefore, this notion of "risk-management", as Pym explains, is essential not only for the analysis of translation behavior, but also to formulate laws or general rules about the translational behavior because it brings in a human dimension to take into consideration. In other words, it allows for describing and analyzing relations "that have a stronger human causation" (p. 326).

This view highlights the fact that mere linguistic and socio-cultural factors are not enough as correlations for explaining translator's strategic behavior. There is something more "human" about their choices. This humanistic view suggests asking questions differently. For example, instead of asking the dated evaluative questions about how good or bad a translation or a strategy is, or did the strategies opted for by the translator fulfill the required purpose, one is encouraged to ask: was the translation rewarding? On what level (personal, professional or financial)? Or what kind of reward does the riskier alternative bring about? Is it culturally and communicatively as rewarding? In other words, are the short-term rewards equal to the long term ones on all levels? Pym makes an important distinction between short- and long-term rewards. He writes that the text which "avoids many communicative risks" can gain "rewards in

the short term" while the rewards of the text which "runs a severe risk . . . in the short term" will pay off in the future.¹³ Based on his discussion, I posit the following:

- Opting for relatively safe or less risky strategies usually results in short-term rewards. It is an easier and more common path. Examples of such rewards could be personal, professional and financial.
- Opting for riskier strategies usually results in long-term rewards with possible short-term penalties or failures. It is a much more complicated and rare path. Examples of such rewards are more likely to be cultural, ideological, societal and communicative, besides the personal, professional and financial, which might be delayed (unless, in rare cases, the risk-taking options might be rewarded immediately and gain both short-term and long-term rewards).

Chapter Four of this thesis will examine whether taking another alternative, a riskier one in translating *The Secret* would have been equally, more, or less rewarding than the one examined here. Moreover, I decided to take Pym's point of view of the more "human" causation of the translator's behavior based on risk and reward a step further by drawing on an economic/administrative concept: "satisficing".

9. Herbert A. Simon: Satisficing

Herbert A. Simon, an American scientist and economist, coined the term "satisficing", which is a combination of "satisfy" and "suffice" (Manktelow, 2012, p. 185), to refer to

¹³ Pym's point on the temporal dimension (i.e. short and long term) of the risk and reward relation comes at the very end of his article. It is not directly linked to his analysis of the translator's behavior or choice but was discussed as part of his subjective opinion on Gideon Toury's translation laws (which Pym sees as a text running risk, due to its abstruse language, thus losing short term rewards but gaining long terms ones) and Mona Baker's translation universals (which he sees as a text avoiding risk due to its clarity and easy application and thus gaining short terms). Regardless of the highly personal context in which this point is discussed in, one could still make use of it.

the selection of a decision that is "good enough" to solve a specific problem or take a certain action (Simon, 1955, p. 118), but is "not necessarily the one that is the absolute best" (Manktelow, 2012, p. 185). This decision meets the threshold of acceptance or aspiration level. In Simon's words: "evidently, organisms adapt well enough to "satisfice"; they do not, in general, "optimize" (1956, p. 129). Because I am borrowing this concept from economic and administrative theory (precisely decision-making theory), I find it essential to discuss this notion in detail before I apply it to translation.

Simon argues that individuals, as well as organizations, do not maximise or seek the optimal solution. In reality they tend to "satisfice" or seek a satisfactory and sufficient solution. He came to this realization through his critique of economic theory which over-idealized the "economic man", and while forming the characteristics of the "administrative man" which is more realistic, more human-like compared to the economic man. In Simon's words, "While economic man maximizes—selects the best alternative from among all those available to him; his cousin, whom we shall call administrative man, satisfices—looks for a course of action that is satisfactory or "good enough" (1965, p. xxv). Another major characteristic that differentiates the two is that:

Economic man deals with the "real world" in all its complexity. Administrative man . . . believes that the real world is mostly empty—that most of the facts of the real world have no great relevance to any particular situation he is facing, and that most significant chains of causes and consequences are short and simple. . . . Hence, he is content to leave out of account those aspects of reality—and that means most aspects—that are substantially irrelevant at a given time. He makes his choices using a simple picture of the situation that takes into account just a few of the factors that he regards as most relevant and crucial. (1965, p. xxv- xxvi)

Simon rejected the omniscient rationality attributed to the economic man by economists for it is incompatible with the "actual or possible behavior of flesh-and-blood human beings" (1965, p. xxiii). He argued that there are at least three limits to objective or standard rationality that actual behavior falls short from. These are: (a) the incompleteness of knowledge of the "exact consequences of each choice" for human's knowledge is "fragmentary" and will not allow him to "induce future consequences from a knowledge of present circumstances", (b) the difficulty or failure of anticipating the consequences lead to imagining their value instead, connecting them to past experiences and avoiding negative results, (c) the scope of behavior possibilities that can come across the mind is limited since thinking of all possible patterns of behavior is inconceivable due to the human's limited capabilities (1965, p. 80-84). It is based on these limits that Simon described the human mind as having "bounded rationality". It is essential to mention that the tenets of Simon's "satisficing" hypothesis are grounded in his theory of "bounded rationality" which he introduced in his best-known work, *Administrative Behavior*. In this way, Simon dovetails administrative theory with bounded rationality and defines it as being "peculiarly the theory of intended and bounded rationality- of the behavior of human beings who *satisfice* because they have not the wits to maximize" (1965, p. xxiv).

The translation task involves a series of decisions, such as choosing the source text, publishing considerations, and choosing the suitable strategies and techniques. In most cases, it requires rational and fast decisions. For Simon, a rational decision is one that guarantees a sufficient and a satisfactory outcome. As he simply explains: "the task of rational decision is to select that one of the strategies which is followed by the

preferred set of consequences" (1965, p. 67). This set of consequences is also vital in the decision-making process of multiple alternative strategies.

In light of the "satisficing" theory, I will discuss the rational behavior of *The Secret's* translator taking into consideration three criteria: the degree of fulfilling the purpose, the consequences of such behavior, the time frame effect of such decision (long-term vs. short-term results or effects/ (or rewards in Pym's terms)).

The notion of "satisficing" has been of significant interest for a wide variety of scientific fields and disciplines such as economics, political and computer science, game theory, philosophy and evolutionary biology. As Michel Byron states: "indeed, these disciplines have cross-fertilized one another through the concept" (2004, p. 1). Thus, I believe it would be enriching to cross-fertilize translation studies and develop a "satisficing" translation strategy; a strategy in which the translator's bounded rationality will lead him/her to satisfice rather than maximize. I think that this rapprochement between Simon's decision strategies and translation strategies reveals common ground and will enrich the discussion I will develop in Chapter Four when I explore alternative translations of *The Secret*. I also think the "satisficing" theory will be highly serviceable for other future studies on translation and behavior.

10. Ideology and Translation

The notion of ideology has been central in translation studies discussions over the past decade (see Teun Van Dijk 1996; Maria Tymoczko 2003; Christina Schaffner 2003; Maria Calzada-Pérez 2003; Mona Baker 2001). Ideology is deemed inherent to the process and production of the translation, and has been analyzed by the different schools and approaches of translation studies.

For this thesis, I chose to draw on Ian Mason's definition of ideology as "the set of beliefs and values which inform an individual's or an institution's view of the world and assist their interpretation of events, facts, etc." (1994, p. 25). As Mason explains, this definition neutralizes ideology in the sense that takes it away from the traditional, commonly negative, political connotation associated to it. This view will suit the nature and type of book I am examining, and the genre it belongs to in general, which is not primarily a political text in the typical sense of the word. The justification of drawing on ideology here is twofold. First, the S-H genre is one that mirrors a world view of its own culture, as will be discussed in Chapter Two, and in this sense it is strongly linked to ideology. Second, this research is norm-oriented and since norms, as I presented them above, are patterns of behavior driven by beliefs and values shared in a given society, they greatly intersect with the concept of ideology. In fact, norms could be viewed as ideological manifestations. As such, the notion of ideology is an inevitable element to take into consideration since the study of translational norms practiced in *The Secret* is one of the main concerns of this thesis.

The ideology of the translator, and other actors involved in the translation production (publisher, editor, etc.), could be unconsciously reflected in the translated text, or consciously performed by him/her, especially if these actors belong to an institution adopting a certain ideological agenda. Either way, ideology will be manifested on different textual levels. In other words, ideology is condensed in textual elements, such as word choice, and lexico-grammatical structures, text type and structure. Christina Schaffner, for example, writes that the:

ideological aspect can be determined within a text itself, both at the lexical level (reflected, for example, in the deliberate choice or avoidance of a particular word) and the grammatical level (for example, use of passive structures to avoid an expression of agency, cf. Hodge and Kress 1993). Ideological aspects can be more or less obvious in texts, depending on the topic of a text, its genre and communicative purposes. (2003, p. 23)

Tracing and examining these textual elements allows the translation scholar to decode the translational behavior, which will then lead to revealing the norms that are embedded in the ideological make up of the culture on the overall level.

11. Methodology

The methodological approach for this thesis will be descriptive. I will draw on Lambert and Van Gorp's hypothetical scheme presented above, and on Leppihalme's approach of describing translational allusions. I will utilize the former method as a guide, for it provides comprehensive sets of elements and variables. The authors proposed four main sections for analysis: preliminary data, macro-level, micro-level and systemic context. Chapter Three of this thesis, in which I present and examine the data, will be structured according to these four sections.

- (1) Preliminary data. In this section, I present introductory information about *The Secret* in its original version (English). This includes examining the book's title and title page, meta-textual elements such as the preface and footnotes, and the completeness of the translation. The initial findings will help pave the way for subsequent steps of the examination.

- (2) The Macro-Level. On this level, which I might call the zoomed-out picture, I examine general information in both the source and target texts such as: the title, metatexts (preface, footnotes etc.), divisions of chapters, the internal narrative structure of content and the author's comments if available, and the overall strategy (whether translation is partial or complete). This will help delineate the features of the more in-depth investigation of the micro-level.
- (3) The Micro-Level. On this level, the zoomed-in picture, I will perform a more detailed examination at the linguistic level (i.e. word choice, narrative and style) of both the ST and TT. I will also identify the translational shifts and altered cultural and ideological elements in the Arabic text by tracing cultural markers evident throughout the whole text. The main goal is to identify the type of translational strategies applied by the translator. The examination of these strategies will be carried out and presented through two ways:
1. The examination of general cultural elements or markers¹⁴ that indicate the origin or the identity of the source of the text, and cultural allusions with a focus on proper name and key phrase allusions.
 2. The examination of phrases or segments related to four pivotal concepts in *The Secret* that have been perceived as ideologically problematic in both the source and target cultures: "the universe", "God", "creation" and the "supreme mind". The selection of these concepts in particular is based on my examination of: (a) the two texts and the translational

¹⁴ I understand cultural markers, in the loosest sense of the term, as elements affiliated to a given culture and refer, or point to its identity. They are culture-specific, yet are not allusive in nature.

comparison process I conducted which revealed they are the most repeated and recurrent concepts in the text, and (b) the study of the critiques the book received in both cultures, which also revealed they are the most problematic points for both cultures, as will be discussed in Chapter Three on the reception of *The Secret*.

- (4) Systemic Context. This section is a three dimensional view of the topic, a combination of the zoomed-out and zoomed-in pictures. I will be comparing the micro and macro levels and examining the compatibility between them in terms of delivering a homogeneous/coherent perspective and strategy. On this level, I will identify the translational norms and describe them. The analysis and discussions of this section will lead to the fourth and final chapter of the thesis, in which I present a deeper perspective on the translator's behavior in light of Reiss's text type theory, religious factors, Jacquemond's review of Arabic translation policies, Pym's concepts of risk and reward and Simon's theory of "satisficing". Intersystemic relations (i.e. the textual references and links to other genres or fields) and intertextual relations (i.e. links to other S-H works) will be touched upon throughout this discussion.

Chapter Two: S-H as a System and a Cross-Cultural Genre

This chapter focuses on three topics: (a) the status of the S-H genre as a system within the literary polysystem in which I briefly present some possible explanations for this status and how it influences the academic research on the genre, (b) the nature, status and challenges of the S-H genre from a translation perspective and its significance to the field of translation studies, and (c) the emergence of S-H literature in the Arab world, in which I attempt to sketch a historical background and highlight some observations and correlations with the source genre.

These observations and correlations can be considered speculative but their importance is twofold. First is the need to shed light on the role of translation in creating and contributing to the form and shape that the S-H genre develops in its new host environment, and the second is to compensate for the lack of information on the S-H genre in the Arab world vis-à-vis the rich analyses on S-H in the West. In other words, in order to systemically examine *The Secret* as one translated S-H text into Arabic, it is essential to look at S-H literature in the Arab world as a translated system—or sub-system of the Arabic literary system—in light of the cultural, social, and historical events that contributed to creating and shaping it.

S-H Literature in the Literary Polysystem and in Research

S-H books, their function and nature, have been studied by numerous scholars and explained by myriad definitions. Santrock, Minnett and Campbell, for example, define them as "books that are written for the lay public to help individuals cope with problems and live more effective lives" (1994, p. 4). The reference to "problems" here is essential for a translation analysis. Problems individuals encounter are embedded in

their own cultures and lives. Therefore, solutions suggested in these books should be viable and feasible for their readers, including readers of these books in translation, who are also seeking help.

Another definition is the one proposed by Sandra K. Dolby who states that "self-help books are books of popular nonfiction written with the aim of enlightening readers about some of the negative effects of our culture and worldview and suggesting new attitudes and practices that might lead them to more satisfying and more effective lives" (2005, p. 38). Dolby's definition is in the same vein as the one proposed by Santrock, Minnett and Campbell since both indicate the aim to better one's own life. Yet Dolby's has a more "educational" aspect. However, it is the "our culture and worldview" part of her definition that needs to be examined for it highlights the cultural specificity of these books.

The link between S-H books and culture is beautifully analyzed by Dolby when she ties Folklore studies with the S-H phenomenon based on the main function of folklore which is: "maintaining the stability of culture" (2005, p. 10). For her, S-H books are "works of analysis and interpretation and offer a cultural critique" (2005, p. 11). She points out that the writing style of S-H books is a highly contextual and performative one in which shared knowledge between the writer and the reader is vital. In this light, one can clearly see the role of the S-H book translator as that of the writer who keeps "shared knowledge" with the target reader as a priority. As part of her suggestions on how to study S-H and readers' testimonials on these books as "part of the study of American worldview", Dolby posits: "one way is simply in recognizing the values expressed through the self-help books are accepted readily because they are

already shared and validated by most members of the culture" (Dolby, 2005, p. 150).

Dolby argues that there is much more in this genre than providing advice.

Peter Kramer, S-H writer and the author of *Should You Leave?*, whom Dolby quotes and analyzes, addresses his readers in his book preface:

One way or another, I must come to know you. Otherwise I will be limited to something that is not quite advice—perhaps the transmission of values; because what passes for advice outside the individual encounter is often just the transmission of values. (As Cited in Dolby, p. 152)

Dolby comments:

Here, I think, is the crux of the matter with regard to what self-help writers are actually doing when they offer to help their readers. They are participating in a literary tradition whose primary purpose is the transmission of values—in this case, American values. And taking a cue from Mechling, we can view the voluminous body of self-help books as a shared and "mediating" structure—as a common text or secular bible—in response to which individual ideas or interpretations can be articulated. (p. 152)

She also argues that "the larger cultural frame of reference is the source of many ideas and materials that writers and readers use in creating or reading a self-help book, and yet it is the individual reader who uses such books in the private task of building a personal philosophy" (p. 158). It is that cultural frame of reference, with all the collective cultural values it encompasses and its uniqueness to the society or region within which it operates, that makes translating a S-H book and examining its translation at the core of translation studies, which places great significance on the

question of culture. The cultural specificity of S-H books poses translational challenges in terms of translatability. How would translation export or transfer that "frame of reference" into another culture? How would the target readers build their "personal philosophy" when it is offering them different values? What form(s) would the translation take? How would the translator deal with this cultural frame dilemma? What strategies would he/she adopt? Studies attempting to answer these questions would definitely widen and enrich the scope translation studies.

The S-H genre is still not considered as a legitimate field of study in academia, specifically in literary studies. It is hardly regarded as a worthy subject of study as a literary genre, nor has it been given space in university curricula. Even on the rare occasions when it is discussed in classes or seminars, it is quickly downgraded and judged as a "lowbrow" genre, as several newspaper and blog articles rank them. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that it has not received attention in translation studies. Many factors have contributed to the inferior status of the S-H genre. However, there are two main reasons: first, the negative image of the S-H genre due to a general tendency to underestimate S-H literature and question its "helpfulness"; several scholars, like Steve Salerno (2005) for instance, argue that the genre has a harmful and even dangerous effect on its readers. This view is also voiced by those in mainstream media, and is expressed through online communication channels such as internet blogs and chat rooms. *Urban Dictionary*—an online dictionary specialized in slang words and cultural words and phenomena not found in standard dictionaries and a resource where visitors provide explanations and definitions—calls S-H books "self hell books" because they make one feel worse after reading them. Second, even S-H writers refuse

the classification of their books under S-H, although they have been received as such.

As Micki McGee highlights:

Indeed, among academics whose books find their way to *New York Times* best seller list, it has become customary to deny that the book in question is a self-help book. For example, see Juliet B. Schor's disclaimer in her paperback edition of *The Overworked American* or Deborah Cameron's discussion of Deborah Tannen's denial of the self help role of her books. (2005, p. 195)

This is not to say, however, that the S-H genre has been completely ignored or overlooked; it has been studied in fields such as sociology, psychology, gender studies, and feminist studies. Yet the focus of these studies has been limited to almost the same questions: What is the S-H phenomenon? How and why did it start and continue to flourish? What are the effects, negative and positive, of S-H books on readers? How are men and women represented in these books?

Therefore, I believe it is time to ask new and different questions and shift the focus onto other perspectives, not to develop the S-H genre particularly but to inform and enrich other fields through this exhaustively produced and seemingly "here to stay" genre. In order to do so, however, the S-H genre should be deemed as a literary system on its own right, and approached by researchers and academics from a perspective that is neither conventional, normative, nor evaluative.

For a researcher to approach this field without prejudice does not necessarily preclude the possibility of stating an opinion or stance on the genre. It means that the results of research shall not be influenced or driven by such a stance. Hence, I shall reveal my own personal stance on the S-H genre and the way I will approach it. I am

neither "anti" nor "pro" S-H literature, in the way many readers are usually polarized. I am aware, however, of the negative effects that have led many scholars to view this literature as a problem per se; yet I see this literature as a symptom or a byproduct of whatever problem a society is experiencing, a case that needs to be seriously examined from as many angles as possible. Therefore, I agree with opinions that view S-H as a sign of "social dissatisfaction" and "pre-political protest" (McGee, 2005, p. 180); "a symptom of social unrest that has not found a political context" (McGee, 2005, p. 97)¹⁵ rather than opinions that limit the discussions of the S-H "culture", as McGee names it, to its mere negative effect which victimizes the reader, or to being a phenomenon of marketing success.

Another view of S-H is the one provided by Sandra Dolby, who considers the S-H book as a "cultural artifact" (2005, p. 153), a "shared knowledge" between the writer and the reader of a given culture, a "cultural critique" of the character of the society, a process of building one's personal philosophy within the overall collective knowledge shared by a given culture (2005, p. 157-159).

To summarize, in order to examine a S-H text from a translation point of view, I approach S-H literature as a phenomenon to be described rather than judged. Whether *The Secret*, or any other S-H text, is effective, helpful or harmful to readers, liked or hated is only relevant to this study in terms of the reception of the book, which is part of the research's descriptive process. It is the translator and his/her strategies that I place at the center of inquiry. This thesis is based on the following premise: the

¹⁵ These are only some of the views discussed by McGee. She argues, however, that one's position or approval of the validity of a certain position regarding the self help phenomenon depends to a great extent "on how one understands the self and the constitution of ideology" (p. 23). For further details, see her chapter "From Self- Made to Belabored".

translated S-H genre is a literary system interacting within the literary polysystem, and it is viewed as a store of cultural and ideological relations and a site for cross-cultural interactions.

S-H in Translation

S-H literature in translation has two dimensions: first, the literature itself being translated into other languages, cultures and regions; and second, its status and significance within the system of translated literature. Both points will be discussed here.

