

## A Semiotic Perspective on the Denotation and Connotation of Colours in the Quran

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the significance and representation of colours in the Quran from the perspective of meaning and connotation according to the semiotic models of sign interpretation; namely, Saussure's dyadic approach and Peirce's triadic model. Such approaches are used to analyze colours from the perspective of *cultural semiotics*. The study presents both the semantic and cultural semiotics aspects of colour signs in the Quran to demonstrate the various semiotic meanings and interpretations of the six basic colours (*white, black, red, green, yellow, and blue*). The study reveals that Arabic colour system agrees with colour universals, especially in terms of their categorization and connotations, and that semiotic analysis makes an efficient device for analyzing and interpreting the denotations and connotations of colour signs in the Quran.

**Key words:** Semiotics, Signs, Denotation, Connotation, Colours, Quran

### INTRODUCTION

Colours affect the behaviour by which we perceive the world and how we interact with it, and make us perceive everything around us vivid and fulsome. This assumption is reflected by our daily routines such as wearing colourful clothes, living and working within painted walls and even following the colours of the rainbow. However, we rarely ask ourselves about the nature of colours and why they leave such effect on us.

The way we understand a colour and its effect originates from its connotations and categorizations. The term 'colour' refers to 'the property possessed by an object of producing different sensation on the eye as a result of the way it reflects or emits light'<sup>1</sup>, and it is regarded as a visual perception attribute that combines both chromatic and achromatic contents that named: *black, green, red, pink,...*etc. (Darrodi, 2012: p.22). Accordingly, a colour is the indirect product of light, and it is the creation of our unbiased visual senses. However, this 'unbiased' visual perception happens to have a psychological effect that might be even sensed by hearing a colour name in verbal interaction. Such a psychological effect has either a positive or negative impact on our disposition, and it may come in several forms in our daily habits and routines; such as changing daily the colour of the shirt, or dress, we wear to the work, or regularly repainting the house rooms. In addition, we use colour terms to represent emotions, beliefs, or events. Hence, red stands for love and passion, and green stands for nature, and blue stands for serenity and peace of mind. However, one may wonder on the impact of hearing,

or reading, a colour 'term' instead of seeing the chromatic features of the colour.

Colours are perceptual phenomena conventionally approached by cultural semantics. In their widely-acknowledged work *Basic Colour Terms: Their Universality and Evolution*, Brent Berlin and Paul Kay introduced a theory of basic colour terms and colour universals on the basis of extensive anthropological approaches to colour terms cross-culturally (Berlin and Kay, 1969). Berlin and Kay suggest a categorisation by which all languages select their primary colour terms from a set of eleven colours: *black, white, red, yellow, green, blue, brown, purple, pink, orange, and grey*, and which, in-turn, are categorized into *primary colour terms* (black, white, red, green, yellow, and blue) and *derived colour terms* (brown, orange, purple, grey and pink) (See Geeraerts, 2010: p.184). This categorisation, according to Berlin and Kay, constructs a hierarchy with five levels depending on the language. Accordingly, there are languages with two colour terms: *black* and *white* and languages with three colour terms (as the *red* colour as the additional one). Then, the fourth, fifth, and sixth terms are chosen among the colours at the third level, and the fourth level may involve 'brown' and so on (see Table 1 below). So, the maximum number of basic colour terms (BCTs) would be eleven (Geeraerts, 2010: p.184).

Colour terms have acquired lots of connotations and meanings which are not necessarily the product of the intuitive and simple colour denotation. Thus, colour terms do not merely make attributive connotations that just describe the physical appearance of an object; instead, they are involved

**Table 1.** Berlin and Kay's Hierarchy for Basic Colour terms (Berlin and Kay, 1969)

L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
BLACK		YELLOW		PURPLE
	RED	GREEN	BROWN	PINK
WHITE		BLUE		ORANGE GREY

in making signs that indicate abstract impressionistic attributes and symbolic representations of messages and cultural ideas which can be universal or culture-specific. For instance, the clothes we wear may reflect codes or messages like when women wear black garments in funerals to reflect their grief, or when they wear white a dress in their weddings to show happiness. These universal meanings of coloured garments demonstrate the significance of colours in conveying conventionalized codes or didactic, and even ideological, beliefs and messages. For instance, we perceive that white indicates purity, innocence, holiness, and cleanliness; green represents nature, calm and security; red symbolizes love, passion or anger; black suggests mystery and evil; blue is associated with dignity, poise, and reserve (Sharpe, 1974: p.91-92). According to Kenney, 'colour is a sign that mediates humans' internal experience of the external physical and symbolic world' (Kenney, 2005: p.113).

In another account, the word 'colour' frequently collocates with the phrase 'stand for' and the terms 'symbol' and 'code'. This suggests that colours can be studied from the perspective of the 'scientific study of sign'; that is *semiotics*, and not only as a semantic phenomenon. Colour terms are recognised as *signs* which signify meanings on the basis of the one who perceives them physically and psychologically. These meanings can be studied by linking the internal system of colours in a given language, or discourse, to that of the speaker's, or society's, experiential world. Accordingly, this article embarks upon the relations between the colour system of the Arabic language and its culture and the religious didactic discourse of the Quran from a semiotic view point.