A research of the classical S-H books such as Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936), Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), Samuel Smiles' *Self-Help* (1859/1996) and John Gray's *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* (1992) will indicate the numerous languages into which they have been translated. As a genre, S-H literature has travelled beyond its linguistic, geographical and cultural borders via translation. But in order for the receiving cultures and languages to welcome the various forms and contents of the S-H products from different source cultures, target cultural constraints, whether religious, socio-political, ideological etc., are applied. It is in these constraints that translation strategies are the most visible, and examining them will point to a network of systemic relations specific to that given culture. As Omotayo Oloruntoba-Oju explains:

It is well established that translation functions not just as a translingual vector of meaning but also uniquely as a vector of culture specificity. For it is only through translation efforts, processes and types, however

defined, that elements of one culture become available to an Other, along with those specificities that ultimately constitute the identity of the culture and its mark of difference from the other. (Rüdiger & Gross, 2009, p. 4)

The translation dilemma posed by S-H books in the cross-cultural context has been pointed out in prefaces written by the translators or the authors of translated S-H books. One example is the following excerpt from Fosdick's English introduction to the Japanese translation of his book *On Being a Real Person*:

It is gratifying to know that this book of mine is being translated into Japanese. I am sure that Mr. Motoo Takei [the translator] has not found the task an easy one, for the book came from intimate dealing with the inward problems of Americans and is full of allusions, illustrations and questions which may well be difficult to render into Japanese. Deeper than the local differences which distinguish us from each other, however, are the common problems associated with this difficult, tumultuous era in which we all live. Fear, anxiety, disillusionment, depression-such inward enemies of the spirit are common to us all...If through this book I can be of help especially to your young men and women facing, as we in America also do, this disordered and often frightening world, I shall be grateful. We must win an inward victory over ourselves before we can win a victory over the world's bitterness and war madness. In this book, I hope that I may speak personally to some who will be helped by its message. (Cited in Erin A. Smith, 2008, p. 10)

Fosdick's statement recognizes the difficulty of translating S-H texts due to their specific nature, and recognizes its adaptable translatable message regardless of cultural differences.

Besides issues of importing the S-H genre and all its specific elements into a given culture, translation can, in fact, be the force behind giving birth to local S-H writings. In the Arab world for example, several S-H books have been and are being written by Arab writers. Many self development institutions have been established. A quick online search will reveal that this also holds true for other cultures and regions such as East Asia, Africa and Europe. Those local S-H writings will definitely differ from the source genre not only because they are produced in a cultural and socio-political environment different from that of the source environment, but because their nature and form might depend on the way translation introduced this genre in a given locale. Therefore, I believe translation studies should stretch its scope and explore the S-H landscape and benefit from the findings.

So far, very little translation research addressing it has been conducted. I have found only one study addressing the S-H genre. Anna Mauranen (2002) compares corpora of mainly Finnish S-H books, both original and translations, in search of differences.^{16,17} The study is linguistic in nature and does not delve deeply into the cultural or ideological aspects. However, important remarks on the genre in general are provided and the study as a whole offers a useful model of research. I believe that the inferior status of S-H literature in academia in general and as a literary genre within the polysystem in particular, is also passed on to its status as a translated literature in the dynamics of the literary polysystem as well. This may explain the paucity of research on the translation of this low-prestige genre. As stated above, one

¹⁶ The study is published by inTRAlinea, an online translation journal affiliated to the department of interpreting and translation of the University of Bologna, Italy.

¹⁷ I shall note that studies on S-H literature in translation might exist and be abundant in language and culture pairs other than my working languages which are Arabic and English.

way to change this situation is to put the academic evaluative ranking aside, and engender value-free research.

S-H in the Arab World

Tracing the roots of the Arabic S-H genre and its emergence and development as a cultural phenomenon is a difficult task. Despite their invasion of bookstores and book exhibitions, S-H books have received little attention from scholars in the Arab world. There is insufficient data on the nature and origin of the genre. There are no statistics on production and translation, nor is there an analysis of the reasons behind its wide spread, let alone studies in relation to translation issues. There is also no information regarding the first local Arabic S-H books produced. An exception is to be made for non-scientific or academic materials such as magazine and newspapers articles and blogs which, however, do not go beyond pointing to the existence of this phenomenon, its flourishing sales and the fact that most these books are translations. It is worth noting that this is symptomatic of the many gaps in accurate data about Arabic knowledge in many different fields (see the 2003 Arab Human Development Report "Building a Knowledge Society").

Despite the lack of information on the first S-H books translated into Arabic, fragments of information are available in the form of historical accounts or anecdotes about the influence of some translated books. One example is Timothy Mitchell's critique of the impact of two S-H books on the Egyptian society when Egypt was a *de facto* British colony between 1882 and 1922. The first was the Arabic translation of Samuel Smiles' most popular work, *Self-Help: With Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance*, in 1880. It was translated by Ya'qub Sarruf who was a teacher in Beirut

and later the editor of the Cairene journal *Al Muqtataf* (Mitchell, 1991, p. 108). The translation became a "reader" at the Syrian Protestant School and had a deep impact on students and intellectuals. It later found its way to Egypt with the movement of Sarruf and a number of his students to Cairo and became highly influential in Egypt. As Mitchell explains:

Several events indicate the impact of Smiles' book in Egypt. In 1886 a Self-Help Society was founded in Alexandria. In 1898 Mustafa Kamil, the young leader of the nationalist opposition to the British occupation, founded a private school - an act which he declared to be his own practical application of the doctrine of self-help. The phrase 'self-help' was inscribed on the wall of the school, together with several other mottoes from Smiles' book. Mustafa Kamil's patron, the Khedive, is said to have gone even further and had the words of Samuel Smiles written up on the walls of his own palace. (p. 109)

In the first chapter of Samuel's book, the relations between the nation and the individual are intertwined. He opens his book stating "the worth of a state, in the long run, is the worth of the individuals composing it" (1996, p. 1). The ideas and themes of this book fitted very well with the circumstances and needs in Egypt at the time. In other words, the translation of this book came at a time when studying and understanding the Egyptian character was the dominant preoccupation for both British administrators as a different form of surveillance and gaining power, and for Egyptian anti-colonists and intellectuals who strived to understand the reasons that led Egypt to colonial rule and sought to change this reality (Mitchell, p. 104-109). In fact, "With the translation of works like *Self-Help*, then, the Egyptian character or mentality could be treated as a distinct and problematic object, the object upon which society and its

strength were said to depend. The very occupation of the country by the British could be blamed upon defects in the Egyptian character, defects whose remedy was Egypt's political task" (p. 109).

In 1881, an article from the journal *al-Muqtataf* recommended the translation of another work by Smiles, *Character*, among a list of books known to be translated from European languages into Japanese. The article examined the political success of a small country like Japan in its wars with China and Russia, comparing it to the political failure of Egypt and the Arab world and attributing this failure to differences in character and mentality. Therefore, one suggestion was to examine the kind of books the Japanese were translating and benefitting from as individuals and as a nation (Mitchell, 1991, p. 109-110).

The second book that has had a significant impact on the Arab region as a whole was Edmond Demolins's, *À quoi tient la supériorité des Anglo-Saxons*. Although it is more of a political work than a S-H one, it "understood the political process again in terms of the problem of individual character" (p. 110). The author argued that Britain defeated all previous colonial powers, particularly the French, and became the greatest power due to the character of the Anglo-Saxons and the distinctive modern education they received. What is interesting, however, was the very self-reflective or politically and culturally conscious type of translation produced by the translator, Ahmad Fathi Zaghul, who clearly expressed his goals of translating this book in his introduction. His aim, as Mitchell summarizes it,

was to make people consider the causes of this inferiority, by comparing the Egyptian 'character' to the character of the English who

had occupied their country. He enumerated what he considered the areas of weakness in the Egyptian character. . . . The foreigners could not be blamed for this, because they had benefitted by their own efforts, and by their social-scientific knowledge. (1991, p. 111)

The Arabic translation of Demolins's book was said to have an impact that transcended the Egyptian elites and made its way to the masses and provided, according to Mitchell, "a scientific basis for development, so that people could apply its principles to their situation" (1991, p. 111).

Although, these two examples by no means provide sufficient basis to formulate definite arguments, several elements can be taken into consideration for future studies about the history of S-H in the Arab world. I will sum them up into four main points:

- 1- S-H literature emerged in the Arab world in a colonial context in the late nineteenth century.
- 2- The shape of S-H literature can be characterized as political and educational when it first emerged and it would be interesting to study the way it evolved and expanded to other aspects S-H usually deals with, in the wake of colonization and in relation to historical events and cultural shifts that took place in the Arab world.
- 3- The awareness or recognized understanding of S-H, by both the colonizer and colonized, as a source of knowledge about ideological, political and cultural differences between different worlds and the way S-H has been simultaneously used as a method of control and resistance.

- 4- The noticeable adaptability of such texts to the Arabic situation, which will be further discussed in Chapter Four.

If we accept the colonial context as the force or the environment that resulted in the emergence of Arabic S-H literature, some correlations with the emergence of S-H literature in its original culture will clearly appear. Many studies on the S-H phenomenon link its emergence and continuous flourishing state to wars, and social, moral and economic setbacks and crises that have occurred in a given country or geographical area. For example, in her article entitled "Translating/Exporting "the American Way": Religious Self-Help Literature and Cold-War Containment", Erin A. Smith reviews some of the best-selling religious S-H books and underscores their direct relation to war and post war dilemmas. Drawing on a critique article by Paul Hutchinson in 1955, Smith states: "citing the Holocaust and other war-time atrocities, the atomic bomb, and the Cold War balance of terror, Hutchinson argues that fear, insecurity, and despair are running rampant" (2008, p. 2). Moreover, in an attempt to draw similarities between the S-H books she examines in her article, Smith argues that "although these books are focused on the anxieties and sorrows of individuals, most are profoundly shaped by World War II and the Cold War" (p. 4). The author juxtaposes the prefatory passages of two S-H books; Joshua Liebman's *Peace of Mind* and Fulton J. Sheen's *Peace of Soul*, which I will briefly discuss, as Smith did, to highlight a tendency in S-H writing to attribute wars and general drawbacks to the unrest occurring within the individual's self. Liebman states that he has "written this book in the conviction that social peace can never be permanently achieved so long as individuals engage in civil war with themselves" (As cited in Smith, 2008, p. 4). Sheen also states that "unless souls are saved, nothing is saved; there can be no world

peace unless there is soul peace. World wars are only projections of the conflicts waged inside the souls of modern men and women, for nothing happens in the external world that has not first happened within a soul” (as cited in Smith, 2008, p. 4).

The success or popularity of S-H books is related to the type of themes they address and their ability to reflect on the society's reality of the time and relate to the war or postwar conditions and the social, political, spiritual and economic ramifications. A good example is the one presented by Micki McGee who ties the success of Scott Peck's best-seller, *The Road Less Traveled* (1978), with the difficult economic situation of Americans in 1983. She explains:

Perhaps it is no coincidence that Peck's book arrived on the *New York Times* bestseller list in 1983, the year that marked the highest level of unemployment in the postwar period. Life was difficult in the extreme for millions of Americans. Peck's *Road Less Traveled* shared the bestseller list with Richard N. Bolles's *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, in which spiritual uplift was augmented with practical job-hunting advice for the millions of unemployed Americans. (2005, p. 57)

Wars, unemployment, fears and all types of insecurities are universal human problems. Therefore, the dynamics or relations between the Arabic S-H literature and the socio-economic and political realities are no exception. Even though the genre might have been exported to the Arab world under and during colonisation, the S-H genre continued to exist, flourish and expand for the very same reasons as it did in the source culture. The Arab world has suffered from wars more than any region in this world over the last century; the French and British occupation, the Israeli occupation

of Palestine, the ongoing tragic situation of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and the United States' war on Iraq, are just few examples (see Albert Hourani 2013 and Mohamad AlKadry 2004). Along with the geo-political circumstances, the Arab world has been suffering from economic vulnerability which has been exacerbating over the years until present time. According to the *United Nations Development Report* in 2009, "the estimated number of Arabs living in poverty could be as high as 65 million" (p. 11). Acute unemployment is another problem to add to the mix. The data from the Arab Labour Organization (ALO), as cited in the report, "show that in 2005 the overall average unemployment rate for the Arab countries was about 14.4 per cent of the labour force compared to 6.3 per cent for the world at large" (2009, p. 108). The stagnant state of education and its declining quality, issues of publishing and censorship are also essential points to consider. These facts and statistics about prevalent problems are basic indicators that need to be studied and taken into consideration in future studies about the Arabic S-H phenomenon. For now, I can only speculate that the defeated Arab spirit owing to constant wars, the lack of security and stability, and compounded by the challenges of daily life make it understandable that the S-H literature might spread and continue to flourish. Such correlations are thoroughly studied and analyzed in the Western world and there seems to be wide agreement on their validity (see for example McGee 2005; Mercé Mur Effing 2009; Roy M. Anker 1999; Smith 2008). My brief and preliminary speculative overview suggests that the Arabic situation is no exception. However, I shall assert that what is most important for this study is that it is translation that exported S-H literature and resulted in local literature that demonstrates common and distinct forms worthy of study.

Chapter Three: Examination and Analysis of *The Secret*

This chapter consists of two sections. The first presents a synopsis of *The Secret* and a discussion on its reception in the West and Arab worlds. The second is the examination of the translated text which will be described on four levels:

1. The **preliminary level** on which I collect and examine initial and general data to formulate observations that form the groundwork for further testing on the next level;
2. The **macro-level** upon which I look into the text on the larger scale in terms of structure, chapter titles and form of narration;
3. The **micro-level** is the level on which I apply a deeper examination of data on smaller scopes. I scrutinize the translational strategies and techniques manifested throughout the translated text.¹⁸ The data will be organized into three main groups: cultural markers, allusions (which are subdivided into proper name and key phrase allusions), and finally the main ideological concepts in *The Secret*; these are: "the universe", "God", "the supreme mind" and "creation";¹⁹
4. **The systemic context** which is the level or the space in which the macro and micro levels are confronted and norms are identified and described.

¹⁸ The compulsory shifts managed by the translator due to differences between language systems are not the type of shifts to be highlighted; it is the optional shifts that this paper is concerned with.

¹⁹ Other problematic concepts are also evident such as "destiny" and "perfection", however, the concepts I draw on are more dominant.

1. *The Secret*: A Synopsis

The Secret is a S-H book about positive thinking written in English by the Australian television producer Rhonda Byrne with the help of twenty-four spiritual and self-improvement "gurus" to reveal the secret for joy, health, wealth and a better life in all aspects.²⁰ It was published in the United States in November 2006 by Atria books/Beyond Words, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, Inc. As listed on *The Secret's* official website, translations are available in forty-seven languages, with more than twenty million copies in print topping the best selling charts. It is based on a S-H film produced and released as a DVD by Byrne earlier in March of the same year, under the same title. A huge part of its success is attributed to the adoption and promotion of the work by many media figures such as Larry King, Ellen DeGeneres and mainly Oprah Winfrey who dedicated two shows interviewing the author and co-authors.

The Secret begins by revealing "the secret", its principles and application with a focus on acquiring wealth, then it dedicates specific sections for acquiring love and improving relationships and health. Byrne combines the knowledge of those whom she calls the "great avatars and master teachers from the past" such as Robert Collier, Wallace Wattles, and Joseph Campbell, with the words of her Secret co-authors and teachers whom she quotes extensively and on whom she bases her explanations and examples.

²⁰ The co-authors names are, in the order they appear in the biographies section of the book, : John Assaraf, Michael Bernard Beckwith, Lee Brower, Jack Canfield, Dr. John F. Demartini, Marie Diamond, Mike Dooley, Bob Doyle, Hale Dwoskin, Morris Goodman, John Gray, John Hagelin, Bill Harris, Dr. Ben Johnson, Loral Langemerie, Lisa Nichols, Bob Proctor, James Arthur Ray, David Schirmer, Marci Shimoff, Dr. Joe Vitale, Dr. Denis Waitley, Neale Donald Walsch and Fred Alan Wolf (p. 185-198). I will refer to some of these names throughout this chapter.

The Secret revolves around one main idea; it is a natural law called "the law of attraction", which in the author's words "determines the complete order in the Universe" because it is the most powerful of all laws (p. 4-5). Byrne argues that "the greatest teachers who have ever lived have told us that the law of attraction is the most powerful law in the Universe" (p. 4). William Shakespeare, Ludwig Van Beethoven, Plato, Sir Isaac Newton, among many others, all knew the secret. Ancient religions such as Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism, as well as civilizations like the Babylonian and Egyptian have all manifested their knowledge of the secret through the ages (p. 4-5). The law of attraction forms and controls all life experiences through our thoughts, good or bad and positive or negative, which attract parallel outcomes. "Like attracts like" is the essence of its function. Based on this concept, *The Secret* likens the human being to a "magnet" whose power is "emitted" through his/her thoughts (p. 7). Mike Dooley, one of the featured teachers, who is an author and international speaker, sums up the principle of the law in three words: "Thoughts become things!" (p. 9). The human being is also analogously seen as a transmission tower; "you are like a human transmission tower, transmitting a frequency with your thoughts. If you want to change anything in your life, change the frequency by changing your thoughts" (p. 25). These frequencies are sent out into the "Universe" and will bring back to the "source", i.e. the human being, circumstances and experiences that were on that same frequency (p. 10). Our thoughts, on which desired results and outcomes in any aspect of life depend, are highly influenced by our feelings. Feelings, such as love and gratitude, according to the author, are the tools to change bad or negative frequencies and they can be changed instantly and enhanced by what Byrne calls "secret shifters" such as recalling happy memories, enjoying

nature and favorite music (p. 37). Another characteristic of the law is its neutrality to "negation". As Byrne claims, the law "doesn't compute "don't" or "not" or "no," or any other words of negation" (p. 14). One of the examples she gives is when someone says "I don't want to catch the flu", the law receives it as "I want the flu and I want to catch more things" (p. 15). Another example, yet more general and world-oriented, is given by Jack Canfield, one of the co-authors, who states: "mother Teresa was brilliant. She said, "I will never attend an anti-war rally. If you have a peace rally, invite me." She knew. She understood The Secret. Look what she manifested to the world" (p. 143). Then, Hale Dwoskin, follows up explaining: "so if you're anti-war, be pro-peace instead. If you're anti-hunger, be pro-people having more than enough to eat. If you are anti-a-particular politician, be pro-his opponent" (p. 143).

Throughout the work, the law of attraction is scientifically supported with the notion of quantum physics. As Byrne notes, "Quantum physicists tell us that the entire Universe emerged from thought!" (p. 15). Dr. Fred Alan Wolf, one of the co-authors who happens to be a quantum physicist, lecturer and award-winning author, explains:

I'm not talking to you from the point of view of wishful thinking or imaginary craziness. I'm talking to you from a deeper, basic understanding. Quantum physics really begins to point to this discovery. It says that you can't have a Universe without mind entering into it, and that the mind is actually shaping the very thing that is being perceived. (p. 20-21)

Byrne and her contributors do not precisely define what quantum physics as a scientific theory is, yet they simplify its principle in basic terms concluding that "*everything is energy*" (p. 156). As James Ray words it, "so if you think you're this

"meat suit" running around, think again. You're a spiritual being! You're an energy field, operating in a larger energy field" (p. 159).

The work then presents the process of applying the secret to readers' lives. This is referred to as "the Creative Process" which requires three simple steps: ask, believe and receive. Asking is making a command to the "Universe" about what one wants. James Ray, one of the contributors, recalls the story of Aladdin and his lamp and the Genie. Byrne views the law of attraction as the Genie and the human being as the master who the Genie is there to serve (p. 45-46). Believing is having faith that what you asked is already yours, while receiving is feeling the way it will feel when the command happens (p. 47-75). In order to use this creative process successfully, Byrne states additional powerful processes that are essential to make "the secret" work. These are: expectation of what one wants, gratitude towards what one already has and visualization or picturing oneself enjoying what one wants to generate powerful thoughts (p. 71-93). *The Secret* in summation tells its readers that they are the creators of their life through using the law of attraction which has been equated with the law of creation and the law of love. As co-author Dr. Joe Vitale simply words it: "you are the Michelangelo of your own life. The David you are sculpting is you" (p. 23).