## SEMANTICS, SEMIOTICS, AND MEANING

Semantics is the study of words, phrases and sentences meaning without contexts of use, and it intersects with other fields such as, syntax, pragmatics and semiotics (Griffiths, 2006: p.1). Several semanticists, such as Bloomfield, described the relationship between a speech-form and objective aspects of the speaker's world as *stimulus-response* behavioural relationship (Geeraerts, 2010: p.71). Thus, human behaviour, especially linguistic behaviour, is the result of some repeated experiences to a given stimulus in several co-occurrences. For example, a driving-teacher's experience with a given colour (e.g. the *red* in traffic lights) would consist of a scenario that starts with him seeing the red light (speaker's stimulus), then he shouts 'its red' to the pupil (the speech) behind the wheel, and the hearer's (pupil's) response would involve the pupil putting his leg on the brakes (hearer's response). In view of this, the visual sign (the red colour in the traffic

lights) work as a stimulus that triggers a series of responses and other stimuli by the hearer.

In addition, John Lyons introduced the 'sense relations' as the paradigmatic relation of words or predicates instead of focusing on the relationship between stimuli and responses. A word connotation can be deduced from its different sense relations, such as synonym and hyponymy, with other words. Such relations could be between the form and meaning or between two meanings (Lyons, 1968: p.292). Hence, semantics emphasises the deduction of meaning of words in order to verify their denotations and connotations. Furthermore, Leech clarified that conceptual meaning (i.e. denotation) is the essential part of what language is and the central factor in verbal communication while associative meaning (i.e. connotation) is what language refers to (Leech, 1981: p.23).

Nevertheless, meaning had been addressed earlier than the above mentioned semanticists by a group of scholars who had studied meaning from a standpoint that associates between meanings and signs and under the scope of what is known as 'semiotics', or 'the study of sign system'. Amongst those semioticians, we know Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, Roman Jakobson, Roland Barthes, and Umberto Eco.

De Saussure defines semiotics or 'semiology' as the science that studies the role of signs in the social life (Saussure, 1983: p.16, cited in Chandler, 2007: p.2-8), and Umberto Eco sees that 'semiotics is concerned with everything that can be taken as a sign' (Eco, 1976, cited in Chandler, 2007: p.2-8). Accordingly, semiotics is the scientific discipline that studies 'the role of signs as part of social life. It would form part of social psychology, and hence of general psychology' (Saussure, 1983: p.16, cited in Chandler, 2007: p.2-8)

The 'sign' is a key concept in semiotics, and it stands for a form that refers to or represents an object or event (Sebeok, 2001). Signs can be of several forms such as words, gestures, sounds, objects, images, or olfactory signs (Sebeok, 2001: p.3). For instance, the noise heard from a fire alarm is a sound sign that means that there is a danger around, and the smell of gas in the kitchen is an olfactory sign that means that there is some gas leak in the cooking hub, and so on. Accordingly, a sign is something that can be interpreted as having a meaning that is something other than itself; the alarm sound is not the danger itself, and the smell is not the leak itself. Therefore, signs can be perceived through any of our senses: *visual*, *auditory*, *tactile*, *olfactory*, or *taste*. In addition, a sign could be produced by an individual with a given conventionalised meaning. This meaning could be *intentional* (such as a word uttered in a particular tone with a specific meaning) or *unintentional* (such as a physical symptom being a sign of a particular medical condition). Therefore, we can say that a 'sign' can convey and communicate information to the one in the form of a code that needs interpreting and decoding. Two main approaches which describe the ways by which signs acquire their ability to convey the informative messages and meanings of a given sign; these are De Saussure's *dyadic* and Peirce's *triadic* models of sign.

In the tradition of semiotics developed by Saussure (referred to as *semiology*), the sign relation is dyadic because it is understood to be consisting of a 'form' (*signifier*) and

a ‘meaning’ (*signified*). De Saussure developed the basis of general linguistic theory of signs (Saussure’s theory of sign) which emphasized that language is a system of signs, in addition to other sign systems around us. According to De Saussure’s dyadic approach, the linguistic sign consists of *signifier* that has a material form (such as a pronunciation or spelling), for example the spelling of the word ‘tree’ or its pronunciation (/tri:/). On the other hand, the linguistic sign has a *signified* that represents the mental idea that the sign expresses; and here, we talk about the idea of a ‘TREE’ in the mind of the language user. Furthermore, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is *bidirectional* and *arbitrary* and *conventional*. In other words, signs can mean anything or different things to different people, because a signifier may trigger different mental ideas and associations in the mind of the language user. A given signifier can have one denotation, but its *value* (connotations) may depend on the different contextual factors and the mutual relations between a sign and its neighbouring signs because ‘the sign derives its value also from its surroundings’ (Barthes, 1987: p.48). Consequently, meaning of a sign (like a ‘word’ in a phrase or a sentence) is purely structural and relational rather than referential, and its meaning is seen lying in their systematic relation to each other sign, and it should not be considered deriving from the inherent features of signifiers or any reference to material things. Accordingly, in the sentence ‘the husband told his wife a white lie’ the value of the sign ‘white’ is seen as lying in its systematic relation to all the other signs ‘the husband’ and ‘his wife’ and ‘a lie’, and this the colour sign ‘white’ its real value as a signified (the connotation) which is ‘innocent and harmless’, and the real value of the sign ‘lie’ is ‘telling something untrue’. And this value is recognised by the socio-cultural knowledge of the speaker and the hearer about the nature of talks, and ‘lies’ between a husband and a wife. De Saussure emphasised that:

The notion of value... shows us that it is a great mistake to consider a sign as nothing more than the combination of a certain sound and a certain concept. To think of a sign as nothing more would be to isolate it from the system to which it belongs. It would be to suppose that a start could be made with individual signs, and a system constructed by putting them together. On the contrary, the system as a united whole is the starting point, from which it becomes possible, by a process of analysis,

to identify its constituent elements. (Saussure, 1983: p.112, cited in Chandler, 2007: p.20)

In addition, Barthes (1987) introduced the idea of different ‘orders of signification’; in which there are two orders of signification: denotation at the *first order* of signification and connotation at the *second order*. Accordingly, the colour sign ‘white’ in the ‘white lie’ example above is not considered derived from the inherent features of the signifier ‘lie’ or any reference to material things, and the colour signifier ‘white’ here does not describe the external physical appearance of the sign ‘lie’; which makes an unreasonable interpretation. Instead, the connotation of the compound sign ‘white lie’ is understood from the connotation of the two signs ‘white’ and ‘lie’ on the bases of the context of the phrase as it is understood at the second order of signification. So, it is of vital significance in semiotic analysis to highlight the cultural, social and political contexts and conditions of the signs in a given expression (see figure no.1 below):

On the other hand, the triadic model of the sign, developed by Charles Peirce, defines the sign as a ‘triadic relation’ or as ‘something that stands for something’ (Johansen and Larsen, 2005: p. 25). Pierce proposed that:

A sign... [in the form of a representamen] is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen. (Peirce, 1931–58: 2.228, cited in Chandler, 2007: p.29)

Accordingly, signs can be words, images, sounds, books, flavours, human gestures or action, and these signs remain still empty until human beings combined them with meanings (Chandler, 2007: p.29). This means that a sign involves a relation between three elements:

1. a *sign* (the specific physical form of the sign), and it is called a *representamen*.
2. an *object* (the aspect of the world that the sign carries meaning about)
3. an *interpretation* (the meaning of the sign as understood by an interpreter), and it is called an *interpretant* (Chandler, 2007: p.29).

individual signs	Sign 1		Sign 2	
	Signifier (1)	Signified (1)	Signifier (2)	Signified (2)
	‘white’	‘innocent and harmless’	‘lie’	‘telling something untrue’
a combined sign phrase	Sign 3 ‘white lie’			
DEONTATION first level (1 <sup>st</sup> order)	Signifier (3) ‘white lie’		Signified (3) ‘a lie that is white’	
CONNOTATION second level (2 <sup>nd</sup> order)	Signifier (4) ‘white lie’			Signified (4) ‘innocent and harmless lie’
Myth	That there are indeed ‘innocent and harmless’ lie			

**Figure 1.** The different values and orders (connotations and denotations) of the phrase ‘white lie’ and in accordance with (Barthes, 1987)



The relationships between these three elements are described in terms of equal relationship between the signifier and the signified where the *representamen* stands for the 'form' (the signifier) and the *interpretant* stands for a 'meaning' (the signified). In addition, there is the 'object' in its real, material, form which could be either present or absent in the context of the speech.

One important feature of Peirce's triadic model is the role of the interpretant which has a distinctive quality that the signified does not have. Peirce argues that the interpretant is itself another sign that is made (or conceptualized) in the mind of the interpreter. Peirce noted that 'a sign... addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. The sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign' (Peirce 1931–58, 2.228). Accordingly, an interpretant will become a representamen for a new sign with a new hidden 'object' and a new 'interpretant', and this new interpretant will become successively the 'representamen' of a third sign, and so on. Umberto Eco uses the notion 'unlimited semeiosis' to refer to the way in which this could lead to a series of successive interpretants (potentially) ad infinitum (Eco 1976, 68–9; Peirce 1931–58, 1.339, 2.303; both are cited in Chandler, 2007). According to Peirce; 'semeiosis' refers to the process of meaning-making – specifically to the interaction between the representamen, the object and the interpretant. To illustrate the idea of 'unlimited semeiosis', if we take the example of the sign 'crown' (/kraun/), a speaker's modern experience and knowledge with the representamen 'crown' will trigger a series of association with other interpretants such as 'the British royal family', and this interpretant, in turn, would become the representamen to another object with a different interpretant, such as the 'Buckingham Palace', and so on.