2. Reception of *The Secret*

Since its release in 2006, and particularly after its promotion on the *Oprah Show*, *The Secret* has been globally celebrated and adopted by some, yet criticized, mocked and parodied by others. It has sparked controversy and heated discussions and arguments online in chat rooms, on websites and blogs, and offline on different TV and radio

channels, and on the pages of numerous newspapers. The good reviews it received have described it as life changing for it teaches readers to appreciate their life, reminds them to be more grateful for what they have and approach life with a positive attitude. It also helped them eliminate or reduce stress because they eliminated negative thoughts (see Sackariason 2007 as one example). *The Secret's* official website has a specific section dedicated to "Secret stories" and the page opens saying, "We have received thousands of incredible stories from real people who used *The Secret* to create the lives of their dreams. These stories will teach you, inspire you and uplift you!" Stories are classified according to the life aspect (finance, health, family, relationships) and there is a box at the page bottom where people can submit and share their stories. In the forward, Byrne says that "the secret" has inspired doctors and their patients, universities and schools and their students, and even "churches of all denominations and spiritual centers with their congregations" (p. xi).

The majority of critics, especially in the mainstream media, have appreciated its positive message being a source of motivation, but pointed out that "the secret" is no secret at all for it brings nothing new. They described the work as a new repackaging of old ideas of positive thinking and spirituality and linked it to the New Thought Movement, Unity School of Christianity, Christian Science and the New Age Movement which all originated and evolved in the United States in the nineteenth century (Velarde 2007; Whitney 2007; Adler March 2007; Redden Sept 2012).²¹ *The Secret's* reference to quantum physics as a scientific proof of the law of attraction has

²¹ The basis of these movements is the convergence of religion, science and metaphysics for the purpose of healing or curing the human in alternative methods of positive thinking. These terms have evolved to what is more known as popular religion and spirituality. The scope of this study does not allow for detailed review of these movements. For more information see: Beryl Satter 1999; Horatio Dresser 1919; Atkins G.G. 1971.

been refuted and attacked. The idea of a physical law having the ability to attract everything including materials and objects, such as a necklace and a bicycle as in Byrne's examples, and the ability to cure cancers without traditional cure for all cases has been described as "preposterous" and "pseudoscientific" (Adler, March 2007, p. 2-3). The most common criticism, however, is increasing wishful thinking and self-blame when one fails to acquire desired wishes because *The Secret* teaches that everything depends on us and our thoughts. The success of the work has been attributed to smart marketing and creative cover art rather than content. As Donavin Bennes notes: "it was an incredibly savvy move to call it 'The Secret'. . . . We all want to be in on a secret. But to present it as the secret, that was brilliant" (As cited Adler, March 2007, p. 1).

The Secret has been examined and critiqued by many religious writers and critics. Opinions ranged from those who were able to see its benefits but highlighted serious problems from a Christian perspective, and those who rejected its principles and completely detached it from Christianity. I devote the following section to the main examples and points of this critique. However, first I would like to present two quotes from *The Secret* that critics deem the most troubling or disturbing for they have appeared in almost every critique I came across (in both English and Arabic). The first passage is:

You are God in a physical body. You are the Spirit in the flesh. You are Eternal Life expressing itself as You. You are a cosmic being. You are all power. You are all wisdom. You are all intelligence. You are perfection. You are magnificence. You are the creator, and you creating the creation of You on this planet. (p. 164)

This equation between the human being, i.e. the capitalized "You", with "God", the "Spirit" and "Eternal Life" and the "creator" has been rejected and even deemed by some, such as Donald S. Whitney, as "blasphemous"; God and his role in people's life are trivialized in the text and the distinction between Him and his creatures is removed.

The second passage is:

The earth turns on its orbit for You. The oceans ebb and flow for You. The birds sing for you. The sun rises and it sets for You. The stars come out for You. Every beautiful thing you see, every wondrous thing you experience, is all there, for You. Take a look around. None of it can exist, without You. No matter who you thought you were, now you know the Truth of Who You Really Are. You are the master of the Universe. You are the heir to the kingdom. You are the perfection of Life. And now you know The Secret". (p. 183)

Opponents of the work see this statement as dangerous for it makes every human a god on their own, and nurtures the self-centeredness of individuals.

As I mentioned earlier, the major criticism *The Secret* received is its connection to Christianity. Some critics acknowledge that the work showed some connection to the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. Donald S. Whitney, for example, spots the points which he thinks conform to the Scripture because, as he says:

For us to live for the glory of God and in increasing conformity to Christ requires not only that we grow in our knowledge of God's Word, but also that we constantly reaffirm specific truths of Scripture, despite feelings or circumstances that contradict them. (2007, p. 4)

For example, he links the basis of Byrne's "powerful process of gratitude" to the scripture of 1 Thessalonians 5:18, "in everything give thanks" (Whitney, 2007, p. 4). However, he criticizes Byrne's usage of two Bible quotes, Mathew 21:22 and Mark11:24, without mentioning Jesus. He also criticizes her statement that the "Creative Process" of "ask, believe and receive" she is using as an easy three step guideline to create a desired reality was taken from the New Testament (Byrne, 2006, p. 47) because "it is not God we're to ask, but "the Universe" "(p. 3). Whitney finds the work contradicted and full of "flaws" when it is carefully examined; "it is no exaggeration to say that this book implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) denies virtually every major doctrine in the Bible" (p. 3). I will summarize his objections in four points:

- Using the Universe as a synonym of God, which is strengthened by the capitalization of the letter "U".
- Addressing the reader as a God, something Whitney links to "Satan's original lie in the Garden of Eden, "You will be like God" (Gen, 3:5) (p. 3).
- The absence, and sometimes the denial, of essential concepts such as sin, death, Heaven and Hell, which imply the Secret sees no need for a Savior (p. 2-3).
- Undermining the Bible whose value and influence are reduced to only provide the teachings of *The Secret*, and because Byrne does not see the Scripture as "unique or supremely authoritative". In Whitney's words: " Byrne maintains that the holy book of every religious tradition contains The Secret . . . she

believes that all religions and their scriptures are equally valid in their authority and basically teach the same thing" (p. 3).

Whitney sees that the main problem of *The Secret* is that it "focuses our hope selfward and not Godward. It is all about self-empowerment, self-fulfillment, and getting whatever we want. But Jesus warned, "for what will profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?" (p. 4). Similarly, Robert Velarde criticizes *The Secret's* emphasis on materialism and "the accumulation of worldly possessions" (2007, p. 6). He also refuses any claim of *The Secret's* compatibility with Christianity, almost for the same reasons mentioned above. As he stresses, "It is anything but Christian. Jesus taught belief in a transcendent, personal, holy God who is distinct from His creation. . . . We are not perfect divine beings with unlimited potentials" (p. 1). Velarde ridicules the idea of one creating one's life and reality through manipulating thoughts, and in his opinion, "it works at odds with theism" (p. 2). He then moves to assess the law of attraction and denies its effectiveness by giving three examples:

- Rape and child molestation, which according to *The Secret*, are brought and experienced because of the bad thoughts of those who suffered from these atrocities.
- The "arduous trials that the Jews faced, as documented in the Old Testament, such as persecution and enslavement" (p. 4) while Byrne claims that the Hebrews mastered the secret and the power of blessing (Byrne, p. 151).
- The persecution of Jesus and the execution of his followers whom Byrne also claims knew and applied the secret.

Velarde calls Byrne's claims "errors" and "misinterpretations" of the Bible. Using excerpts from *The Secret* (p. 2-3), he roots the Law of attraction in pantheism in which everything is considered divine, monism in which everything is seen as interconnected, the New Age movement, Positive Confession teachings and Mind Science groups of the nineteenth century. Then he questions how scientific *The Secret* is, highlights its failure to solve the problem of evil by focusing on different forms of harm caused to children, and finally reflects on the negative effect it has for those for whom the law does not work, concluding that even if it works, it does not matter because "eternal destiny" and "eternal life" is what matters (p. 5-6).

This contradictory or confusing relation between *The Secret* and Christianity is expressed by Whitney, who sees the work as:

Just a secular version of all what some TV preachers have taught for decades, namely, if you will sustain right thoughts, words, and feelings, you will receive whatever you want. But *The Secret* adds this important twist: your thoughts can bring anything into your life because you are god. (p. 2)

3. Reception of the Arabic Translation

The reception of *The Secret* in the Arab world revealed many commonalities with that in the West. The Arabic translation was huge success in Arab markets, flying off bookstores shelves. It has also created controversy and fueled many objections and arguments which not only pertain to the effectiveness of *The Secret's* teachings or its agreement with Islam and the Quran, but also to translation goals and strategies. Views and opinions were very disparate; on the one hand, *The Secret's* Arab

advocates adopted its principles and recommended it to other readers and tried to prove its compatibility with Islam by pointing to extracts from The Quran and The Sunna that prove the workability of *The Secret*.²² Writers such as Salah Al Rashed, a Kuwaiti S-H author, for example, published a full album of several episodes and lectures dedicated to find and explain the Islamic equivalences of *The Secret's* teachings. On the other hand, the law's validity was denied by many readers and critics who divorced it from Islam.

In his book *خرافة السر* [The Myth of *The Secret*], Abdullah Al Ojairi presents a scathing criticism of *The Secret* and its Arabic translation from an Islamic perspective. He criticizes its global popularity and especially in the Arab world describing it as a "trade of illusion and myth" (p. 7).²³ His critique presents a "trial of The Secret" reviewing its principles and refuting them. Here are some of the major objections:

- Elevating the human being to the level of the creator while Muslims believe God is the only creator of all things.
- The denial of fate and destiny which are among the pillars of the Islamic belief. In Islam, God's knowledge encompasses all creation.
- The doses of self-aggrandizement, exaggeration in solipsism, self worship and materialism the author and her teachers inject in readers throughout the work to the extent of giving them God-like traits and divine powers (p. 35).

²² Sunnah in simple words is the teachings and practice of the prophet Mohammed (pbu).

²³ Unless indicated otherwise, all Arabic-English translations are mine.

- The failure of the author and contributors to explain concepts like "coincidence" and "sin".²⁴
- On a moral level, favoring selfishness rather than sacrifice and altruism which are invaluable principles in Islam.
- Encouraging readers to wish rather than work hard to achieve purposes and goals.
- The focus on the joy of lifetime and denying the afterlife while in Islam one is asked to care about both.
- Turning the oppressed or the maltreated into the oppressor, and the victim into the perpetrator because it is the person who attracts bad situations to him/herself. The author sarcastically says that according to the law of attraction, the people of Gaza, because of their bad thoughts, have caused the siege imposed on them by Israeli occupiers, and it is Palestinians who caused the occupation of their land, and it is Muhammad Al Durra himself, the 12-year old Palestinian child, who attracted the bullet that left him dead (p. 54).²⁵

The significance of these objections is that they are interwoven with a translation examination and evaluation. Al Ojairi examines segments from the original text and their Arabic translation.²⁶ Reviewing his criticism of the translation itself and the translator's treatment of the source text is important not only for discussing the reception of the translated text, but also because it reveals information about the kinds

²⁴ Al Ojairi wonders why the author failed to convince and influence the opponents of the book by using the secret and the law of attraction (p. 34).

²⁵ This child has become a symbol of Palestinian resistance after his death in September 2000 by Israeli forces while hiding behind his father, who was trying to shield him before they both were shot dead near Netzarim in the Gaza Strip (BBC news 2 Oct, 2000).

²⁶ His translation comparison critique is intended to explain the religious and ideological incompatibility of the original text to Islamic belief, in the sense of revealing the truth the translator intentionally hid from the Arab Muslim readers.

of understanding and perception of non-translators or non specialists hold about translation.

Al Ojairi considers the Arabic text an Islamized version of *The Secret*, false and sales-oriented. He states that the translator has resorted, deliberately, to "forging the translation through deletion, distortion and adding an Islamic flavor to some parts" in order to pass some "outrageous infidel phrases" (p. 36). He clarifies that *The Secret* and its translation when examined and analyzed are not the same, even though they are alike in most of the content, packaging and output (p. 38). He states:

They are two different books: an original which is the expression of that deviant idea in its clear and explicit form which contradicts the axioms of Islam and its major notions, and a false Arabic version whose task is to cover the areas where there are explicit flaws of belief in the idea of (The Secret) by misrepresenting the original phrases to fit the Muslim's Eastern mind, so that he does not discover the clash between the idea [of the Secret] and the essence of his belief [Islam]. Also, to make the passing of these deviant ideas easier and smoother, with less and weaker resistance. These modifications are in fact part of the requirements for the Muslims market, in order for the supply to meet the specifications of our demand. (p. 38)

The author goes further to consider this translation as a type of "scientific treason", and an indication of a misunderstanding "of the essence of translation and its role, what is allowed or not" (p. 38). He describes the translation as a "patching" process that masks the truth (p. 44). Although against the ideas of the work, he is against manipulating them for they constitute its creed and philosophy. The translator, in his opinion, should:

Represent the book as it is in order for its trial to be just, its ideas to be understood as they are to be analyzed, traced to their origin and judged. But manipulating the book and tampering with its content then producing it under the same title and the name of the same author, without pointing to the changes of its substance fools the reader and confuses the critic, and is a distortion that is not supposed to occur. (p. 39)

Al Ojairi also points to the issue of selecting works to be translated; he believes that a work claiming creation and pantheism should not be translated in the first place (p. 39). This attitude towards the Arabic translated text, however, does not appeal to *The Secret's* advocates who expressed their satisfaction with the translation and the alterations made by the translator because what matters for them is that the positive message of the work was transferred. Some Arabic speaking reviewers who read *The Secret* in both languages said that, even when reading the English version, they were automatically interpreting the ideas in terms of their Islamic belief and finding commonalities and areas of compatibility. Hence, they find it only reasonable for the translator to do the same. These arguments pertaining to translation will be revisited for analysis in Chapter Four.

Noticing the striking similarity of *The Secret's* reception in the source and target cultures is unavoidable; not in terms of the effectiveness of its ideas per se, but in terms of the religious stance towards the text. The religious objections reviewed above, Christian and Islamic alike, are based on almost the same religious concepts and premises. This is not surprising due to the significant swathes of commonalities between religions, especially the monotheistic faiths. These objections also belong to a more or less fundamentalist religious thought and attitude of both religions. What is

significant, however, is that even though the Arabic translation was 'islamized', as claimed by al Ojairi above, it failed to solve the work's controversy or prevent such conflicts in the target Muslim world. In other words, the controversial *Secret* remained controversial in translation. Therefore, one wonders about translation's ability to preserve or transfer controversy and whether it is inherent to the text and therefore is inherited by default.

The reception of a translated text in its host culture is greatly influenced by the way it is translated, the translation strategies used by the translator and ultimately the norm(s) operating in a text of a given culture at a given time. The next section of this chapter will examine the translation of *The Secret* by presenting data on three levels: Preliminary data, Macro level and Micro level.

4. Examination of the translation

4.1 Preliminary Data

According to Lambert and Van Gorp (1985), preliminary data includes information on title and title page (e.g. indications of genre, author's and translator's name), metatexts (e.g. preface, footnotes) and the general strategy of a translation (partial or complete). Collecting preliminary data about both texts is essential for a complete and comprehensive analysis. The Arabic text of *The Secret* was translated directly from the source language, English, with no intermediary language. It was also introduced to and promoted in the target culture as a translation through the ads and banners at Jarir Bookstore, and generally in newspapers articles. However, at first sight, it is difficult to tell that the work is a translation. The Arabic cover is identical to that of the original (see images 1&2 in Appendix); the author's name and the original title are both

printed in English (Roman script) on the front cover exactly as they appear on the English one, along with the original red wax seal logo. The Arabic title is written (in Arabic script) in a much smaller font size, in the same color (white) under the English title. The target text is also identical in terms of paper material and all design features of both the cover and the internal pages. The translator's name, however, is not mentioned anywhere in the book. Usual additions on S-H translated books such as "best-seller" or "best self-help book" are also absent. The title page, similarly, has the English title and author's name in English exactly as written in the source text, with the publisher's name and logo "Jarir Bookstore" at the bottom of it. However, the title page is preceded with a blank page on which one sentence is written: *بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم* [In the name of Allah, The Entirely Merciful, The Especially Merciful]. This sentence, called *Al Basmalah*, is the Arabic expression used to begin each Surah or chapter of the Holy Quran (except the ninth Surah) but is widely used as an opening statement for many books, articles, constitutions and many other forms of writing.

There is no translator preface or footnotes; the ST has no footnotes either. The translation generally is a complete translation as no major deletions or additions were made. The dedication, author's preface and acknowledgments pages are all translated into Arabic. A close comparative examination, however, indicated two translational alterations:

(1) The insertion of "God" into a sentence in the dedication:

Byrne writes, "May The Secret bring you love and joy for your entire existence".

The Arabic translation is:

ندعو الله أن يساعدك "السر" على تحقيق الحب و البهجة في كل حياتك

[May God make The Secret helpful for you to achieve love and joy for your whole life]

(2) The deletion of "divinity" from a sentence in the acknowledgment:

The author states, "for generously sharing their wisdom, love and divinity, I pay homage to the featured co-authors of The Secret." (p. xiii).²⁷ The Arabic translation is:

أدين بالشكر وأشيد بالمؤلفين و المعلمين الذين ساعدوني في فيلم "السر" بإسهامهم الحكيم و
مشاعرهم الدافئة و النبيلة

[I owe thanks and pay homage to the authors and teachers who helped me in The Secret movie for their wise contribution and their warm noble feelings.]

Based on the initial data presented above, we can observe the following:

- The Arabic text indicates a strong formal resemblance to the source text which, in addition to the absence of the translator's name, does not clearly highlight the fact that it is a translation.
- The more or less identical rendition of the meta-textual content suggests a significant adherence to the source text, however, the addition of *Al Basmala*, the word "God" and the deletion of "divinity" as discussed in the examples above, show signs of interference of religious nature. Such modifications indicate to the readers that what they will be reading conforms to the Islamic tradition.

²⁷ Except for one example, all Arabic quotes have the same page numbering as the English; therefore, I will not state the page numbers twice.

4.2 The Macro Level

As mentioned in Chapter One, the macro level includes information on the division of the text (chapters, sections, acts etc.), chapters' titles and presentation, internal narrative structure and authorial comments if available. On this level, the Arabic text preserved the exact structure of the source text. It has ten chapters with the same titles as the ST, besides the biographies. It also follows the same narrative pattern which is the author's own prose narration interwoven with extensive quoting of the co-authors featured in each chapter. It is important to mention that *The Secret* is originally based on the movie and it follows the same "cinematic" kind of presentation; it actually reads like a printed script of a documentary movie. In other words, *The Secret* does not conform to the conventional forms of S-H writing, which, as Dolby explains, usually are: "the parable, the essay, and the manual how-to books" (p. 40). A summary of the main ideas is provided at the end of each chapter and it is presented identically in the target text.

By and large, the translator made no change, which again shows a visible external and structural correspondence to the ST. However, careful microscopic comparison of the two texts will provide a closer insight of the internal structure.

4.3 The Micro Level

The Micro-level is where shifts of different types and levels (phonic, graphic, syntactic, lexico-semantic, modal and stylistic) are examined; it includes information on word selection, dominant grammatical patterns, forms of speech reproduction, and language levels) occur. A close investigation of internal textual elements is essential to examine the micro-structural strategies of the translator, which will then allow

studying the dynamics between the macro and micro strategies relations. I will identify the shifts found on the lexical and semantic levels through word choice, narration form and modality. Then, I dedicate three sections to: (a) the translation of cultural markers, (b) cultural allusions and (c) the translation of four ideological concepts that proved to be problematic in both cultures: *Universe, God, Supreme Mind and Creation*.

As in the majority of the S-H literature, *The Secret's* author, and the co-authors, speak in first person. They also keep the tradition of S-H writing in addressing the reader directly. The author and the twenty-four gurus communicate their ideas mainly by affirming one's ability of self-creation and self-mastery through believing in one's hidden power, capabilities and talents. For instance:

(a) "You can do anything you want. You are a genius beyond description, so start telling yourself that and become aware of who you really are" (p. 170).

(b) "The capabilities and the talents and the gifts and the power that is within every single individual that is on the planet is unlimited" (p. 170).

Another stylistic technique is recounting stories about the author herself, some of the featured gurus and other inspiring people who applied the secret in different aspects; Byrne's struggle with weight loss (p. 58-62), and the guru Morris Goodman's story of healing after an airplane crash (p. 136-137) are just two of many examples.

The use of figurative language is also a recurrent stylistic tool throughout the text:

(a) "If you think about Aladdin and his lamp" (p. 44).

(b) "You are a *human* transmission tower" (p. 11).

(c) "Your mind can be like a runaway steam train" (p. 170).

(d) "Remember that you are a magnet, attracting everything to you" (p. 56).

Although it is not a typical "how-to" book, *The Secret* can be also characterized as instructive or didactic since the instructive style, even though is only visible in the third and fourth chapters: "How to use The Secret" and "Powerful Processes", manifest a use of the imperative form. For example:

(a) "Change your thought" (p. 34).

(b) "Get clear on the weight you want to be...you must believe you will receive. . . . Do not contradict what you have asked for with your thoughts. . . . Make it your intention to look for . . . " (p. 60).

In the target text, these stylistic tools were reproduced almost identically. Grammatically, both texts follow the modern grammar rules of their respective languages. However, some grammatical patterns—the active and passive forms, for example—are not reproduced in the translation although Arabic grammar and syntax rules would allow it. These discrepancies may be intentional as, together with other translation strategies, they produce a text that attenuates the centrality of the human being. For instance, the passive form in the following two sentences was preserved in Arabic:

(a) "Everything sent out returns to the source. And that source is You" (p. 10).

كل شيء يتم إرساله خارجاً يعود إلى المصدر، و المصدر هو أنت.

[Everything that has been sent out returns to the source, and that source is you.]

(b) "Any action we take must be preceded by a thought" (p. 114).

(p. 115) أي فعل تتخذه لا بد أن يكون مسبوقاً بفكرة.

[Any action you take must be preceded by a thought.]

However, the following sentence marks a shift in pattern from the passive into the active:

"This wonderful story demonstrates how your whole life and everything in it has been created by You" (p. 46). It was translated into Arabic as:

تظهر تلك القصة الرائعة كيف تبدع حياتك بكاملها و كل شئ فيها

[That wonderful story demonstrates how you innovate your whole life and everything in it.]

The emphasis given to "You" in the original sentence has been reduced by the active form in Arabic besides substituting "create" with "innovate".²⁸ The position of "You" at the end of the original passage increased emphasis which is not re-produced in the Arabic active form even though modern Arabic allows for agentive passive sentences.²⁹ Therefore, using the active form is intended to diminish this emphasis. Similar reduction of emphasis is also notable in the following sentence:

"The Universe will deliver every single thing that you've been wanting" (p. 151). It was translated as:

سوف تجد في الكون كل شئ تكون قد رغبت فيه

[You will find in the Universe everything you've been wanting.]

²⁸ The translation of the word "create" throughout the text will be further discussed in a following section I devote to the concept of creation.

²⁹ For more details on the translation of English passive sentences into agentive and agentless passive forms in terms of classic and modern Arabic, see for example Aziz Khalil 1993.

Here, the Universe, which was a subject in the original sentence, became an object of a preposition in the translated phrase.

The language level is popular modern standard English; jargons or dialect varieties are not used. The translator has retained this level in the Arabic as well. Short sentences are noticeable in the source text and the translator has more or less kept the same length of sentences in the target text. He/she also maintained the author's tone and attitude which is a mixture of: positive, confident, empowering, instructive and propulsive.

On the level of word selection, the vocabulary of the ST can be generally described as everyday language, not rhythmic or poetic and it is also noticeably repetitive. Overall, the translator gave a precise and almost identical rendition of the original words of the author. However, paying attention to some of the most frequently used words in the ST will help identify the translator's techniques in more detail. For example, some of the dominant words in *The Secret* such as "Universe" and "create" or "creation", have been almost always substituted by other words, such as "God"/"the creator" and "make"/"innovate" respectively, as will be discussed in further detail in the following pages.

An Arabic reader with a fair familiarity and knowledge of the culture and language of the source text, who reads the Arabic text independently without comparing it to the source, will be able to spot words that are culture dependent and be almost completely positive they are expressed differently in the ST. For example, the translator's choice of words that create a religious connotation:

- (a) The use of *بإذن الله* [God willing] at the end of some sentences.³⁰
- (b) The use of *الحمد لله* [*Al hamdoulillah* meaning thank God] which is a central phrase in Quran and highly used in the Arab world by all religions, but most frequently by Muslims. *Al hamdoulillah* is substituted for the more general "thank you" every time it occurs in the ST, as in examples like: "every morning I get up and say "Thank you." Every morning, when my feet hit the floor, "Thank you"". Byrne then follows up and explains she started applying James' method of gratitude herself: "then as I get out of bed, when one foot touches the ground I say, "Thank," and "you" as my second foot touches the ground" (p. 75-76). However, the act of thanking or gratitude in the English text was not directed to God; it was more to all the things one feels good about, as emphasized by the authors. Hence, even if *Al hamdoulilla* is not perceived as a phrase of religious connotation due to its commonness, it is strongly culture-specific.
- (c) The use of expressions indicative of a religious flavor that is specifically Islamic, for they exist in Quranic verses such as: *بأنك خلقت بأحسن تقويم* (p. 164) [you were created in the best of moulds], and *الله أكرمك وفضلك على سائر مخلوقاته* (p. 164) [God has honored and favored you above all of his creation].

Some word selections in the Arabic text clearly point to a possible change or deviation from the original because they reveal lexical strategies that avoid using certain words. For example:

- (a) The substitution of the word "gay" with descriptions, as in the example:

(p. 17) *كان "روبرت" ضعيف الجسد و كان وجهه و أداؤه أقرب لوجه و أداء النساء*

³⁰ It is worthy to note, however, that some argue that *بإذن الله* is quite common in the Arab world in almost all contexts and that it has lost its religious connotation. It is used by different denominations, not only the Islamic. However, the addition of this expression still reflects a specific cultural affiliation.

[Robert was physically weak; his face and demeanour were more similar to a woman's face and demeanour.]

Other descriptions the translator used in the same paragraph were: سلوكه [feminine behavior] and لاختلافه عن بقية الرجال [he's different than other men]. The translator has also deleted the word "homophobic" and used بعض المستأسيين [some bully people]. This shows a linguistic dodge to euphemize the word "gay". Although sexual orientation is discussed nowadays in different Arab Muslim channels of information, it is still not a common issue and therefore remains a cultural constraint to consider when translating.

- (b) The translator's replacement of "pigs" with "deer" in the sentence "just like the law of gravity, the law of attraction never slips up. You don't see pigs flying because the law of gravity made a mistake and forgot to apply gravity to pigs that day"(p. 36). It was translated as "you don't see deer flying" since pigs are not usually a positive or common reference because eating pork is forbidden for Muslims. It is important, however, to highlight that "pigs flying" is a well-known idiom meaning "there is little chance to" or "it is impossible to happen" and the English reader could easily recognize that the author has employed this idiom in this example to emphasize that it is impossible for the law of attraction to make a mistake. However, the context this idiom is being used in, as an example of gravity, makes it challenging to be replaced with an equivalent Arabic idiom. Therefore, the translator's choice of merely replacing "pigs" is not an issue of Arabic idioms availability, but a matter of solving an essential translational problem, idioms, and a cultural consideration.
- (c) The translator's deletion of the word "naked" from the sentence "in every corner he had this beautiful image of a naked woman draped with a fabric" (p. 113).

Based on the above examination of textual elements, two observations are to be stressed:

- For the most part, the translator maintained the author's style, voice and tone, which shows a stylistic adherence of the source text. This point will be discussed again in detail in terms of the text's function in Chapter Four.
- The translator's selection of words, as presented in the examples above, indicates a visible cultural imprint specific to the Arab world, and reveals that translational shifts occurred when the translator was faced with incompatible cultural or religious ideas.

5. Translation Strategies

In this section, I present a closer examination of the translator's strategies in rendering: cultural markers, allusions (proper name and key phrase), and three ideological concepts (the Universe and Supreme Mind in relation to God, and the concept of creation).

5.1 Cultural markers

Cultural elements stand as markers of the cultural origin of the text. They can take many forms such as names of characters or cities, book titles, units of measure and currency values, specific events or traditions or a general prevalent phenomenon known about the culture in question. A distinction must be made between these elements and allusions. Cultural markers stand in the text without necessarily playing any allusive function or being used for an allusive purpose such as characterization or irony for example (see Leppihalme, 1997). In other words, they do not "convey implicit meaning" which is how allusions are defined (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 3). The presence of cultural markers in the text mainly points to the culture's identity.

Therefore examining them first is crucial for the scholar because they reveal the very broad lines of the translator's strategies; does he/she keep the connections between the translated text and its culture of origin or detach them?

As a work written in English and promoted mainly in American best-selling book lists, *The Secret's* identity as a text can be viewed, from the target culture's point of view, as a Western text, North American and Christian in particular, regardless of the controversy about its religious affiliation in its home culture, as discussed in the reception of *The Secret*. I started my examination by looking into basic markers such as:

(a) Names of different types:

1. Names of people such as "Robert" (p. 17), "Marcy" (p. 53) and "Morris Goodman" (p. 136) were all rendered as they are, transcribed in Arabic script. In other words, they were not replaced by Arabic names.
2. Names of famous people in history. For example, Byrne states, "think about the inventors and their inventions: The Wright Brothers and the plane. George Eastman and film. Thomas Edison and the light bulb. Alexander Graham Bell and the telephone" (p. 82). These names were all kept in the Arabic text.
3. Names of places such as "California" and "New York" (p. 57) were all kept by the translator.
4. Names of prophets and other Christian religious figures, however, were deleted and replaced by "wise men". Byrne states, "in these glorious books you will discover that Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Jesus were not only

prosperity teachers, but also millionaires themselves" (p. 109). In Arabic, the translator rendered it as the following:

و في تلك الكتب المذهلة سوف تكتشف أن حكماء عديدين لم يكونوا فقط معلمين عظاما
للوفرة، لكن أيضا أصحاب ملايين هم أنفسهم.

[In those glorious books you will discover that many wise men were
not only prosperity teachers, but also millionaires themselves.]

5. Titles of books, newspapers or lecture names have revealed a variety of strategies adopted by the translator. For example, Neville Goddard's lecture "The Pruning Shears of Revision" (p. 73), Wallace Wattles' *The Science of Getting Rich* (p. 76), Catherine Ponder's *Millionaires of the Bible Series* (p. 109) and Charles Haanel's *The Master Key System* (p. 81) all retained their English titles in the Arabic text.³¹ Jack Canfield's *Chicken Soup for the Soul* was, exceptionally, translated into Arabic (p. 97) because its Arabic translation was a best-seller in the Arab market and a wide range of readers are familiar with it. Other titles like *National Enquirer* as in the example: "*Then I saw the National Enquirer in the supermarket*" (p. 97), were phonetically transcribed into Arabic script.³² The translator also added "newspaper" before the transcription of the word to clarify its reference. (p. 96-97). Although the strategies varied between retaining the English titles, translating them into Arabic and transcribing them, the main point here is that they were preserved in the translation.

³¹ The general strategy many translation institutions and practitioners in the Arab world follow is to refrain from translating book titles unless they have already been translated and published in Arabic, as stated on the official website of the Arabic Organization of Translation.

³² The title here is treated differently; it was not rendered in English as other titles. Usually, as discussed in several Arab translation associations and bodies, all foreign titles, whether of books or newspapers, are treated alike. Hence, I am speculating this choice is either due to the institution's specific requirement, or the general tendency in media to transcribe foreign newspapers' titles and names. The transcription strategy followed by an explanation has been also used in *The Secret* with other scientific terms mentioned such as "Feng Shui" (p. 113) and "placebo effect" (p. 125).

(b) Units of measure and currency:

1. "Pound" (p. 59) was translated into the Arabic equivalent "رطل".³³
2. "Dollar" (p. 63), on the other hand, was kept as it is; it was not replaced by another Arabic currency equivalent.

(c) Cultural or religious occasions and objects:

1. "Salami sandwich" (p. 178) was deleted and replaced with an explanation that reads in Arabic as "smoked meat sandwich".
2. "Christmas" was replaced with the non-religious occasion, the "New Year" in the example: "I had set a goal to walk out of the hospital on Christmas" (P. 137).
3. The "Bible", was deleted in every occurrence in the text, and "Hebrews" were replaced with "religious men", as in the example: "In the Bible, the Hebrews used the act of blessing to bring health, wealth, and happiness" (p. 151) was translated into Arabic as:

فقد استعان رجال الدين بهذه المباركة لتحقيق الصحة، و الثروة، و السعادة.

[Religious men used this blessing to bring health, wealth and happiness.]

4. The "New Testament", and the "Bible" similarly were replaced with "books of ancient wisdom" as in the following sentence: "the Creative Process used in The Secret, which was taken from the New Testament in the Bible" (p. 47), was rendered in Arabic as:

إن العملية الإبداعية المستخدمة في "السر"، و المستلهمة من كتب الحكمة القديمة.

[The creative process used in The Secret, which was inspired from books of ancient wisdom.]

³³ It is important to mention that although the Arabic unit "رطل" is the equivalent of the English "pound", it is not as commonly used compared to "kilo". It is more noticed in translated texts and classical Arabic texts.

5. "Churches" has been omitted in the Arabic text and replaced with the more general referent, "houses of worship", as in the example: "the Secret has inspired doctors to share the knowledge with their patients . . . churches of all denomination and spiritual centers with their congregations" (p. xi). It was translated into Arabic as:

*ألهم السر بعض الأطباء ليشاركوا المعرفة مع مرضاهم . . . و دور العبادة و المراكز
الروحية مع المترددين عليها.*

[The Secret has inspired some doctors to share the knowledge with their patients . . . and houses of worship and spiritual centers with their congregations.]

Based on the examples presented above, one can observe the following:

- By keeping the majority of foreign names, titles and units of measure in the Arabic text, the translator has kept the overall identity of the source text.
- The deletion of prophet names, words such as "Bible", "church", "Christmas" and the "New Testament", however, suggests that the translator has only removed the connections with the source text that are religious in nature.

5.2 Allusions

The challenge allusions pose resides in recognizing them in the ST, understanding and translating the reference or the intention behind their usage into the target language/culture. Hence, creating a similar allusive intention or function in the translated text is not an easy task and may require resorting to several techniques. Examining such techniques is essential to discovering the overall strategy of the translator. I organize the data into two major groups: proper name allusions and key phrase allusions. I was able to recognize the allusions I present in the following based

on my familiarity with the culture generally, and through the tools Leppihalme (1997) provides as "recognition enhancers".

5.2.1 Proper name allusions

The author and co-authors of *The Secret* have used several nominal allusions throughout the work. The following examples demonstrate that the translator used two different ways to deal with proper name allusions:

(a) Deletion of the allusion and replacing it with the actual implicit meaning or allusive function. For example:

1. Deletion of the historical figure "Michelangelo" and his famous work "David" as in the example: "because you are the masterpiece of your life. You are the Michelangelo of your own life. The David you are sculpting is you" (p. 23). In Arabic, it was rendered as:

لأن حياتك هي التحفة الفنية التي شكلتها بيدك. أنت الفنان الذي يبدع حياتك الخاصة، وسوف
تشكل وتبدع حياتك على خير مثال.

[Because you are the masterpiece you shaped with your hand. You are the artist who innovates your own life, and you will form and innovate your life in the best way.]

The translator deleted "Michelangelo" and replaced it with the generic "artist", and deleted "David", replacing it with a phrase containing the verb "form" as a substitute for the "sculpting" act. It is difficult to know the exact motivation behind the deletion, but one could guess at two reasons: (a) rendering these two names in the short direct way as used in English might be puzzling for readers who might not be familiar with the artist and his work, or (b) the statue "David" and most of Michelangelo's works are religious in nature and commissioned by or associated with the Roman Catholic

Church, and therefore, such a metaphor might be difficult to reproduce as a motivating example to a Muslim reader. In other words, although "David" is not only a Biblical figure, but also a Quranic one (prophet داود), the issue of featuring any prophet as a statue or painting, and likening a human being to a prophet as in the example above, are generally viewed as unacceptable by Muslims. Therefore, their translation could upset Muslims, especially the more conservative.

2. Deletion of the American television series *The Twilight Zone* as in the example:

"the theme from "The Twilight Zone" went off in my head, like, whoah, this stuff's really working" (p. 97). This phrase was rendered in Arabic as:

و قلت لنفسي و قلبي يدق بشدة: "يا إلهي إن الأمر يجدي حقا.

[I said to myself, and my heart was beating strongly: "Oh God this stuff's really working.]

The translator deleted the name *The Twilight Zone* and replaced it with the phrase "my heart beating strongly". *The Twilight Zone* belongs to science fiction, thrillers and supernatural genres, and it is known for the suspense and twists it creates. Hence, the translator chose to render the hidden meaning of the allusion, i.e. the actual "theme" of the allusion, which is suspense or unexpected events. One could also assume the translator tried to avoid distracting the reader with an unfamiliar reference. Another reason could be that the sentence requires explanation that would result in a long Arabic sentence which might interrupt the narrative thread of the story.

(b) Retention of the allusion with the addition of explanations to clarify the reference:

1. Keeping the name *Star Trek*, as in the example: "We're really now moving into a new era. It's the era where the last frontier is not space, as "Star Trek" would say, but it's going to be Mind" (p. 181). The translator retained the English name

in the Arabic text and added the word "movie" before the title. One can legitimately wonder why the strategy in this case differed from the previous one. It seems here that rendering this reference, *Star Trek*, into Arabic is easier for it is used more directly in the English context and does not require a long explanation about the nature or theme of the movie, as in the previous example. Also, *Star Trek* is a phenomenal pop culture work which started as a TV series and evolved into series of movies and became popular in the Arab world and worldwide and, therefore, could be more known by Arab readers.

2. Keeping the allusion of the historical figure "Rockefeller" as in the example: "who do you think I am? Rockefeller?" (p. 95). The translator transcribed the name "Rockefeller" into Arabic and explained in brackets that Rockefeller is "(one of the oil industry leaders)" (p. 95). Again, rendering the allusion in this case only requires briefly clarifying the person's identity.

The examination of proper name allusions allows me to make a general observation:

- Using two different strategies to deal with the same translational problem seems to depend on three considerations: (a) the level of familiarity of allusions as in the example of *Star Trek* which is a globalized work, (2) religious considerations as in the example of Michelangelo and David, and (3) the difficulty and easiness of rendering the allusion into Arabic as in the example of Rockerfeller and *Twilight Zone*.

5.2.2 Key phrase allusions

Key phrase allusions are not as common as proper name allusions in *The Secret*. However, below I present two examples that clearly highlight the translator's strategy.

Two verses from The Bible are quoted in The Secret:

1- "Whatever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Mathew 21:22"(p. 54). It was translated into Arabic as:

مهما كان ما تدعو به في صلاتك، فإن الله يستجيب لك. "حكمة قديمة"

[Whatever you ask in your prayer, God responds to you. "*Old wisdom*"]

2- "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." "*Mark 11:24*" (p.54). In Arabic it was rendered as:

ايا كانت الأشياء التي ترغب فيها، فحين تصلي آمن أنها ستتحقق و لسوف تتحقق. "حكمة قديمة"

[Whatever the things you desire were, when you pray believe that they will be achieved and they will be achieved "*Old wisdom*".]

With the exception of the addition of "God" in the first verse, both verses were translated more or less identically to the source text. However, the source "*Mathew 21:22*" and "*Mark 11:24*" were both omitted and relayed as "old wisdom". The italics were produced in the Arabic text. However, the old English language of the verse was not reproduced in the Arabic rendition which is standard modern Arabic. The two verses in the English text were quoted without a previous reference to the Bible. Thus, the names "Mark" and "Mathew" can read as mere references of quotes for those unfamiliar with Scriptures of the Bible. And the fact that the translator retained the sources of all other quotes identically indicates the translator's recognition of the allusion. Therefore, the omission is a conscious decision.

However, in another key phrase allusion, the translator preserved the allusion.

Dr. Joe Vitale, a co-author, says: "how can I attract more money into my life? How

can I get more of the green stuff?" (p. 101). The "green stuff" was translated into Arabic as:

الأوراق الخضراء (الدولارات)

[The green papers (dollars).]

Hence, the translator clarified the intended reference to the Arab reader.