As signs allow humans to experience and represent the world in various ways or modes which consist of *icons*, *indices* and *symbols* (See Johansen and Larsen, 2005: P.32-39). Peirce sees that signs can be divided by the type of relation that holds the sign relation together. *Symbols* are those signs that signify through a law or arbitrary social convention (e.g., letters and flags), and *icons* are those signs that signify by means of similarity between sign and object (e.g. a picture), and *indices* are those signs that signify by means of a direct relation of contiguity or causality or resemblance between sign and object (e.g. a symptom or smoke). Accordingly, when we look to the situation of colours by taking the example of a 'black dress', what we infer of this dress is that it does not represent only a black dress but it represents a sign of darkness. This darkness is understood in terms of the *indexical* mode because it involves 'resemblance' with our experience of 'darkness' via our senses. In addition, the colours 'black' conveys a *symbolic* mode of 'sorrow and grief' because of our conventional association between blackness and feelings of sorrow grief. This means that the colour 'black' works as a communication and meaning element that helps language users to understand the representation of the intended message from wearing a black dress; especially by a woman. Hence, within semiotics, colours are used as visual elements which act as a code that communicates our messag-

es from the signs. This code is represented in terms of the amount of information a communicator, or a language user, could deduce from seeing colours or uttering their 'terms'. This means that colour terms, which are essentially 'words', are signs in the 'symbolic mode', and they are conventionalised to represent a set of accepted cultural ideas.

## THE CURRENT RESEARCH

The discourse of the Quran is one of the key manifestations of the crossing point between Arabic language and culture. Muslims believe that the Quran is the sacred word of an almighty God, *Allah*, revealed in Arabic to the Arab Prophet Muhammad to make a constitution for Muslims to direct them in Islam, and it also involves commands and advices, duties and rituals, legislation and moral values, and stories about creation and old nations. Thus, the Quran involves several themes and topics which are verbally introduced to reading or listening followers. As a representative expression of Arabic culture and religious literature, the discourse of the Quran mentions eight colour terms in 35 places (verses). However, accredited interpretations of the Quran recognise colour terms as semantic representations rather than as realisations of *visual signs*. Accordingly, studying these visual signs from a semiotic perspective would demonstrate how colour terms can be linguistically interpreted and explicated as a visual system of communication. This account might be of great significance in clarifying the Quran messages and shaping the manner by which the Quran messages are perceived by the listeners and readers.

Most of the previous studies on the denotations and connotation of colours in the Quran have focused on the semantic analysis of colour terms and their meanings and connotations (See Al-Murazaqa, 2010; Taha and Abdel-Azim, 2012; Taha, 2012; Khafaji, 2012; Al-Domi, 2015; Al-Bzour, 2015). Almost no study has applied semiotic approaches to colour signs analysis on the basis of the models and approaches introduced by De Saussure or the Peirce. There are no Arabic studies that applied either Saussure or Peirce's models in analyzing and deducing the connotative meanings of colour signs in particular in didactic discourse; such as the Quran. As the connotation of colour signs can differ if the target text of analysis is of a particular unmatched nature as it is the case of the Quran, many studies have opted to analyze colour terms in the Quran from a pure linguistic semantic standpoint.

This study aims to analyze all the verses in the Quran which involve colour terms. There are eight colours (six basics and two non-basics) which appear in the Quran, and they are mentioned for 36 times in 35 verses. Such relatively large number of contexts where the colours occur should encourage the researchers to investigate how these colours are interpreted and explicated, and what are their roles as sign system in conveying the intended message of the discourse of the Quran. Although there are several researches which have studied colour terms in Quran from a linguistic semantics viewpoint, this study adopts a different approach that is based on semiotic models to deduce the socio-cultural conceptions of the colour signs systems in the Quran.

Therefore, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. *What are the main semiotic characteristics of the colour signs system in the Quran?*
2. *What are the values (the denotations and connotations) of the colour signs in the Quran?*
3. *How do the values of the colour signs affect the conveyed message of the verses and its interpretation?*

The analysis is based on Saussure's dyadic and Pierce's triadic models for signs analysis. In addition, the semantic and cultural features of the colours will be addressed during the analysis and discussion. The data for the study involve all the verses in the Quran which involve the primary colour terms as suggested by Berlin and Kay (Berlin and Kay, 1969); these are black, white, red, green, yellow, and blue. The process of data collection is based on searching colour terms in the entire Quran by the researchers and by the help of *The Quranic Arabic Corpus*<sup>2</sup>; and then identifying the verses where each colour occurs (the name of the Surah and the verse number). This constitutes a small corpus of 35 verses where the basic colour terms occur. The corpus is in Arabic, but the researchers will refer to them during the analysis through their accredited English translation<sup>3</sup>. Meanwhile, the data collected are analyzed on the basis of the following:

1. The frequency of the colour terms.
2. The function of the colour term (for example, attributive or referential).
3. The semantic exegesis of the verse where the colour terms occur. And this exegesis is based on a selection of six primary exegesis books (*tafsir*) of the Quran.
4. A descriptive analytic methods in examining and analyzing the colour signs in Quran on the bases of the semiotic models of De Saussure and Pierce's approaches in semiotics.
5. A description of how colours signs construct a sign system that represents, signifies, and communicates ideas and meanings within the Islamic and Arabic culture.
6. A comparison between the results of the semiotic analysis and the semantic exegesis (of the interpreters of the Quran).

For the sake of analysis, the collected data will be presented in the form of reduced tables (See Appendix) which will illustrate the semantic and semiotic characteristics of the *short context* of the colour, its English *translation*, the *colour sign*, the *coloured* (object or idea) sign, the *syntagmatic relationship* between the sign of the *colour* and the sign of the *coloured*, and the *value* of the two signs together (the sign of the *colour* and the sign of the *coloured*), the *connotation* and *evaluation* of the entire sign (the *colour* and the *coloured*), the *mode* of the entire sign (the *colour* and the *coloured*): symbolic, iconic, or indexical, and finally, the *similarity* or *difference* between the denotation of the entire sign and its connotation.

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The Quran mentions eight colours 36 times in 35 verses. However, these colour terms refer to the six basic colours: white (12 *x*), green (9 *x*), black (7 *x*), yellow (5 *x*), red (2 *x*),

and blue (1 *x*). As the Quran involves a language in written (visual) and spoken (oral) forms, we can propose colour signs, in addition to all other adjacent signs, take the *symbolic* form of the 'word'; each colour term (either written or spoken) is regarded as a symbolic 'sign' in the semiotic sense. Such symbolic signs are built upon arbitrary relationship between the concept and its form (Chandler, 2007: p.36). Meanwhile, the Quran is a narrative that refers to objects and ideas outside its text, and it is mostly recited within enclosed contexts (such as rooms and mosques); thus, we should acknowledge that the referent of its symbolic signs (the 'signified' or the 'object') is always absent and understood as a mental concept.

The analysis essentially relies on interpreting and understanding the linguistic and para-linguistic contexts where the colour signs occur in the Quran. So, in order to study the different connotations of the colour terms in a given verse, we have been constantly consulting and referring to the traditional books of interpretation of the Quran (*tafaasir*) (namely, al-Tabri's, al-Qurtubi's, Ibn Katheer's and Al-Razi's)<sup>4</sup>.

We present the findings about the semantic and semiotic analysis of instance of the colour terms (signs) *white*, *green*, *black*, *yellow*, *red*, and *blue* in the Quran according to a consistent, and balanced, account of explanation and analysis that will not be influenced by the frequencies of colours. This approach aims to minimize the amount of complexity and redundancy during the analysis of the semantic and semiotic characteristics of each colour term and sign.

### The Colour Sign 'White'

The colour sign 'white' is the most frequent colour in the Quran as it is mentioned twelve times in twelve different verses. In this, the semantic characteristics of the semiotic and semantic analysis of these instances are represented illustratively in the reduced Table 2 (See Appendix). Examples of these instances are:

1. ... and eat and drink until the **white thread** (light) of dawn appears to you. (Al-Baqarah, *(the Cow)*: 187)
2. ... some **faces** will become **white**... and for those whose **faces** will become **white**, they will be in Allah's Mercy (paradise), therein they shall dwell forever. (Al-Imran *(Family of Imran)*: 107)
3. ... and press your (**right**) **hand** to your (left) side: it will come forth **white** (and shining), without any disease as another sign. (Taha *(Ta-Ha)*: 22)
4. see you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and We produce therewith fruit of various colours, and among the **mountains** are **streaks white** and red, of varying colours and (others) very black. (Fatir *(Originator)*: 27)
5. ...round them will be passed a cup of **pure wine**, **white**, delicious to the drinkers. (As- Saffat *(Those Who Set The Ranks)*: 45,46)
6. ... and he lost his sight [lit. his **eyes** has been **whitened**] because of the sorrow that he was suppressing. (Yusuf, *(Joseph)*: 84)

The illustrative instances above (in addition to Table 2 in the appendices) show that the signifiers (representamen)

of the colour sign 'white' are all derived from the Arabic triadic root 'b-y-D', some of these derivatives are mostly used to signify an attribute conveyed by adjectival signified (interpretant) (e.g. *alkhaiT alabiaD*, *yaduka baiDa*.) or verbal signified (interpretant) that refers to the process of 'whitening a coloured object' (e.g. *tabiaDu wujuuh*, *ebiaDat Aynaahu*); however, there is one instance of a nominal signified (interpretant) (*biD*).