Based on the two examples of key phrase allusions mentioned above, we can observe that the translator in general rendered the key phrase allusions in the Arabic text. However, the deletion of the biblical source of the allusion in the first example conforms to the translator's removal of religious links to the source text, as discussed previously.

5.3 Translation strategies and ideological concepts

5.3.1 The "Universe vs. God" dilemma

The concept of the "Universe" is a pivotal one and it stretches from the very beginning to the end of the work. Reading the translated text reveals it is a problematic one. Examples demonstrate different ways of treating this concept:

(a) Replacing the "Universe" with "God" as in the following examples:

1. "Trust the Universe" (p. 57) became "trust God".
2. "It is You placing order with the Universe" (p. 48) became in Arabic:

و دورك هو أن تصوغ طلبك من الخالق، و الكون سوف يتولى المهمة.

[Your role is to make your request from the Creator, and the universe will undertake the mission.]

3. "The truth is that the Universe has been answering you all of your life" (p. 172).

It was translated as:

و الحقيقة هي ان الله قد زدك من خلال الكون بكل الاجابات طوال حياتك.

[The Truth is that God has provided you, through the universe, with all the answers all of your life.]

The three examples highlight the translator's attempt to shun the godly power the universe is given; it is God who one should trust and make request from, and He is the one who provides, not the universe.

(b) Keeping the "Universe", but with the addition of "God", as in the following examples:

1. "There are no rules according to the Universe. You provide the feelings of having it now; it will respond – whatever it is"(p. 63). In Arabic, the two sentences became:

ليس هناك قواعد بالنسبة للكون. أنت تزود الكون بالمشاعر الدالة على حصولك على الشيء المرجو في التو واللحظة؛ و سوف يسخر الله الكون ليستجيب لتلك المشاعر- أيا كان نوعها.

[There are no rules according to the universe. You provide the universe with the feelings indicating having the desired thing now at the moment, and God will harness the universe to respond to those feelings –whatever kind they were.]

2. "Make a command to the Universe. Let the Universe know what you want. The Universe responds to your thoughts" (p. 47), was translated into Arabic as:

وجه طلبك للكون. دع الكون يعرف ما تريده، و لسوف يستجيب الكون لأفكارك بإذن الله

[Direct your request to the universe. Let the universe know what you want, and the universe will respond to your thoughts in God willing.]

The two examples indicate how the translation reduces the power of the universe, seconds it to that of God, and the universe is viewed as no more than a tool acting

according to God's permission. This ideological premise, however, contradicts *The Secret's* original premise in which the power of the human being is articulated and highlighted throughout the book.³⁴

(c) Exact rendition of the "Universe" with no replacement or addition, as in the following examples:

1. "Proclaim to the Universe that all your good thoughts are powerful" (p. 22).
2. "*How* the Universe will bring it to you . . . Allow the Universe to do it for you" (p. 51).
3. "This is a feeling Universe" (p. 52).
4. "When you are acting to receive from the Universe" and "The Universe likes speed" (p. 55).
5. "There is no time for the Universe and there is no size" (p. 63).

The identical rendition of the above example points to inconsistency in translation strategy and the reader would get the impression that the Arabic text is ideologically schizophrenic for it kept the Universe in these examples, yet altered them in others. What could explain this seemingly contradicted behavior? The usage of "the Universe" in the above listed examples differs from that in the previous ones where the translator applied alterations; it does not allude to having power similar to that of God. Hence, the translator only resorted to replacement when the universe is given this ultimate godly power of giving, offering, controlling or creating. Other than that, he/she made no changes. This strategy continues to serve the translation's ideology and is very congruent with it.

By the same token, the translator dealt with some elements according to the context in which they are used. There are two salient examples:

(a) The "blackboard" metaphor:

³⁴ For example: "we are the creators of the Universe. So there's no limit, really, to human potential" (p. 160), "that means that you have God potential and power to create the world" (p. 164).

The co-author Neal Donald Walsch explains:

There is no blackboard in the sky on which God has written your purpose, your mission in life. There's no blackboard in the sky that says, "Neale Donald Walsch. Handsome guy who lived in the first part of the twenty-first century, who . . ." And then there's a blank. And all I have to do to really understand what I'm doing here, why I'm here, is to find that blackboard and find out what God really has in mind for me. But the blackboard doesn't exist. (p. 177)

This paragraph was translated into Arabic as:

*ليس هناك ما يجبرك على تحديد مقصدك و رسالتك في الحياة. ليس هناك من يقول: "دانييل دونالد وولش"، شاب وسيم يعيش في مستهل القرن الواحد والعشرين، وهو . . . " .
و كل ما علي القيام به هو أن أفهم حقا ما أقوم به هنا، و لماذا أنا هنا و أن أجد طريقي و
أتبين ما تبينه لي الظروف، و أن أقاوم لكي أحقق ما أريده أنا وليس ما تريده لي الظروف.*

[There is nothing that forces you to determine your purpose and message in life. There is no one saying:" Neale Donald Walsch is a handsome guy living in the beginning of the twenty first century, and he is...." All I have to do is to really understand what I am doing here and why I am here, find my way, see what the circumstances are showing me and resist in order to achieve what I want, not what the circumstances want.]

The translator deleted the whole metaphor of the "blackboard" and replaced the word "blackboard" with words like "nothing" and "no one". The word "God" was also deleted and replaced with a semantically different sentence turning "find out what God really has in mind for me" into "see what the circumstances are". A Muslim or someone familiar with Islam would know that the reason behind this deletion; in Islam this metaphor is a real belief. Muslims believe, as stated in the Quran, in what is called "the Preserved Tablet" (or *Al- Lauh Al Mahfuuz* in Arabic) on which God has already written, before creation, everything that will happen for people and the world

till the day of judgment. Thus, the predestination of everything has been previously recorded on that tablet and this is all to indicate the knowledge of God. However, it is worthy to note here that the freedom of one's decisions and choices is not affected by having his/her destiny already written; the belief in the Preserved Tablet is only an admission of God's ultimate and encompassing knowledge. This contradicts the idea of the blackboard as presented in *The Secret* in the sense that one's message in life is already "chosen" or "determined" for him/her, while in Islam it is just written but the choice is up to people. However, for the majority Muslim readers, the blackboard metaphor will bring into play the idea of the Preserved Tablet. Therefore, the translator chose to remove it all together.

However, the translator's dual technique shows up again when he/she keeps the blackboard metaphor in another part of the text. The sentence "you get to fill the blackboard of your life with whatever you want" (p.178) was translated exactly as it is in English because the existence of the blackboard here is not denied and it is not associated with God. Therefore, in Arabic it will read like a literary metaphor. Hence, this dual technique or strategy of deleting words, metaphors or keeping them depending on the context and ideological premise continues throughout the translation.

(b) The comparison between "God" and "Energy":

James Ray, one of the contributors, states:

You go to a quantum physicist and you say, "What creates the world?" And he or she will say, "Energy." Well, describe energy. "Ok, it can never be created or destroyed, it always was, always has been, everything that ever existed always exists . . . You go to a theologian and ask the question, "What created the Universe?" And he or she will

say, "God." Ok, describe God. "Always was and always has been, never can be created or destroyed, all that ever was . . . You see, it's the same description, just different terminology. (p. 158-159)

The translator deleted the comparison in which God is mentioned, and translated the part about energy alone.

5.3.2 The "Supreme Mind vs. God" dilemma

The concept of the "Supreme Mind" appears in the ninth chapter entitled "The Secret to You".³⁵ It has been discussed in light of: quantum physics which posits that everything is energy; pantheism which surmises the unity of everything³⁶; and spirituality. It is viewed as the only existing truth and the source of "every creation and invention in history" (p. 161). On one hand, it is presented as "You", i.e. the human being, and on the other, it is realized as "God". It is also equated with "the One Energy Field", the "One Consciousness" and "the One Creative Source" (p. 162). "Call it whatever you want, but we are all One" (p. 162). Examples revealed two strategies in dealing with this concept:

(a) Replacement of "Supreme Mind" with "God" and the Creator", as in the following examples:

1. "The true supply is the invisible field, whether you call that the Universe, the Supreme Mind, God, Infinite Intelligence, or whatever else" (p. 163). The translator rendered it as:

³⁵ Also called the "Universal Mind" and "the One Mind" (p. 157 and p. 160).

³⁶ The term "pantheism" is not mentioned in the book, yet the idea of the "oneness" of everything is stated and emphasized.

غير أن الدعم الحقيقي هو المجال الخفي، الذي لا تراه، والذي يأتي من عند الله سبحانه وتعالى.

[But the real supply is the invisible field, which you don't see, and which comes from God the Glorified and the Exalted.]

The translator has deleted all the other labels or names provided by the author for the "true supply" and replaced it with "God the Glorified and the Exalted".

2. "All that exists is the One Universal Mind, and there is nowhere that the One Mind is not. It exists in everything. The One Mind is all intelligence, all wisdom, and all perfection" (p. 160). The translator rendered it as the following:

إن ما يحكم الكون و كل ما فيه هو قدرة الخالق و ليس ثمة موضع لا يوجد به القدرة الإلهية و الطاقة الكونية تستمد قوتها من الله. و هي تمثل الذكاء، والحكمة، والمثالية التامة.

[What controls the universe and everything in it is the power of the Creator and there is nowhere that the divine power does not exist and the universal energy draws its strength from God. And it represents intelligence, wisdom and all perfection.]

Again, the translator replaces "the One Universal Mind", and "the One Mind" with "the Creator", "Divine power" and "God", respectively. He/she also added the phrase "the universal energy draws its strength from God" as additional emphasis.

3. "The Supreme Mind holds that possibility." (p. 161). The translation, however, was rendered as:

فذلك بيد الخالق.

[For that is in the hand of the Creator.]

(b) Retention of "Supreme Mind" and "Universal Mind" as in the original, with no alterations:

1. "All knowledge, all discoveries, and all inventions of the future, are in the Universal Mind as possibilities" (p. 161).

2. "Every creation and invention in history has also been drawn from the Universal Mind" (p. 161).
3. "The Universal Mind is not only intelligence" (p. 157).
4. "Well, now you know you are the Supreme Mind" (p. 169).

These examples indicate no comparison or equation with God, and therefore, they were rendered into Arabic almost identically.

5.3.3 The Concept of creation

The concept of creation is a dominant one in *The Secret*. The teachings of the work are all for the purpose of helping one to learn how to "create" one's life. The human being is perceived as a "creator" with abilities and potentials of creating everything he/she desires. This concept, however, seems to be problematic and challenging in the translated text. The Arabic equivalents of "creation" and "create" are *الخلق* and *يخلق*. However, the Arabic translation demonstrates almost no usage of these words. Examples highlight two strategies in rendering this particular concept.

(a) Deletion of the concept all together, as in the following example:

1. "You are the creator of you" (p. 41). In Arabic, it was translated into:

إنك تملك زمام السيطرة على نفسك.

[You have control over yourself.]

(b) Replacement of "creation" with a variety of words, for example:

1. "You are a creator, there is an easy process to create using the law of attraction"

(p. 45). It was translated into Arabic as:

إنك مبدع، و ثمّة عملية سهلة للإبتكار و الإبداع باستخدام قانون الجذب.

[You are creative, and there is an easy process for innovation and creativity using the law of attraction.]

The translator turned "creator", which is a noun, into the adjective "creative". "To create" was replaced with "innovation and creativity". One can easily draw two observations here: the first is that "creativity" differs from "creation" in the sense the author intends it to be, which is making something out of nothing. The second is that the addition of "innovation" clarifies that the creativity or creation process the translator is referring to is that of being novel and developing for it is only God who creates.

2. The co-author Dr. Fred Wolf who explains that the negative attitude also creates negative outcome says, "Every single "I'm not" is a creation!" (p. 167). This phrase was rendered in the Arabic text as:

كلمة "الست" في حد ذاتها إبداع!

[The word "I'm not" in itself is creativity!]

Clearly, the translator is intentionally avoiding the usage of the word "creation", although the Arabic phrase makes no sense for the reader in terms of its semantic compatibility with the previous ideas of how even negative ideas have the power to "create". "Creativity" gives a positive sense to a negative idea.

3. "Creation is always happening. Every time an individual has a thought, or a prolonged chronic way of thinking, they're in the creation process. Something is going to manifest out of those thoughts" (p. 16). The Arabic translation is:

عملية التفكير في حالة حدوث دائم. ففي كل لحظة تراود شخصا ما فكرة، أو تتمخض فكرة عن شئ ما، سوف يتبدى شئ ما عن تلك الأفكار.

[The process of thinking is always happening. Every time an individual has a thought, or an idea results in something, something is going to manifest out of those thoughts.]

The translator replaced "creation" with "the process of thinking", and the phrase "they're in the Creation Process" was omitted all together.

4. "In 1912 Charles Haanel described the law of attraction as "the greatest and the most infallible law upon which the entire system of creation depends" (p. 5).

In the Arabic text, "the entire system of creation" was translated into: "upon which the order of things depends".

5. "What you are thinking now is creating your future life. You create your life with your thoughts. Because you are always thinking, you are always creating" (p. 16-17). The sentences were rendered into Arabic as:

و ما تفكر به الآن هو ما يشكل حياتك المستقبلية. إنك تصوغ حياتك بأفكارك؛ و لأنك على الدوام تفكر، فإنك على الدوام تشكل و تصنع.

[What you are thinking is shaping your future life. You formulate your life with your thought. Because you are always thinking, you are always shaping and making.]

The translator resorted to use synonyms of "creating" such as "shaping", "formulate" and "making".

The data presented and examined above on the three levels (preliminary, macro and micro) will be analyzed and interpreted in the next section.

6. The Systemic Context

This fourth and final level is the analysis stage in which I intend to answer most of the questions I posed in the introduction of this thesis regarding the translator's strategies and overall behaviour. To this end, I apply the theories I presented in Chapter One. The analysis is divided into two parts. First, a combined analysis of preliminary data,

macro and micro levels is conducted; I juxtapose the observations of the three levels to formulate the findings. Second, I identify and describe the norms at work in *The Secret* based on these results.

6.1 Combined analysis: Preliminary data, macro and micro levels

The examination of both the preliminary data and the macro level observations revealed that the external features, text structure and narrative mode of the Arabic translation have reproduced the source text in almost complete valence. However, three instances indicated a divergence from the source text. I shall note first that my usage of the word divergence here shall not be interpreted as an agreement or assertion of the traditional concept of the source text being the authoritative original and the translation as a copy,³⁷ but as a tool to allow easier description and analysis of the translation choices and strategies. This divergence is manifested in three strategies: addition, deletion and replacement, and these instances are: opening the text in the name of Allah with *Al Basmalah*, the insertion of *God* in the dedication and the deletion and replacement of the word *divinity* in the acknowledgment. They all revolve around religious concepts. Hence, the translator's macro-strategy initially indicated a dual technique: an identical rendition of almost all textual elements versus a treatment of religious elements.

On the micro-level, where I scrutinized internal textual elements, the data indicates that the translator has applied this technique through the whole text. His/her choices mark recurrent strategic patterns of omission, addition and replacement. For example, the translator has identically reproduced the stylistic features of the original

³⁷ See Susan Bassnett's discussion on original and translated texts in Chapter 2 "When Is a Translation Not a Translation?" in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (1998).

text, the author's voice and tone, but shifted from the source text whenever confronted with religious elements that are deemed necessary to be changed. We have seen this in the translator's treatment of cultural markers which were all preserved except for the religious ones, maintaining in this way the source text's cultural identity but leaving out the religious features of that identity. Similarly, the treatment of allusions (both proper name and key phrase allusions), despite some differences among the two types, has also showed the same technique. The translator demonstrated two strategies for rendering proper name allusions: one is what Leppihalme calls "retention of the name" and which specifically falls under the subcategory of using the name but "adding some guidance" (1997, p. 79) as we have seen in the examples of *Star Trek* and *Rockefeller*. The other strategy is "omission of name"; it specifically belongs to the subcategory of omitting the name but transferring "the sense by other means, for example by a common noun" (Leppihalme, 1997, p. 79) as we have seen in the examples of rendering "Michael Angelo", "David" and *Twilight Zone*. One could legitimately wonder why the translator would use inconsistent strategies for the same translation problem (i.e. rendering proper names). The answer Lepihalme gives is that the translator's strategy is based on two considerations: the level of familiarity of the allusion (the more familiar the less thought and effort to be paid), and the significance of the allusion (the more important to the text, the more attention and effort paid) (1992, p. 185). It is also important to note that the strategies dealing with allusions as presented by Leppihalme are hierarchical; retention of allusions is placed at the top of the hierarchy while omission comes at the bottom as the least favored or acceptable strategy.³⁸ As for key phrase allusions, the translator has similarly retained the

³⁸ The hierarchy of strategies provided by Leppihalme is based on Jiří Levý's minimax strategy of

allusions while using allusive guidance as in the example of "the green stuff" (i.e. dollars). However, in other passages, the translator used a combination of three strategies: The first is the strategy of "minimum change", as Leppihalme names it (p. 84), in which he/she provided a literal translation when rendering the two biblical verses. The second is the strategy of omitting the sources of these verses by deleting the phrases "Mathew 21:22" and "Mark 11:24", and the third, the strategy of replacement to substitute them with "old wisdom" which has no religious sense or connotation. This combination strategy of keeping the content of an allusion yet camouflaging its source by replacing it with a noun or phrase of different sense does not belong to any of Leppihalme's categories and subcategories of dealing with key phrase allusions. In fact, it points to the absence of the ideological dimension in Leppihalme's work on allusion. She deals with allusions as cultural elements that pose textual problems or challenges. However, the examples I analyzed demonstrate that translating allusions was ideologically driven; it was not a mere issue of familiarity and effort. Nevertheless, the main point to make here is that the translator's strategies show that he/she took the cultural background of the target reader and issues of familiarity into consideration; he/she dealt with allusions and did not leave them as "puzzling "culture bumps" in the target text" (Leppihalme, 1992, p. 183). However, the religious allusions were under-translated (partially translated or not translated at all),³⁹ which reveals that rendering allusions is in line with the overall strategies analyzed so far.

minimum of effort but maximum of effect. Leppihalme provides a "'minimax' ordering of strategies" for both proper names and key phrase allusions (1997, p. 106-107).

³⁹ Under-translation and over-translation are concepts first introduced by Peter Newmark in 1976. As Mian Wang explains, "under-translation refers to the information that the target language contains is

My examination of the four problematic concepts: the *Universe*, *God*, *Supreme Mind* and *creation* has also revealed a repeated strategy of omission, addition and substitution. The examples revealed the substitution of the *Universe* with *God* or the *Creator*, and sometimes the addition of *God*, in order to downplay the great power given to the universe in the original text and attribute it to God in the target text. Any element compared to God in the original text, such as *energy*, has been deleted in the translation. Similarly, the *Supreme Mind* was replaced with *God* and the *Creator* whenever equated with the divine power. These ideological shifts indicate a conformation to the Muslim's ideology in which God does not resemble anything, be it human, creature or a thing, and hence God's power and features are not to be compared or contested.⁴⁰ However, many examples have also shown an identical rendition of the very same concepts which pointed to an inconsistency of the translation strategies. But when examined, these inconsistencies proved to be neither incidental nor random; they are contextual and rendered carefully. When these concepts are in a context that does not compete with God's power and not in comparison with God, they remained unchanged in the translation. Therefore, the ideological discrepancies observed in the translation seem to result from conscious decisions by the translator and they are in agreement with the strategy patterns followed generally as I discussed above.

less than that of the source language", while "over-translation refers to the information that the target language contains is more than that of the source language" (2012, p. 131).

⁴⁰ The belief in one God (i.e. monotheism) who is the creator of everything in the universe and who is above all of his creation is the fundamental concept in Islam and the foundation of its creed. Evidence of this belief is repeated in many Quranic verses and prophetic Hadith. A salient statement of this belief is in the verses of Surat Al Ikhlas: " Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; [1] Allah, the Eternal, the Absolute; [2] He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; [3] And there is none comparable unto Him. [4]. (translation by Yusuf Ali).

As for the concept of *creation*, the translator seemed to be skewing the usage of this term in Arabic by choosing a variety of synonyms such as *shape*, *formulate*, *make* and *innovate*, even when these synonyms resulted in semantically obscure sentences and a contradiction in ideas, as in the example discussed above. This semantic compensation was done in order to emphasize the belief that God's creation, the creation out of nothing, cannot be comparable to that of any human being.