The instances of the colour sign 'white' above reveals that once the colour sign 'white' comes as a modifier to an object sign (the coloured sign), as 'thread' and 'mountains', the value (the connotation) of the meaning of the combination of the entire new combined sign phrase (the colour + the coloured) could change. To elaborate, the evaluation of the colour sign 'white' in the verses above is predominantly positive; however, it becomes neutral in instances no.1 and no.4 once the sign 'white' comes to modify a sign with the value inanimate/non-human objects (i.e. *thread* and *streaks/paths*). On the other hand, and with exception of the sign 'eye', the colour sign 'white' does not affect the positive evaluation of the combined sign phrase (the colour + the coloured) when it involves human body organs (i.e. *face* and *hand*). To elaborate, in example no.1 above, the signifier phrase 'white thread' is used neutrally as it has no positive or negative connotation as it signifies punctual time (*alfajir*; the dawn time), and in example no.4, the neutral combined signifier 'white mountains' is used to signify the 'different kinds of mountains'.

Furthermore, the combined colour sign 'white-faced people' with the sign *yawma* (the day) and the sign *wujooh* (faces) in instance no.2 above are positively evaluated. Here, the signifier *yawma* refers to the signified 'Day of Judgment'<sup>5</sup>, whereas the signifier *wujooh* is the plural of *wajh* (face) and which refers metonymically to specific class of people who will be rewarded with the Paradise. And such combination of the signs (i.e. 'white' and the 'faces' and 'the day') makes a unified sign phrase of the 'people with white faces on the Day of Judgment', and it would trigger a series of successive associations, or *unlimited semeiosis*. According to Pierce's model, this interpretant ('people with white faces on the Day of Judgment'), in turn, becomes a representamen of a second semeiosis in which the interpretant conveys the meaning of 'people feeling satisfied, delighted, optimistic, and contented'.

In addition, the signifier 'white hand' in instance no.3 involves a combination of the signifier *baiDa* (white) and the signifiers *yadahu* (his hand) and *yaduka* (your hand) which has the interpretation of the 'unfamiliar appearance of a hand that people are not accustomed to'. Accordingly, this signifier has a literal denotation that signifies the physical appearance of the 'sound hand'. However, at the second level of connotation, this sign conveys the idea of the 'originated miraculous scene' which God supported the Prophet Moses with in order to influence his addressees (the Pharaoh and the People of Egypt) and persuade them of the divine message. Moreover, the signifier 'white drink' in instance no.5 is another positive combined sign that signifies the drinks which God promised in the Gardens of Eden. In this view, an unlimited semeiosis, on Pierce's sense, would lead to a series of successive representation of the drink on the basis of its

'white' colour; such as its unique white colour, the colour of 'sugar', then the sweet flavour that resembles that of milk, and milk as the primary source of nutrition of early Arab societies, and so on.

On the other hand, the colour sign 'white' has a negative value in instance no.6 where the sign 'whitened' is used as a verb to refer to the new state of affair of the 'eyes of Jacob'. In this view, the association between the colour sign 'white' with the body organ 'eyes' has a different negative signifier that signifies the meaning 'to turn blind'. This interpretation coincides with that of other studies on the significance of white colour in the Quran (e.g. Himmoud, 2013). This signified (interpretant) can create a series of successive semeiosis that signify blindness of the eyes, dark vision, psychological suffering, and so on.

Studying the difference between the first order (the denotation level) and the second order (the connotation level) of the white-colour sign system in the instances above reveals that the semantic characteristics of the phrase that contains the white-colour terms (the colour + the coloured) follow either one of two patterns: either there is a difference between the denotation level and the connotation level (the first and second order) or there is no change. In many instances of the white colour sign, the denotative meaning of the signifier becomes totally different from the connotative meaning. For instance, the denotative meaning of the colour terms in the 'white thread' in example no.1 changes from the denotation 'a thread that is coloured in white' to become 'punctual time of starting (fast)' at the level of connotation (second order). The same can be also seen in instances no.2 and no.3 where the denotation of the sign phrase 'white faces' means 'a face that looks white' at the first order, but it changes to signify 'happiness, success, delight, optimism, and contented' at the connotation level. In addition, the meaning of the sign phrase 'white eyes' in instance no.6 changes from 'eyes that turned totally white' at the first level to be 'grief which leads to blindness as a result of tears' at the second level.

On the other hand, it happens that the denotative meaning of the signifier remains the same in both the denotative level (the first order) and the connotative level (the second order). For instance, in instance no.3, the meaning of the signifier phrase 'white hand' has the same connotation at the two levels; that is 'a hand that looks white' because it is an index that it is 'sound and healthy'. The same occurs with the signifier phrase 'white mountains' in example no.4 has the same signified at the first and second orders that is a 'path that is white and variety of mountains forms which represents the creator ability'. Furthermore, the meaning of the sign phrase 'white drink' in example no.5 has the same sign at both levels. Here, we argue that the relationship between a 'taste' and 'drinkers' connected by a white beverage. Thus, the colour is familiar for the addressee so it could be compared here of some beverages such as milk; but the taste can't be imagined since it is a drink in paradise; so, the focus is totally connected with the taste.

### The Colour Sign 'Green'

In the Quran, the green colour is the fourth most mentioned colour; it is mentioned eight times in eight different verses



to describe positive ideas and objects such as paradise, trees, clothes, and cushions (See Table 3 in the Appendix). To illustrate:

7. ...it is He Who sends down water (rain) from the sky, and with it we bring forth vegetation of all kinds, and out of it we bring forth **green stalks**., (Al-An'am (*the Kettle*): 99)
8. ...and the king (of Egypt) said: 'Verily, I saw (in a dream) seven fat cows, whom seven lean ones were devouring, and seven **green ears of corn**, and (seven) others dry'. (Yusuf (*Joseph*): 43, 64)
9. ...reclining on **green cushions** and rich beautiful mattresses. (Ar-Rahman (*the Beneficent*): 76)
10. ...their garments will be of fine **green silk** and gold embroidery. (Al-Insan (*the Man*): 21)
11. ...he who produces for you fire out of **the green tree**, when behold you kindles therewith. (Ya-Sin (*Ya-Sin*): 80)

The signifiers (representamen) of the colour sign 'green' are all derived from the triadic root 'kh-D-r', all these derivatives are only used to signify an attribute conveyed by adjectival signified (interpretant) (e.g. *nabattan khuDran* (*green stalks*), *thiaban khuDran* (*green silk*), *rofroufin khuDoren* (*green cushions*), *sunbulaten khuDoren* (*green ears of corn*), *thiaban khuDoran* (*green silk*)).

Green-colour signs have more special connotations than any other colour signs in the Quran; they are all positively evaluated whether they refer to crops, furniture or stalks (See Himmod, 2013). This reflects a universal tendency towards the positive connotation of the colour 'green' as it is reflected from images of fertility, nature, welfare; and in Islamic culture, it is reflected also from the clothes and furniture of the dwellers of paradise, as it is mentioned in the Quran. When it comes to the mode of the green-colour sign, it is symbolic at the first level of analysis and indexical signs at the second level. The indexicality of the green-colour sign in crops here reflects grown ripen crops and their readiness to harvest.

Applying both Saussure's and Peirce's models on instances of green-colour signs above show that in instance no.7 above, the combined (and conceptualized) signifier phrase *nabattan hkuDren* (*green stalks*) is used as a sign that represents the meaning of real seen picture of universe and the creatures which conveys the meaning of the Creator's ability. Furthermore, the signifier phrase *rofroufin khuDoren* (*green cushions*) in no.9 conveys the meaning of description for furniture of rewarded people in paradise, and in no.8 the signifier *sunbulaten khuDoren* (*green spike*) is a sign that implies hope and optimism and represents welfare and abundant crops. And in no.11, the signifier *nabattan hkuDran* (*green trees*) is a sign that implies the meaning of real seen picture of the Creator's capability.

The semantic characteristics the denotations and connotations of the green-colour terms shows that the green colour does not affect, or change, the value of the coloured at the denotative and connotative levels. For example, the signifier 'green stalks' and 'green trees' in no.7 and no.11 have the same signified (meaning) at the denotative and connotative level. This signified means 'the colour appearance of

stalks/trees is green). In no.9 and no.11, the signifiers 'green cushions' and 'green garments' have signified the same meaning at the denotative and connotative levels that is 'the description for the clothes and furniture of those people who win Paradise'.

On the hand, in instance no.8, the value of the signifier phrase *sunbulaten khuDoren* (*green spike wheat*) changes from 'the colour of spike wheat' in the first order to become 'welfare, abundance of crops' in the second order. In this, following Peirce's model would lead to the same interpretation of 'welfare, abundance of crops'. The representamen *sunbulaten khuDoren* (*green spike wheat*) refers to the interpretant 'the colour of spike wheat', and here, the interpretant becomes a representamen that has the interpretant 'abundance in crops' at the second level of the unlimited semeiosis. This second interpretant can make another representamen that signifies 'welfare', and so on.

### The Colour Sign 'Black'

The black-colour is the third most frequent colour mentioned in the Quran. It occurs in 8 instances in 7 verses (Table 3 in the Appendix). Below, we present illustrative examples from selected verses:

12. ...and eat and drink until the white thread of dawn becomes distinct to you from the **black thread** [of night]. (Al-Baqarah (*the Cow*): 187)
13. ...see you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and We produce therewith fruit of various colours, and among the **mountains** are streaks white and red, of varying colours and (others) very **black**. (Fatir (*Creator*): 27)
14. ...on the Day (i.e. the Day of Resurrection) when **some faces** will become white and some faces will become **black**; as for those whose **faces** will become **black** (to them will be said): "Did you reject Faith after accepting it? Then taste the torment (in Hell) for rejecting Faith." (Al-'Imran (*Family of Imran*): 106)
15. ...and when the news of (the birth of) a female (child) is brought to any of them, his **face** becomes **dark** [lit. **blackened**], and he is filled with inward grief! (An-Nahl (*the Bee*): 58)

In the case of black colour, the colour signifiers (representamen) in Arabic are derived from the Arabic triadic root 's-u-d'. Some of these derivatives are mostly used to signify an attribute conveyed by adjectival signified (interpretant) (e.g., *alkhaiT alaswad*, *djudud*, *suud*) or verbal signified (interpretant) that refers to the idea of 'blackening the coloured object' (e.g., *taswadu wujuuh*, *eswadat wujuuhuhm*) (See Table 4 in the Appendix).