Based on the above discussion, one can see how the translator's behavior on the micro-level is an extension of the initial strategies demonstrated in the preliminary data and on the macro-level. They all are in harmony and the behavior is maintained in consistent fashion through all these levels.

6.2 Norms: Identification and Description

As I mentioned earlier, Toury explains that there are three types of norms: initial, preliminary and operational. In order to identify and describe these norms in the case of *The Secret*, I take into account the findings of my text examination and extratextual information about the publisher, Jarir bookstore and publishing house.

The choices for which the translator opted and the decisions he/she took showed an attempt to preserve most source elements. The translator only deviated from the source text when confronted with elements that ideologically clash with that of Islam. Therefore, the operational norms in *The Secret*, which Toury defines as the decisions made during the process of translation that will influence the text's matrix and linguistic features, could be described and interpreted as the following: an identical reproduction of the source text in all possible aspects except for those that

could produce an ideological conflict that Arab Muslim readers could encounter and that could lead to potential discomfort or even outrage.

As for the preliminary norms, which refer to translation policy in terms of the selection of text type or the individual text and to directness of language (the usage of a mediating language), little official information was available to me. There is no translator preface, or author or publisher comment on the translation of *The Secret* from which one could understand the reasons behind the choice to translate this work in particular and the translational requirements. Jarir's website and the yearly publication flyers do not include any information regarding the translation policy of the institution. However, in an interview, Jarir's CEO, Abdulkarim Al Agil, made important statements about the bookstore's translation activity and revealed the tenets of its policy. Al Agil stated that the reason behind Jarir's exclusive interest in the translation of self-improvement works, along with works on management, computer science and psychology, is due to "a severe lack of these themes in the Arabic library" (Bab.com, 2001). He further adds that the selection of these works is very careful and they are some of the most famous best-sellers in their original languages. Regarding the conditions of selecting the works deemed worthy of being translated, Al Agil answers, "there are no specific conditions; the topic has to be useful, the book should be one of the most promoted and best-selling books, and should not conflict with our Arab thoughts and Islamic beliefs" (Bab.com, 2001). Jarir, as clarified by the CEO, has no translation department but uses "professional translators" in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries. In his words, "the door is open to those who have linguistic and scientific competence and commitment because the translation required by the management [of Jarir] is professional, not amateur. Jarir also obtains

translation permission from the original publisher to guarantee their rights as required by law” (Bab.com, 2001). Regarding the type of translation expected, Al Agil says, “there is no translation that is completely identical to any book, but the bookstore [Jarir] makes sure to revise all the translations; what matters is to have a correct translation which contains the meaning and the aim the writer seeks in the original language”. Finally, Al Agil clearly states that Jarir’s translation activity is limited to the aim of “filling the void in the Arabic library in aspects deemed necessary to serve knowledge and enlightenment” (Bab.com, 2001). The interview did not contain any information regarding language direction.

Based on these statements, preliminary norms at work in *The Secret* could be described as the following: *The Secret* was translated into Arabic as part of the institution’s translation project to enrich the Arabic library with this text type, self-improvement, and it was particularly chosen because it is a bestseller in its original culture and language. The translation had to fulfill another main requirement which is to be in agreement with Arab culture and Islamic beliefs.

The final type of norms is the initial norm which refers to the translator’s primary choice of subscribing to the norms of the source or target text.⁴¹ The analysis of the text showed that the translator adhered to the English text norms in almost all aspects, but adhered to the Arabic text norms when confronted with different ideological items. Hence, I could describe the initial norm in the following terms: the Arabic translation is linguistically, structurally, stylistically and functionally adequate,

⁴¹ I believe it is important to note that this choice is not necessarily fully governed by the translator’s own will. The initial norm could also be influenced by other factors such as the institution’s vision or orientation.

but ideologically acceptable. In other words, the translation is a hybridization of the norms of the source text and culture in terms textual and generic features, and the norms of the target in terms of ideology. Norm hybridization in a translation is not surprising since Toury posits that "no translation is entirely 'acceptable' or entirely 'adequate' " (1980, p. 49). However, instead of trying to find which norms prevail more, i.e. is the translation more adequate or more acceptable, I believe a more important question is: in what areas a translation is adequate and in which ones it is acceptable?

This analysis has shown that the Arabic translation of *The Secret* is source-oriented due to the fact that the translator took into consideration the text type's structure and function and most of its original features. It is also target-oriented since he/she took into account the Arab Muslim reader and tried to eliminate conflicts of ideology, cultural difference and social taboos they may encounter.

Chapter Four: An Intertextual and Intersystemic Analysis

This final chapter is an analysis of the potential factors which resulted in the translation norms identified in *The Secret*. It is divided into five sections; each explores a different factor: (1) explores the function of the text, (2) examines the religious considerations, (3) discusses translation policies in the Arab world within the socio-political context, (4) analyzes the translation's consequences in terms of two notions: "risk" and "reward", and (5) draws on translation decision-making in light of the "satisficing" theory. Throughout the chapter, intertextual and intersystemic relations are described. This analysis goes beyond the discussion of norms presented in the previous chapters.

Perhaps what is more challenging and fruitful than identifying and describing the norms at work in a certain translation, or a corpus of translations, is investigating the source of such norms or the forces from which they resulted. This argument has been voiced by some translation scholars such as Anthony Pym and Ritalice Ribeiro de Medeiros, who highlight and justify the need of initiating a post-norm analysis. Anthony Pym notes that "the mere observation and description of norms does not explain a great deal. It just tells us that there are norms. We have to know about the other variables" (1998, p. 5). In similar lines, De Medeiros states that "if translation scholars limit themselves to the identification and description of norms in actual translations, major cultural aspects inherent to this undeniably culture-bound activity may be missed out" (1999, p. 145).

Both writers assert that there definitely are "aspects" and "variables" external to the translation activity in a given culture and they could pertain to norms other than

translation norms. In other words, translation norms do not exist in a void; they could be derived from, formed or influenced by other norms that are non-translational (e.g. socio-political, literary etc.). In this chapter, I take the risk of examining what is beyond the norms performed in *The Secret's* Arabic translation, beyond their existence and description. I query the direct and indirect forces behind them. Two questions I wish to answer: **Why** was the Arabic translation of *The Secret* ideologically Islamized (target-oriented), while unchanged (source-oriented) in every other aspect? **What** does this hybridization of norms indicate and where does it come from? The two questions, in my opinion, are a question of genre (S-H) and a question of the overall socio-political norms in the Arab world on which translation norms could be mapped. These two questions are the pillars of the following discussions.

Possible factors contributing to the final result of the Arabic translation

1. The Function of *The Secret*

One of the primary factors to consider when explaining a certain translational behavior is the text's function. As I explained in Chapter One, the interdependence between translators' methodology and the text's type and function has been discussed and studied by translation scholars. Therefore, examining and analyzing the function of *The Secret* could offer insight on the rendition of the Arabic translated text and the translator's strategies. Drawing on Reiss's work, an analysis of (a) text type, (b) text variety and (c) style is the first step to establish a text's function.

(a) Text type

Many factors in the English text lead me to conclude that *The Secret* has a "persuasive character" in communicating the content, to use Reiss's words, and hence is of an "operative type" (1981, p. 124). In other words, it intends to urge the reader take decisions, actions and change attitudes on certain issues and problems of life.

Even from a superficial reading of *The Secret*, one cannot but notice the use of highly inspirational language. Sentences like: "because you are the masterpiece of your own life" (p. 23), "you are the Master of the Universe, and the Genie is there to serve you" (p. 46), "You are the designer of your destiny. You are the author. You write the story. The pen is in your hand, and the outcome is whatever you choose" (p. 166), "You are God manifested in human form, made to perfection", "You are all wisdom. You are all intelligence" (p. 164), all intend to foster one's belief in one's self and boost one's inward power.

The affirmation of positiveness also characterizes the work and is easily noticeable. Sentences like: "There are no limits to what you can create for You, because your ability to think is unlimited!" (p. 150), "There is abundance for everybody" (p. 118), "Your life is in your hands. No matter where you are now, no matter what has happened in your life, you can begin to consciously choose your thoughts, and you can change your life. There is no such thing as a hopeless situation. Every single circumstance of your life can change!" (p. 19), reassure the reader and confirm the possibility of change for the better.

Another characteristic of *The Secret* is the intense use of the words *You* and *create*. For example: "All of your power to create your life is available right now" (p.

22), "You are the creator of you, and the law of attraction is your magnificent tool to create whatever you want in your life" (p. 41). This repetitive use of these words is intended to subtly strengthen the appellative voice of the work.

The frequent use of the direct imperative form, especially in the "How to use the Secret" section of the book, is another characteristic. Sentences like: "Let go of all those limiting thoughts" (p. 59), "Do not contradict what you have asked for with your thoughts, words and actions" (p. 60), "Make it a daily habit to determine every event in your life in advance" (p. 67), "Trust the Universe. Trust and believe and have faith" (p. 57), "Trust your instincts" (p. 56), highlight the expectation of an action and a change on the part of the reader/help-seeker.

Other elements, however, also indicate that the text belongs to the informative type, i.e. a mere communication of content. The introduction of the secret or the law of attraction, explaining how it works and how to apply it belong to the informative aspect of the text. This pure communication of content is visible in sentences like: "The law of attraction is a law of nature" (p. 13), it "doesn't compute "don't" or "not" or "no," or any other words of negation" (p. 14), "The law of attraction says like attracts like, so when you think a thought, you are attracting like thoughts to you" (p. 7), "Quantum physicists tell us that the entire Universe emerged from a thought!" (p. 15).

The usage of success or transformation stories of both individuals and organizations, some of which are the authors' own, such as Byrne's success after her life collapsed on all levels and her weight struggle (see p. 58-62) for example, could also appear to pertain to the informative aspect only. But in fact, this usage is an

effective rhetorical device to confirm and reinforce the workability of the law of attraction, and a tool for convincing and stimulating readers to apply it. Resorting to stories and personal anecdotes, among other devices, is definitely not exclusive to *The Secret*. Dolby explains:

Though self-help books are works of non-fiction and are cast, in general, into what composition teachers would call 'expository prose', they very often use stories by way of illustration. . . . We can see that persuasion sufficient to inspire a reader's own constructive action is the writer's objective; persuasion rather than rigorous verification, is the writer's aim. And stories are very persuasive despite their singularity, despite their lack of comparative or control group instances. (p. 112)⁴³

In this sense, even the informative stories and experiences of others carry the intention of persuasion which points to the dominance of the operative type. As for the remaining type, the expressive, although artistic elements such as rhythm, rhyme, leitmotifs and so forth, are not dominant features of the text, which might suggest that the text is not typically expressive, stylistic and poetic devices such as metaphors, parallelism and pithiness are used and will be discussed in detail in the section on analysis of style.

Although the three forms exist in *The Secret*, I argue that the text is primarily of an operative type, secondly informative, and thirdly expressive. However, the overall function of the text can only be decided after consideration of text variety and style.

⁴³ See Dolby's full section allocated to stories in self-help literature (p. 112-134) and how authors of self-help tend to use "personal narratives" since they are "more personal, and authors achieve a degree of intimacy with the readers by relating personal narratives" (p. 123).

(b) Text Variety

Reiss defines text variety as "super-individual acts of speech or writing, which are linked to recurrent actions of communications and in which particular patterns of language and structure have developed because of their recurrence in similar communicative constellations" (1981, p. 126). She further explains that establishing a text variety is important for the translation process in order not to "endanger the functional equivalence of the TL text by naively adopting SL conventions" (1981, p. 126). Regardless of the prescriptive nature of her note, establishing the text variety is also important for the scholar to describe whether the translation preserved the text's variety and function or not.

As I mentioned in Chapter Three, *The Secret* was based on the movie/documentary which preceded it. Its structure reads as a printed documentary script, which differs from the presentation or narration modes of other S-H texts. Another distinctive feature is the extensive use of relatively long quotes of the participant gurus/ teachers whose names and professions precede the quotes and are written in bold form each time they are quoted, just as if introduced on the screen. Byrne's commentary or illustrations precede and follow the quotes as the narrator's role in a documentary. It is customary in S-H writing to use quotes, and other types of memorable and easily memorizable sayings such as proverbs, aphorisms and *bons mots*. But the length and density of the quotes in the case of *The Secret* make them part of the book's structure rather than a stylistic device.⁴⁴ Such structure and representation hence gives *The Secret* its individual variety. As I discussed in Chapter

⁴⁴ See Dolby's chapter "Proverbs, Quotes and Insights" for more details on the role and common practices of quotes and proverbs in self-help writing (2005, p. 135-146), and "the tendency of self-help authors to quote each other" (p. 143).

Three, the translation has maintained this structure and hence adopted the source text's variety which means the text's function was not "endangered".⁴⁵

(c) Style

Reiss places great importance on this element, as the stylistic features will more clearly reveal and confirm the communicative function of the text and determine the translator's techniques and strategies.

One of the most recurrent stylistic characteristic of *The Secret* is the repetition of certain words to increase the emphasis. For example: "Be happy *now*. Feel good *now*" (emphasis in original) (p. 179), "This is a magnificent Universe. The Universe is bringing all good things to me. The Universe is conspiring for me in all things. The Universe is supporting me in everything I do. The Universe meets all my needs immediately" (p. 40), and "You must believe you will receive and that perfect weight is yours already. You must imagine, pretend, act as if, make-believe, that the perfect weight is yours. You must see yourself as receiving that perfect weight" (p. 60).

Parallelism is a noticeable technique in the text. Sentences like: "It's working as much as you're thinking. Any time your thoughts are flowing, the law of attraction is working" (p. 16), "It is precise and it is exact" (p. 27).

Metaphors are also a central poetic device in the majority of S-H books; the authors of *The Secret* employed a number of them throughout the text. For example: "Remember that you are a magnet, attracting everything to you" (p. 56) or "you are a human transmission tower" (p. 11), "thoughts have a frequency" (p. 10), "The Genie

⁴⁵ Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis, it would be interesting to examine if the target varieties or conventions differ from those of the source texts and how.

is the law of attraction" (p. 46), "the Universe is a mirror"(p. 49) are used here to convey how the law of attraction operates. Other examples like: "You are the Michelangelo of your own life. The David you are sculpting is you" (p. 23) are used to stress the "you can do it" principle.

Many sentences are presented in the interrogative form to create a conversational effect when addressing the reader. Sentences like: "why do you think that 1 percent of the population earns around 96 percent of all the money that's being earned?" (p. 6), "what do you really want" (p. 47) and "Can you imagine not being?" (p. 159), create a feeling of a one-to-one conversation, which strengthens the intimacy between the reader and author and thus fosters the persuasive purpose.

The extensive usage of dependant clause sentences, such as: "If you stay in that feeling, it will always be in the future" (p. 84), "When you visualize, you generate powerful thoughts and feelings of having it now" (p. 93) and "As you demonstrate faith in giving, the law of attraction must give you more to give" (p. 108), strongly characterizes the text. These serve as indirect advice or an alternative of the imperative form to create a friendlier and less authoritative tone which will be more effective in persuasion.

One can clearly see how these stylistic devices all serve the same end which, to use Reiss's words, is to "trigger off impulses of behavior" (p. 124-125), and therefore "help". Now if we take the analysis of type, variety and style together, we can see how they collaborate to make *The Secret* a text that is "capable of making an appeal" (p. 124) and have, primarily, an operative function.

It is important, however, to note that S-H literature has a didactic and persuasive nature. Scholars who have studied this genre have all pointed to this function. Dolby, for instance, writes that the task of S-H writers:

is a rhetorical one; they must persuade their readers to adopt the new and cast off the old. As have teachers and prophets from earlier times, they claim to bring a new philosophy to the common people, and they want to present it in a way that people will find convincing. (2005, p. 93)

According to Reiss's theory, if the text's function is operative, then the translation mode is "adaptive translating" and suggests that "the psychological mechanisms of the use of persuasive language should be adapted to the needs of the new language community" (p. 129). The author calls this stage, in which the text function and translation method are matched, the "reverbalization" stage. For the purpose of this study, it is a description stage in which the strategies used in *The Secret* are described in the light of the text's function.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the translator's strategies (deletion, replacement and addition) in rendering *The Secret* proved to be adaptive to the Muslim Arab culture whenever a possible cultural or religious conflict arose. In other words, the translator maintained the function of *The Secret* and the translation mode was partially adaptive. The Islamic flavor of the text could then be viewed as part of this adaptation and the "psychological mechanisms" of the persuasive language of the Arab Islamic culture in order to be "capable of triggering off analogous impulses of behavior" for the Arab Muslim reader (p. 129). Hence, the function of the S-H text,

and the genre in general, stand as a strong factor behind the target-oriented norms (Islamizing norms) manifested in *The Secret*.

2. S-H and Religion

To ask why or why not *The Secret's* Arabic translation, or any other S-H text, was Islamized, will immediately bring into play the relation between the text (and its genre) with religion. I have previously discussed how *The Secret* and its translation relate to Christianity and Islam through the discussion of its reception in both source and target cultures. *The Secret's* author and co-authors emphasized the universal spirituality of their work and its independence from any religion, and simultaneously its workability with all religions and beliefs. It is this duality that has caused the polarized reception between those who Christianize the text and those who de-Christianize it. The Arabic translation was adapted to Islam, and similarly stirred debates between those who match it to the Islamic belief and those who deny any connection to Islam. However, discussing the reception of the text only is insufficient; it is critical to discuss the genre's connection to religion, secularism, and the genre's religious adaptability. These three points will be further discussed throughout two sections: (1) Religious considerations in the S-H genre and *The Secret*, and (2) Religious considerations in the Arabic translation of *The Secret*.

2.1 Religious considerations in the S-H genre and *The Secret*

S-H writing and religion are strongly tied. There is a significant number of studies on S-H writing and its connection to religion and so-called popular religions, or mainstream religions, (see for example: Roy M. Anker 1999; Peter B. Clarke 2006). There also seems to be porous borderlines between self-improvement writings and

religious writings—as they manifest common features such as providing advice on coping with life—which has led to the coining of terms like "self religion", "cult of therapy" and "human potential movements" (Chryssides, 2000). Another umbrella term is what Paul Hutchinson calls the "cult of reassurance". It is a new movement that marks the American turn to religion in post-World War II and the fusion writings of best-selling religious S-H books which combine psychology and religion. Hutchinson writes:

It is a flocking to religion, especially in middle class circles, for a renewal of confidence and optimism at a time when these are in short supply. It is a turning to the priest for encouragement to believe that, despite everything that has happened in this dismaying century, the world is good, life is good, the human story makes sense and comes out where we want it to come out. Most of us find these things hard to believe these days. (As cited in Smith, p. 1-2)

Smith then explains:

The cult of reassurance is a rejection of the ubiquitous hopelessness. As preached from pulpits and expounded on the pages of best-selling self-help titles, it insists on "positive thinking," and the achievement of peace of mind through relaxation, meditation, and the reading/repetition of scriptures and other inspirational texts. Calling the psychologist "our tribal medicine man," Hutchinson describes the cult of reassurance as a rapprochement of sorts between religion and science. It repackaged American faith in the individual and his boundless capacity for achievement in psychological and theological language. (p. 2)

Therefore, this needed rapprochement has resulted in many religious figures of all creeds infusing their writings with positive thinking styles and solutions while stressing the importance of integrating faith into the lives of the desperate. Examples are the works of pastors like Norman Vincent Peale, Fulton Sheen, Rick Warren and the Rabbis Joshua Loth Liebman and Abraham J. Twerski, to name a few. Similarly, in the Arab world, many sheikhs (Islamic scholars or Islamic knowledge seekers) have also taken a part in this genre. Among the numerous examples stand out the popular book by Sheikh Aaidh al Qarni *Don't Be Sad* [لا تحزن] (2002), *Enjoy your life* [استمتع بحياتك] (2006) by Muhammad Al Arifi and the numerous works of Sheikh Tareq al Suwaidan.

Besides discussing the conflation of religion and S-H writing and tracing the S-H phenomenon to the emergence of religions based on the shared role of keeping positiveness in societies, some scholars indicate that many people consider their religious books as their source of S-H to seek inner peace, guidance and inspiration (Covey, A. Merrill & R. Merrill, 1994, p. 15). Dolby, for example, writes:

My grandmother found inspiration, guidance, and comfort in the bible. Unlike me, she did not feel the need to seek out other kinds of resources. . . She was content to ponder the wisdom that her culture's primary sacred text had to offer, both for her spiritual enlightenment and for her psychological well-being. (2005, p. 158)

The above discussion by no means claims to provide a detailed overview of the history of religion and S-H literature. Instead, it presents some major points where the two come into contact with each other. Therefore, Islamizing *The Secret* in the

Arabic translation is anything but surprising due to this strong connection of the text and the genre to religion. This connection also raises a question on the role of the translator in relation to religious figures/writers, namely: how much of the translator's adaptive practice was influenced by and influential to original writings?

The evolution of the relation between religion and self-improvement is perhaps as crucial as the relation itself when discussing it in a translation context. Several scholars pointed out the recent secular shift in the self-improvement literature. Paul Tillich describes self-improvement literature as "contemporary, secular manifestations of the sacred" (as cited in Dolby, 2005 p. 158). Guy Redden similarly calls it "somewhat 'secularised' kind of religious formation" (2012, p. 57). Two main forms of secularism in S-H writing could be distinguished. The first is the dilution of religion. McGee for example writes: "some strains of self-help culture do provide a kind of secularized religion—a sort of moral values lite" (2005, p. 20). She further explains:

Uplifting without requiring a serious commitment of time or resources, self-help literature offers inspiration by, in the words of the sociologist Wendy Simonds, "Shrinking God". . . . Less demanding than traditional religious reading and practices—and promising not only spiritual uplift but also worldly success—much popular self-improvement literature, including the most contemporary examples, interpolates spiritual traditions as "natural laws" or "scientific principle. (p. 58-59)

In the case of *The Secret*, such interpolation of metaphysical and scientific ideas constitutes the essence of the work. The focus on the universe, energy, power, the natural law of attraction and quantum physics, suggest a form of euphemism for God.

This growing secularism is not only visible in newer works but also in republished works. McGee, for example, examined the indexes of the different editions of Richard Nelson Bolles' *What Color is Your Parachute* (1970) and noticed the disappearance of some religious concepts and the limited explanation of others. She notes that these instances suggest that: "there was some concern about limiting the book's religious references for its growing secular audience. . . . Throughout the 1970s and mid-1980s, *Parachute* became increasingly secularized, despite its genesis in a Protestant ministry" (2005, p. 119).

The second form of secularism in S-H literature is the embracing of all religions and inclusion of various practices. As Redden explains:

"New Age" is a rubric term covering a range of affined belief options that rarely demand the exclusive loyalty of participants. Indeed, proactive syncretism—deliberately exposing oneself to various sources of wisdom, and forging a personal philosophy from multiple influences—is often seen as the route to growth. (2012, p. 56)

This syncretism is emphasized throughout *The Secret*. For instance, Byrne introduces the law of attraction by stressing that: "Religions, such as Hinduism, Hermetic traditions, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and civilizations, such as the ancient Babylonians and Egyptians, delivered it through their writings and stories" (2006, p. 4). She later stresses this point using a quote of Charles Haanel: "This is an

eternal and fundamental principle inherent in all things, in every system of philosophy, in every Religion and in every Science" (p. 39). In her "Forward", Byrne also states: "It doesn't matter who you are or where you are, The Secret can give you whatever you want" (p. xi). This is a message that can be read as: regardless of the religious/culture/tradition affiliation the "who" embodies and the "where" stretches over, the principles promoted in this book will work for you as long as you believe in them, and you can believe in them your way.

Another significant example is the quote from James Ray, one of the co-authors, who says:

Then you've got the Universe at large, which is the Genie. Traditions have called it so many things-your holy guardian, your higher self. We can put any label on it, and you choose the one that works best for you, but every tradition has told us there's something bigger than us. (p. 46)

In similar lines, Byrne explains: "The true supply is the invisible field, whether you call that the universe, the Supreme Mind, God, Infinite Intelligence, or whatever else" (p. 163). Therefore, the author intended to highlight the readers' ability to call or "label" the law of attraction anything they want which points to the flexibility of interpreting this principle which expands the liberty of readers to adapt it to their beliefs. Now, if we think of the translator as a reader first and foremost, we can legitimately ask if the translator can do the same thing, i.e. choose to adapt the Secret's principle to whatever "works best for them" or their target readers.

2.2 Religious considerations in the Arabic translation of *The Secret*

In the case of *The Secret*, the translator translated the text to conform to the target's Islamic beliefs. In other words, the translator has de-secularized the text. The secular flavor of *The Secret*, or the secular coat that covered all religions and traditions, irrespective of what one might think of the intention behind this secularism,⁴⁶ has increased its translational adaptability to Islamic thought or facilitated religious domestication. It has given more leverage and space for the translator to act within. Whether the translator considered this issue of secularism and religiosity in the translation process or not is irrelevant. It stands as a legitimate factor that has probably participated in shaping the translation of *The Secret* in its current state, and as a factor to consider in the translation/study of other S-H texts. *The Secret* provides one case. It would be interesting to examine in what way secularism in S-H literature affects translation and is affected by it. What happens to it when translated to less secular societies, or areas which have different types of secularism?⁴⁷

To return to the point of de-secularization of *The Secret*, two strategies can be discerned. The first is through the removal or the reduction of Christian links present in the source text which is a form of exclusion of a religion and, as such, contradicts a main premise of secularism. The second is by enlarging God in the target text, which was achieved by the replacement of the *Universe* with *God* and attributing the ultimate power to Him. One might rightly argue that this rendition of the text could be

⁴⁶ One could argue it was intended for better promotion and sales, or to satisfy and help as many people as possible both religious and the less so. See Redden (2012).

⁴⁷ For detailed discussions on secularism in the Arab and Islamic world, its history and current situation, see for example Nader Hashemi's chapter "Secularism and its discontents in Muslim societies" in his 2009 book *Islam, Secularism and Liberal Democracy: Toward a Democratic Theory of Muslim Societies*, Albert Hourani 1983, 2013 and Bingbing Wu 2007.

a matter of self-censorship on the part of the translator, which could be a personal choice, or a regulation performed by the publishing house, Jarir, which itself works within the limited and very strict freedom of publishing in Saudi Arabia.⁴⁸ Patterns and degrees of censorship vary in the Arab world from one country to another, yet it is known that "in Saudi Arabia, the situation is stricter than that in most of the Arab countries" (Yehia, 2007, p. 5).

Censorship in itself, however, is not a sufficient explanation for the existence of a certain norm in a given text. In fact, it only manifests constraints of some type set to serve specific ends, whether on the individual, group, institutional or governmental levels. It is then equally, and perhaps even more important, to know what ends this censorship is serving. The censorship performed in the translation of *The Secret* is part of the overall censorship—whether of press, media, books, or cyber censorship—that is religious in nature. It derives from the mono religious policy justified by the Saudi government to preserve the Islamic spirit, which, as argued by Yehia, is de facto politically driven, in the sense that religious censorship is a tool through which most of the Arab governments consolidate their power to insure the stability of their repressive regimes (p. 4-6).⁴⁹

Besides the deletion/and or replacement of the elements considered unacceptable, the translator infused an Islamic language in the translated text by the addition of familiar sentences directly borrowed from the Quran in places he/she felt a need for Islamic reinforcement. It is in this Islamic discourse that I believe the

⁴⁸ For more details on censorship and translation in cross cultural contexts, see Billiani 2007.

⁴⁹ Censorship and translation in the cultural and political context is addressed by various translation scholars. See for example Billiani 2007. For more information on censorship in the Arab world in particular, see Trevor Mostyn 2002; Nsouli and Meho 2006; Yehia 2007; Al Hamad 2013.

desecularization or Islamization of *The Secret* is more than an issue of censorship; it has to do with the complexity of Islamism, post-colonialism and post-modernism in the Muslim world. Taking a cue from Mike Holt whose article "Translating Islamist Discourse" starts from the premise that "Islamism is basically a political discourse", I consider the Islamization of *The Secret* to be, at least partially, attributed to the fact that Islam has become the "master signifier for all discourses including the political, the cultural and the social" (2004, p. 64-65).⁵⁰ Holt draws on Bobby Sayyid's argument that views:

The emergence of Islamism as a direct result of what is called the 'decentring of the West' where the West is no longer the uncontested model of human progress and development and the history of the West can no longer be seen as an unchallenged record of that progress. (p. 64)

Sayyid sees decolonization and postmodernism as the main reasons for pushing the West away from the centre. The twist, Sayyid explains, however, is that rejecting the West does not entail rejecting modernity. In Holt's words:

Islamism . . . is a rejection of Western or European political models, but not of modernism or progress. . . . Modern regimes in the Muslim world, which Sayyid calls Kemalist regimes, have been discredited and along with them their borrowed Western ideologies. What is required to challenge these regimes is another type of discourse capable of becoming hegemonic; in other words a discourse able to describe all other discourses in its terms and dominate them. Islamist discourse, borrowing as it does so much from Islam itself, has been readily

⁵⁰ Holt's article addresses the challenges of translating the Islamic discourse from Arabic into English, but his discussion on the relation between the Islamic discourse and translation is the concern of this thesis.

available to take over from failed Western ideologies to offer hope and a political plan of action, unattained by charges of being in the service of Western states or alien to ordinary Muslims' way of life. (p. 65)

In this sense, the Islamic discourse in *The Secret*—and I could argue many Arabic S-H books—is a performance of the Islamic "master signifier". One cannot, however, have absolute certainty as to whether the translator is fully aware of this performance and has intended it. Translators, writers, politicians and Arab readers alike, are all accustomed to this discourse, greatly influenced by it and embedded in it. Islam has become a dominant master discourse in translation as it is in writing. This predilection to Islamize translated texts highlights how socio-political factors have palpably influenced translation in the Arab world. This leads me to the following discussion on translation policies in the Arab world.

3. *The Secret*: a question of translation policies and socio-political factors

As I discussed in Chapter One, Jacquemond describes translation policies in the Arab world within the socio-political landscape. He identifies two "logics" defining these policies: a "humanistic" one aiming to present world literary works and models of thinking to the Arab reader, and a "developmentalist" one aiming to make new scientific literature accessible. Through an examination of translation programs and projects, both foreign and indigenous, Jacquemond analyzes the dominant discourse on Arabic translation which, as he describes, is a discourse of "lack" of translations quantitatively and of "loss" qualitatively.

With respect to *The Secret*, this discourse has also been expressed through the previously discussed statements of Jarir's CEO. The "severe lack" of translations of

self-improvement literature and Jarir's criteria of the text's usefulness and agreement with Arab thought and Muslim beliefs are a continuation of the dominant ideology on Arabic translation, and an implementation of its call for improvement.⁵¹

It is important to note that Jacquemond's study of Arab translation policies describes the post World War II era until the present time and represents a modernist developmentalist orientation. However, pre-modern Arab translation traditions should be also taken into account if we are to have a comprehensive insight. Some scholars have undertaken studies, although limited, on earlier translation practices, such as Tarek Shamma who examines the Abbasid translation movement (10th century) sponsored by of the second Caliph, al- Mansur. Although Shamma focuses on one case study (the translation of *Kalila wa Dimna* by Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa), he presents a historical examination of the dominant translation practice, an Islamization or domestication of foreign texts.⁵² Unlike modern translation theory views on domestication which sees it as a suppression of cultural difference and equates it with "ethnocentric violence" as Venuti posits, Shamma argues that domestication in the Classic Islamic age "contributed to cultural diversity" (p. 79-80) in which different cultural elements were incorporated into an "Islamic whole" through the efforts of translators (p. 69). Therefore, the author calls for a reconsideration of the concept of domestication and other notions such as "equivalence" and "faithfulness" for they cannot apply to the pre-modern context of Islamic "universality" rooted in the

⁵¹ Another recent example of bodies taking action to change the Arab translation reality in line with this ideology is the Emirati-based project, Kalima [Word], undertaken by Abu Dhabi's Authority for Culture and Heritage. It justifies launching the project to the "translation drought" the Arab world suffers from and the low quality of translated works. Website <http://www.kalima.ae> under the section "why Kalima was created". Also see Jacquemond's discussion (2009, p. 31).

⁵² On domestication and Islamization of knowledge, see also Hassan Hanafi 2001, *Islam in the Modern World*.

"principle of the unity and continuity of cultures and of wisdoms as universal, emanating from a divine source" (2009, p. 83).⁵³

The domestication modality, however, seems to have continued in modern times as well. As Samah Selim comments:

While diverse forms of domestication (especially in 'new' genres like the novel, short story and drama) continued to be the norm in practice until well into the second half of the 20th century, no effort has yet been made to elaborate a post-Romantic history and theory of this seminal dynamic in the region's literatures. (2009, p. 9)

A modern example of this modality, however, is the Islamization of Shakespearean works translated into Arabic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In her article "Religious and Cultural Considerations in Translating Shakespeare into Arabic" (1995), Amel Amin Zaki examines the Arabic translation of the oaths, for most of them are considered "blasphemous" and "offensive" to a Muslim reader. "These oaths", the author notes, "have typically been "Islamized" by the translators; that is, they have been rendered into Arabic in such a way as to make their usage and occurrence consistent with the Islamic beliefs and the habits of an Arabic speaker" (1995, p. 224). She also examines the way translators have dealt with bawdiness "in the face of an audience unaccustomed to having bawdy or ribald material dealt with in public" (p. 224).

⁵³ Shamma points to the limitations of modern translation theory paradigms to account for non-Western and historical forms and practices of translation, especially those in the Middle East, which is structured on dramatically different cultural, socio-political and historical pillars and has evolved differently. These modern constructed notions of translation will fail to do justice of the examination and analysis of translation phenomena, like the one presented at the Abbasid epoch.

One cannot but notice the twist modern domestication has taken; Islamization of foreign texts shifted from being a universal inclusion tool of multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual people to one Islamic melting pot in the classical age of Islam, to a cautious filtering tool conscious of cultural sensitivity in modern times. Reasons for this shift cannot be explored here due to space limitations; however, the arguments for welcoming modernity while rejecting Western models as a way of distinguishing the Arab identity and holding to it, and decentring the West, as explained by Sayyid and Holt, are valid and cogent. In this sense, one can observe a mix of modernist, developmentalist approaches accompanied by a counter approach towards the domestic ethno-centric Arab identity and heritage. This ambivalent state has been captured by Richard Jacquemond when he discusses the interplay of two opposite models or evolutions:

Though, in its present economy, translation into Arabic frequently reflects a return to a certain ethnocentrism, a distancing from the foreign, the opposite evolution would be observed in its poetics. Arabicisation (*ta'riib*), a naturalising mode of translation given elevated rank by the great author-translators of the 1940s and 1950s, seems to have been succeeded by a more servile, more literal mode of translation, which reveals the source language in the lexis and syntax of the Arabic. This is connected to the permeable to foreign influences. (p. 125)

This duality of approaches is mirrored in Jarir's policy and *The Secret* which revealed hybridized norms at work (see Chapter Three).

Given the network of cultural and socio-political relations of Arab translation policies and the Islamic discourse, the question to ask here is: what is the position of translated Arab S-H literature within the translated literature system, which in turn lies within the overall Arab literary polysystem? As I explained in Chapter One, Itamar Even-Zohar posits a correlation between the position of translated literature and translation strategies. Three conditions could explain why a translated literature might assume a central position: (a) if the literature of a given culture is "young" and strives to grow and become established, (b) when it is "peripheral" or "weak" , as in the case of literature of small nations within bigger cultures and needs to strengthen itself, and finally (c) when it is influenced by the occurrence of "turning points" and "historical moments", resulting in a literary vacuum and causing a rejection of obsolete literary models. In the case of Arabic literature, it is the third condition that holds true. In the wake of colonialism, the Arab world witnessed an awakening that called attention to a knowledge vacuum in all fields, mainly scientific, literary and political. Translation was the solution to fill the urgent need of keeping up with the modern world. As Selim explains:

The Arab *Nahdah* (modern Renaissance movement) celebrated translation as the mechanism through which Arab societies would achieve enlightenment and modernity. Translation then became a jealously guarded zone, relying on new romantic concepts of originality, transparency and accuracy to establish the purity of its foundation. The purified modern languages and identities constructed through romanticism and nationalism were understood to be fundamentally incompatible with popular and pre-modern literary practice: the forgery, the adaptation, the authorless, or multilingual for example. Moreover, anything less than strict equivalence in the

translation process was considered by a Nahdawi critics and historians to be a form of textual *mutilation*. (p. 9)

As understood by Even-Zohar, Arabic translation then occupies a central position. It operates with innovative forces that actively interact and shape the centre of the Arab literary polysystem by introducing new genres and original forms and models of writing, such as drama, novel, short story, and in this case the S-H genre.⁵⁴

Another historic moment to consider is the Arab world's resistance to Westernization and attempt to distinguish itself from the foreign, despite its acceptance of modernity and the prevalence of technological and cultural imports from the West (see Holt's view discussed above). Westernization posed a challenge for the Arab identity and heritage, which feared loss or melting into the stronger and more advanced other, the West. Translation into Arabic became one form of resistance. In this sense, translation continued to assume a central position, but instead of bringing innovative forces, it took a twist and brought forces that are conservative in nature to become the "guardian" of the traditional aspects pertaining to identity and heritage, and to "preserve traditional taste" in Even-Zohar's words (1999, p. 195).

⁵⁴ It is interesting to note the contradiction between the discourse on Arab translation which appears to state that it is weak and "peripheral", to use Even-Zohar's term, while in reality, Arab literature has depended massively on imported foreign literature since the start of the post-colonial era. The generators of this discourse (primarily the authors of the 2003 development report), however, do not deny the knowledge importations and translations from the West, but criticize the fact that they do not revolve around or revive the old lost Arab scientific glory. Hence translation in their view is not playing a central role. This highlights that the question of positionality from the Arab point of view depends on the degree to which translation is able to fulfill a certain goal, and hence is more intricate than that suggested by Even-Zohar which is a mere filling of a literary vacuum.

These conservative or secondary forces were also supported by the rise of Islamic discourse which accompanied this resistance shift.⁵⁵

With the above discussion of positionality and the types of forces participating in the translation result in mind, one can explain the origins of the hybridized norms at work in *The Secret* come from. In order to verify the validity of this analysis further, it is helpful to examine whether the Arab translated S-H literature occupies the same central position and maintains a similar network of relations. According to Even-Zohar "the hypothesis that translated literature maybe either a central or peripheral system does not imply that it is always wholly one or the other. As a system, translated literature is itself stratified" (p. 195).

The very fact that the S-H genre was introduced to the Arab world as a new literary genre through translation, and later grew to have original Arabic S-H works is evidence of the central position of Arab translated S-H. Whether the mixed forms of innovative/primary and conservative/secondary forces are present in both S-H books translated into Arabic and the original work is a topic that requires examining a corpus of works. This is beyond the scope of this thesis and remains a project for the future.

4. Translation Consequences: Risk and Reward

In my theoretical framework, I asked if *The Secret* could have been translated differently. By "differently" I mean, without being ideologically domesticated, i.e.

⁵⁵ Conservative forces in this case operated despite the central position of Arab translation, which is contrary to Even-Zohar's explanation that they function when translations are in peripheral position. This shows that the existence and operation of certain forces could be unrelated to the position and could result from other factors.

without being adapted to the Islamic worldview, and without fading the secular color of the source text. It surely could! There will always be alternative translations and endless possibilities and versions of text reproduction. However, bearing in mind the religious, cultural and political sensitivities during translational crossings, a translator definitely thinks of the aftermath of a translation: i.e. the reception and reaction of the target readers, the institution or the body commissioning the translation, and the implications for him/herself. For example, how would the Arab Muslim translator render sentences such as: "You are God in a physical body" and "You are God manifested in human form, made to perfection" (p. 164) in a different way than that of the present rendition to a Muslim reader who might consider such statements offensive and blasphemous? What might be the outcome/consequences if the translator produced a literal non-adaptive rendition? As I discussed in Chapter One, Anthony Pym's hypothesis of risk and reward posits that it is the absence or presence of reward, be it social, financial or symbolic, that determines whether the translator is willing to take a risk. Therefore, in order to know if a riskier option would have been possible, two points shall be examined: (a) How rewarding the current translation was, and (b) whether rewards exist in the Arab world for translators who challenge the conventional practice.

Although there are no exact figures available, the Arabic translation of *The Secret* is said to have sold thousands of copies, as stated online in several articles and blogs. Thus, it was financially lucrative. On the social level, the translation was generally accepted by Arab readers; it was purchased, discussed and received significant positive reviews, despite some scathing criticism. Hence it was socially welcomed and circulated. On the personal level, however, the translator did not

receive symbolic reward since his/her name does not appear on the translation due to Jarir's policy. However, even though the translator was not publically recognized, the smaller circle of publishing houses, including Jarir, probably have recognized his/her work as being well-produced since he/she managed to avoid ideological conflicts, and then might gain a certain status in the field and more assigned offers to come in the future. In this way, the translation was successful and rewarding overall. If the translator—with the agreement or the command of the institution or publishing house—chose to produce an ideologically equivalent translation to the source text, would it be as rewarding?

An examination of the current translation scene in the Arab world does not indicate the existence of positive outcomes for texts antithetical to the predominant norms, be they translations or "original" writings. Texts, both original and foreign, violating Arabic and Islamic conventions or norms are usually faced with varying degrees of rejection; from the outrage of readers to the censorship of authorities. Negative reactions have included threats to the author's life. An early example is the forced exile of the Egyptian translator Al- Tahtawi to Sudan's capital, Khartoum in 1850 "as a sort of punishment by the Khedive Abbas, who did not appreciate his intellectual and political sympathies, especially his passion for the French model of democracy" (Baker, 2001, p. 422). Some of the best known examples are also Salman Rushdie's death sentence by Iranian leader Khomeini for writing his fourth novel *Satanic Verses* (1988),⁵⁶ and the ban of Muhammad Shukri's novel *Bread Alone* and its removal from university curriculum of a modern Arabic literature course at the

⁵⁶ It is important, however, to highlight that this death sentence has been condemned by many Muslim figures and people outside of Iran for it violates Islamic jurisprudence.

American University of Cairo.⁵⁷ Generally, the rejection of works in the Arab and Muslim world—although it varies greatly from one country to another—is mainly due to the violation of "three main overlapping fields: religion, the ethics and morals of the society and politics" (Al Hamad as cited in Al Hamad, 2013, p. 105). These controversial works then are either not considered for translation in the first place, or subjected to censorship by the translator and/or the publishing house. As Al-Hamad writes:

In certain societies where the conventions of the society are governing- the Arab and Muslim societies as an example- the covert policies are the invisible process that takes place in the author's (translator) mind and *allow, restrict, guide, control, change or prohibit* the translatability of texts into the recipient culture depending on how tolerant or intolerant the society is. It is the unspoken, but agreed upon, cultural aspects, traditions, taboos, norms, habits accusation/fear of translation as a project of the conspiracy theory, orientalism, and the insignia colonialism. (2013, p. 104)

Although instances of translational ramifications have occurred in almost every translation tradition in different places, at different times and under various circumstances (see the section "History and traditions" in Baker 2001, and Billiani 2007 for example), it takes a special significance in the Arab and Muslim world, at least in the present time, due to the complex socio-political relations it shares with the West. There is a strong belief held by fundamentalists/traditionalists and the majority of the public to think of translation as what Al- Hamad calls the "Trojan Horse" in

⁵⁷ It is important to point out the recent ban removal of these works, among others, which indicates societal shifts and also poses questions as to the role of internet and open media in changing the reality of censorship.

which ideological "invasion" of the Arab Muslim world is planned by the West.⁵⁸ In this sense, translations counter to the indigenous systems are seen as a danger and a threat to society and heritage while the translator is seen as an agent of foreign agendas. To deny these accusations, translators tend to yield to this narrative even if they do not themselves believe it. It is only natural then for translators to resort to strategies of deletion, replacement and additions, like in the case of *The Secret*, as "risk averse" strategies, since the rewards for a risky alternative translation do not exist.

5. Decision Making: "Satisficing"

The above discussion of rewards, i.e. financial, symbolic and social, however, is incomplete in my opinion if the cultural or communicative rewards are not examined. Asking whether the translation has brought the two cultures together, in this case the West and the Arab Muslim world, is inevitable. Will the current translation help improve the cultural dialogue when essential features or components that make up the "other" culture are removed and replaced with components of the "we" and "our"? In different terms, will translation strategies help reduce the ideological differences, and hence the sensitivities, and eventually help accept the "Other"? Or will this partial representation deepen the ideological gap and thus generate more sensitivity? Might it, instead, enhance commonalities and cultural intersections, and generate more tolerance? Ultimately, these questions do indeed pertain to the effects of translations, and especially to translation strategies. These questions, which will be addressed in

⁵⁸ See Al Hamad's full discussion of "resisting translation" in light of the conspiracy theory and the control policy (2013).

the following pages, highlight the timeframe dimension of the "risk" and "reward" notions.

I explained in the theoretical framework that, in translations of highly cultural works, the safe translational decisions are most likely to bring rewards of a short-term nature, such as the financial, social and symbolic. Riskier decisions, on the other hand, will delay short-term rewards and might pay off on the long run.⁵⁹ Individuals and organizations, according to Herbert A. Simon, usually opt for safer decisions; they look for short-term gains and thus they are not seeking optimal solutions. Instead, they "satisfice", i.e. choose solutions that "satisfy" and "suffice". The translator of *The Secret*, by translating in a fashion consistent with the Islamic belief has satisfied both the Arabic Muslim reader and the publishing house which required a translation consistent with its target culture. His/her translation "sufficed" the local needs of reading a modern foreign text while preserving one's own identity and "sufficed" Jarir's demands of avoiding ideological clashes. This eventually turned into successful sales. In this way, the translation achieved short-term gains. The question to ask now is: what does it mean to *optimize* the translation of *The Secret*? It means to think of the outcome of the translation in the meta-context of Arab society and of its cultural interaction with the West. In other words, optimizing a translation means deciding the strategies and policies that result in the best influence on the target society which will eventually lead to a much better form of contact with the foreign culture. It means to examine and determine this influence. Are the current or future

⁵⁹ In some exceptional cases, the short-term rewards might pay off directly, as Pym argues, and he gives the example of Lawrence Venuti's work which was celebrated for breaking the dominant norms in America. However, these exceptions undoubtedly depend on the culture in question and the degree of its tolerance to breaking norms.

strategies and policies contributing to more political and religious sensitivity in a society, or reducing it? Are they forming a society that might become allergic to difference and might evolve to be culturally and intellectually "autistic" and isolated, since it is only exposed to nativized and overprotective translations? Or are they forming a society that is more accepting of difference, welcoming of the other, and thus more confident and experienced in interacting with the other different culture? Bearing in mind the utopian role of translation, i.e. bridging cultures and mutual enrichment, the latter scenario is perhaps the optimal solution. If Jarir and/or the translator chose to optimize, losses in the short-term would be expected. But the analysis in this thesis suggests they have chosen "good enough" decisions, to use Simon's words, that do not take into consideration the meta-outcome.⁶⁰ By doing so, they chose their "preferred set of consequences" which is, from Simon's point of view, viewed as a rational decision. This, however, contradicts Pym's implicit suggestion/preference of some sort of a delayed gratification, in the sense of: the risk of today could be the reward of tomorrow and vice versa.

One problem remains, however, with the above discussion of the satisficing vs. optimizing theory. Choosing whether to optimize or satisfice means that the consideration of the type of reward desired (long-term vs. short-term) is the main and perhaps only factor that will determine the strategies of the translator, and the policies of the initiator of the translation, with little or no consideration of other factors. While this may be possible and practical for texts of various genres, it becomes somewhat

⁶⁰ Examining whether translators, publishing houses, and translation law makers in a given society at a given time tend to optimize/maximize their decisions or opt for an "it will do it" motto will be extremely fruitful for gaining an understanding of the nature and scope of translation practices and their influences on societies. This also relates to translation debates on agency and ideology.

problematic with S-H books. The specificity of the S-H genre—in the sense that it requires some form of adaptation to the target cultural frame of reference and ideological system in order to function as a text offering help to its readers—may stand as a key determinant of translation strategies. One could safely argue, however, that this adaptation might not be necessary and readers could still receive help, as advice and wisdom are universal and easily extractable. These two arguments were expressed in the views of some readers on the reception of the Arabic translation of *The Secret*. Those who objected to Islamizing the text explained that it prevented them from knowing the origin and context of the work's ideas and the West's mentality and way of thinking.⁶¹ In contrast, those who welcomed the translation explained that Islamizing the text was convenient, helpful and eased the application of its principles.

Behind these arguments lie two questions: a question of text functionality and a question of mode of reading. In other words, the translator could either take into consideration the text's function and type and translate the S-H text as a persuasive advising text, and hence serve readers seeking help. Or he/she could translate the text as a "reading mode" that is irrespective of the genre it belongs to and its function, and hence serve readers who consider the S-H book as a source of knowledge about the other. The point of viewing the S-H literature as a reading mode has been presented by Micki McGee but in a different direction than the one I discuss here. She writes "If one defines self-help literature as a mode of reading, rather than as a genre, then

⁶¹ It is important to note that the rejection of the Islamization of the text came from the most religious readers. The paradox here is that because they are the most suspicious of the West and believers of the ideological invasion and conspiracy narratives, they demand a literal translation of cultural texts in order to know its real face and not be "fooled" by it.

nearly any publication—fiction, poetry, autobiography, philosophy, history, or social science—could fall within the category" (2005, p. 193). In the case of translation, however, it goes the other way round; if the translator views S-H literature as a mode of reading, then the S-H text could be viewed as a general text loaded with cultural, socio-political and historical information about the source culture. Erine A. Smith is perhaps the pioneer to capture this translation dilemma in S-H works. While examining the "American way of life" cross-culturally through the translation of religious S-H literature, Smith ends her article with speculation about the usage of this literature in foreign encounters. She writes:

Since Franklin books like *On Being a Real Person* were chosen by local elites vs. dictated exclusively by American diplomats and publishers, I'd like to close by speculating about the appeal of books like this in the developing world. What if foreign readers were not hindered by the quintessential "Americanness" of *One Being a Real Person*, but instead were reading it *for that very reason*? Perhaps *On Being a Real Person* and similar texts were books about Americans and the American way of life for foreign readers, not a how-to guide for relieving psychic distress. Rather than a tool for figuring out how to live "the good life," this book might have been a tool for figuring out the people on whose influence and resources the fate of one's own country depended—the American. (p. 11)

Regardless of the contexts, cultures, and ways of life being discussed, Smith suggests that the S-H text could be viewed as a cultural, historical and political account of the source culture rather than a help tool. From this translation point of view, it is then the translator, and publisher, who decide what to make of this text on behalf of the target

reader. In the case examined in this thesis, the decision was to make *The Secret* an aid tool for the Arab Muslim reader. This in turn could be linked to the old debate of the reader/translator dilemma; whether the translator is the one to take the effort of adapting/interpreting/explaining/illustrating the text to the reader or let the reader be the translator and take the liberty and responsibility of this intellectual activity? The translator of *The Secret* chose to take the role of cultural and ideological interpreter for the Arab reader.

Returning to the hypothesis and questions I posed in the introduction, it is possible to state now that the Arabic translation of *The Secret* is a result of all the factors examined in this chapter. However, the function of the text remains the essential force in the final production of the translation. The (in)validity of this hypothesis and finding should be tested through corpus studies of different language and culture pairs in order to arrive at generalizations about the translation of this genre. For now, I shall close this chapter with questions that remained unanswered: What kinds of translations are being produced in S-H literature? Are they translations of S-H texts or "helpful" translations of texts?

Conclusion

This thesis is a case study of *The Secret*, a popular bestselling S-H book by Rhonda Byrne. The central question it poses is how this book was translated into Arabic and what the translator's behavior was. It asks about the type of translational norms operating in the Arabic translated text. It also queries the nature of the S-H genre, its function, its relation to religion in general and Islam in particular, and the nature of socio-political norms as four possible influences on the production of the Arabic translation I examine in this study. Furthermore, it questions the possibility of an alternative rendition of the original text.

Before giving answers to these questions, I felt a crucial need to discuss the S-H genre in general by looking at it with a translation lens, due to the lack of information on this genre in the field of translation studies. I view it as a legitimate system within the literary polysystem, and a (sub)system within the translated system also within this literary polysystem. I describe the genre as occupying an inferior status which is indicated by its absence or marginalization in academia and literary studies; the popular opinions on the negative effect these books have, and the writers' common refusal of labeling their writing as S-H are two reasons to account for this inferior status. Then I examine the genre as a cross-cultural encounter, the consequent cultural/ideological socio-political challenges and constraints in terms of the translation activity, its status and significance to the field of translation studies. Then I take the liberty and the risk to contextualize the S-H genre in the Arab context by sketching a historical, socio-political profile, due to the paucity of knowledge in this regard. This discussion allows me to discuss the vital role of translation in (a) the introduction of this genre to the host

culture, the Arab in this case, and (b) the emergence of indigenous Arab S-H writing and the extent it has influenced its characteristics.

From this broad context on the genre, I move to my textual examination, attempting to find answers for the above stated question. The scrutiny of textual elements on the four levels, i.e. preliminary data, macro- and micro levels and the systemic context, revealed that that the translated Arabic text is ideologically Islamized while preserving the structure, function and stylistic features of the original text. In other words, the foreign elements of the original text are woven with the target ideology. The norms identified in the text, therefore, are hybrid; they adhere to target's norms when dealing with ideological elements (acceptable/target-oriented), and conform to the source culture's norms when dealing with any other element deemed ideologically non-problematic (adequate/source-oriented).

My post-norm investigation indicated that the norms performed in *The Secret* were the result of a combination of three main factors. First, the function of *The Secret* which proved to be adaptive to serve seekers of help and thus fulfill its *raison d'être*; this partially explains the reason behind adapting the translation to Islamic belief. Second, the genre's strong connection to religion and its evolution into a more secular nature accommodates a wider array of beliefs and faiths increases and facilitates the text's translational adaptability. This also indicates another force behind the adaptive translation of *The Secret* into Islamic belief. Third, the socio-political norms prevailing in the Arab World have a great impact on translation norms and policies in the region. Issues pertaining to post-colonialism, modernity and the more recent rise of Islamism, and Islam as a master discourse, along with the presence of the historic translational

norm of domestication, have all contributed to the hybridism of translation norms and practices, as evident in *The Secret*.

The last point I discuss is the possibility of an alternative non-adaptive translation, i.e. non-Islamized one. I conclude that opting for such alternative is a risky decision that most likely will not be rewarded; on the contrary, it will result in negative consequences on the social, personal and financial levels. In this light, the translator's behavior and the strategies he/she followed could be described 'risk-averse', to use Pym's words, and preventive in order to: (a) guarantee the acceptability of the text in the Arab culture, (b) insure a lucrative outcome for the publishing house and finally (c) avoid any form or degree of penalty from the translation commissioner (Jarir bookstore and publishing house) or the government (i.e. the Saudi government). The translator applied these strategies to bring this preferred positive set of consequences. In other words, the translator's behavior could be described as "satisficing", according to Herbert A. Simon's theory, in the sense that he/she took decisions that will satisfy and suffice the average Arab Muslim reader, the publishing house, the Saudi government and perhaps him/herself, even though they might not be the utmost best decisions to take in the long run. However, the choice between subscribing to satisficing vs. optimizing decisions, each with their implications in the short- and long-term, is not the only issue to consider when dealing with a S-H text in particular. S-H texts are loaded with ideological and culturally-specific components. This offers two translational options: either translating the text according to its function (and thus replace these ideological/cultural components with target ones), or view the S-H text as a mode of reading, i.e. a source of knowledge on the culture it belongs to (and thus retain the original ideological/cultural components). This choice is also underpinned by another

conceptual debate on the translator's own understanding of his/her responsibility towards the reader. Is it the translator's responsibility to take the intellectual burden of interpreting and replacing the original cultural frame of reference with the target one, or is it the reader's? The translator has the choice to either produce a "helpful" translation for the target reader, or produce a translation of a foreign S-H text.

It is important to mention that the questions this thesis asks are based on interconnected indications, both textual and para-textual, that needed to be explored. For example, the initial examination of the translated text, which revealed replacements of textual elements with Islamic equivalents, immediately posed the question of norms and the text's function. Readings on the reception of *The Secret* in both cultures and the criticism it received led to exploring the genre's linkage to religion and secularism and to the question of translator's decision-making and the consequences of these decisions.

Although this thesis offers answers to the questions it proposed, it generates several others which remain unanswered. The paucity of translation research on S-H writing, and the fact that this thesis is a study of one case only, makes it impossible to provide answers or a thorough analysis on a number of points. For example, clear cut answers cannot be given as to whether or not it is the textual function that is the main factor to consider when translating S-H books, or what the dominant norms are when producing translations of this particular genre, and what special translational characteristics and considerations are exclusive to this genre. These points are beyond the scope of my thesis for they require corpus-based studies.

While writing this thesis, I was constantly wondering how *The Secret* was translated into other language and culture pairs. Was it also controversial in different

host cultures? Was it also adapted to the beliefs and cultural codes of these cultures? How was it translated to cultures that have closer ideological world views and cultural settings? These questions are potential projects to be studied on their own in future translation research.

I hope this thesis has highlighted the importance of S-H literature and the enriching findings the field of translation studies could benefit from. This research also underscores the urgent need to create a profile for S-H in translation studies and set the parameters for its study. To this end, several aspects could be studied. The following are some possible projects:

- Conducting case studies of translated S-H texts to examine and identify the dominant translation norms and characteristics.
- Conducting corpus-based studies in search of common norms, characteristics, practices, predilections and tendencies.
- Dedicating studies to the accounts of translators of S-H books, and authors commentaries on these translations, to trace challenges, constrains, and intersections of characteristics.
- Examining the norms of translated S-H literature in relation to the norms of the original S-H literature of the given culture/language, what type of influence they have on each other? and in what direction?

Comparing and examining the findings of these projects, of different cultures and languages, would then allow for an examination of parallels and for making generalizations about the translation of this genre.

S-H literature is a product of culture and product of translation in target cultures. It is a mass genre or mass-produced and disseminated on a wide-scale in both original and translated productions. This automatically categorizes it as a non elitist genre or a low literature. However, its appeal to millions of source and target readers—proved by the phenomenal success in market—makes it the very reason of why S-H is worthy to be appreciated and studied more seriously in translation studies. To put it differently, translation research in my opinion should challenge this current view and go past the S-H position on the literary hierarchy, not to change this view or position, but to tackle this highly active and growing form of cultural communication, which feeds on the translation activity and produces it at the same time. In fact, the S-H culture has reached such an extent that translation companies specialized in S-H translation are being established—as a quick online search reveals! Their goals, policies, recruitment criteria and the strategies they adopt are all topics merit exploration. Therefore, the field of translation studies is missing enormous translational insights and perspectives due the absence or marginalization of this genre. More research will help it gain more currency in the field. The questions, theories and tools this thesis provides could be easily replicable to case studies of other cultures and languages. The findings it presents are open for further testing and examination. I hope this thesis can create an appetite for its readers to study this genre and reflect on it from the culture/language paradigms they work with. My thesis is just one step in this direction.

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APPENDIX

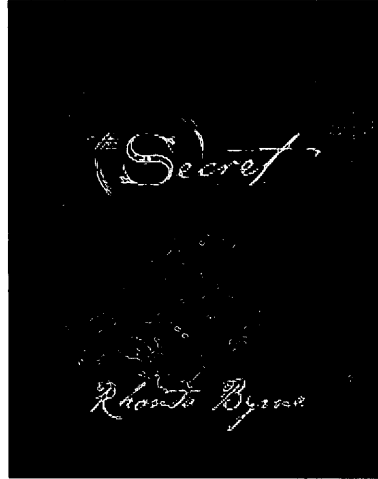


Image 1: The English cover of *The Secret*

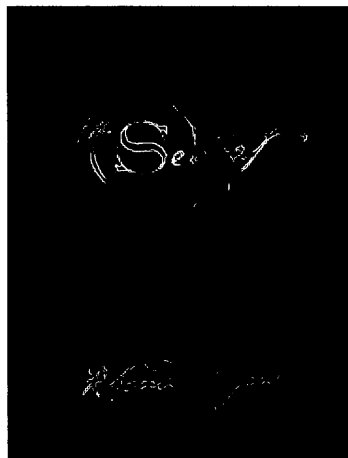


Image 2: The Arabic cover of *The Secret*