As we perceived with the white-colour sign, the black-colour sign typically modifies an object (the coloured) and preserves its neutral connotation at the first order of signification (e.g., 'black thread' and 'black mountains'). However, when the black-colour sign modifies a sign of the body organ *wajh* (e.g., the face), the connotation of the combined colour sign becomes constantly with negative evaluation. In six instances among eight where the black-colour sign occurs with other adjacent signs, the re-

sult of the combined sign phrase has negative evaluation at the connotation level.

Thus, in most verses, black-colour signs evoke negative connotations especially when they are used to modify the sign of a body organ. To illustrate, in instances no.14 and no.11, the colour signifier takes to form of an agents who change the colour of the modified signs faces (*wujuuh*, *wujuuhuhm*, and *wujhuu*) to 'black'. The result is a new signifier phrase with the signified signs all mean the 'black faces' of the disbelievers in Hell. This new sign phrase has the negative connotation of 'shame, fear, catastrophic destiny, and punishment'. In addition to that, the metonymic relationship between the face and its bearer works on developing the meaning of the signified phrase 'people with black faces'. This leads to change the denotation of 'faces that looks black' to become 'shame, fear, catastrophic destiny' among several other disconcerting meanings at the connotative level.

Nevertheless, the black-colour sign signifies a neutral connotation as it is just describing a physical appearance with neither positive nor negative message. Instance no.11 is similar to the case of the 'white thread' discussed under the colour white in the previous section. Black and white colour signs are mentioned in opposite relationship (*binary opposition*), and they have the same signifier at denotative level as in (*white/black thread*); however, the signified has a different meaning at the connotation level. The signifier phrase *alkhaiT alabid* (*white thread*) has the interpretation of punctual time *fajr* (dawn). Here, the instance shows that the combined signifier phrase 'black thread' signifies, in the second order (the connotation level), 'a crucial sign of permission starting eating and drinking'; that means a time for permission after (*prohibition*). Accordingly, the connotative meaning can be interpreted according to the situation of context. Thus, the white-colour sign becomes a crucial sign of starting *Siyam* (*fast*). In other words, it is an accurate interval between the permitted and the prohibited. The colour in this verse clarifies a religious rule for all Muslims who fast the month of Ramadan. While the signifier 'black thread' has signified an opposite meaning to the 'white thread', distinguishing the black-colour sign from the white-colour sign (the black from the white) becomes an indexical sign of to break the fasting and giving permission to start eating and drinking. In addition, in instance no.13, the signifier phrase 'black mountains' signifies the meaning of 'a real example from the universe to prove how Allah is able to create various shapes of mountains as a challenge to the miscreants'.

When it comes to the mode of the black-colour sign, it is similar to what is discussed under the white-colour sign above where the mode is symbolic at the denotation level and *figuratively* indexical at the connotation level because it is meant to reflect the inner state of faith of the modified sign (the coloured).

Remarkably, there is a predominant difference between the denotation of the entire signifier phrase (the colour (black) + the coloured) and its connotation. However, there is one exception in instance no.13. Here, the black and white colour signs occur simultaneously (as adjacent signs) in the verse to modify the same category of signs *djudud* and

*gharabib* (*mountains/streaks*). Both colours signs have the same signifiers (*black/white mountains/streaks*) which all signify the 'diversity and variety of mountains forms which represents the Creator ability'.

Following Pierce's triadic model, instances of the colour-sign phrases which talk about the 'black faces of the dwellers of Hell' can make the conceptual representamen 'black faces'. In instance no.14, the understood representamen '*black faces*' is metaphorically used here to conceptualize the disbelievers or the dwellers of Hell by comparing their 'blackness' to that of their wicked souls and unsound deeds. Thus, the representamen '*black faces*' is used to signify the interpretant the disbelievers and Dwellers of Hell. Nevertheless, an unlimited semeiosis, in Pierce's sense, may lead to a different series of successive representations of the '*black faces*' on the basis of the 'black' appearance of the disbelievers on the Day of Judgment because of being gathered under the heat of the sun, or their faces turn black because of burns after been thrown into Hell. The two interpretants of the sun heat or the burning will make a representamen represented in the mind of the reader or listener of the verse to stand for the object 'fire'. This fire in turn may trigger another unpleasant mental image of fire qualities such as pain and screams and smell of burned skin, and so on.

### The Colour Sign 'Yellow'

The yellow colour is mentioned in the Quran in five instances in five different verses (See Table 5 in the Appendix); these are:

16. ..they said, 'Call upon your Lord for us to make plain to us its colour.' He said, 'He says, 'It is a **yellow cow**, bright in its colour, pleasing the beholders. (Al-Baqarah (*the Cow*): 69)
17. ..and if we send a wind [which would spoil the green growth (tilth) brought up by the previous rain], and they see (their **tilth**) turn **yellow-behold**, they then (after their being glad,) would become unthankful (to their lord Allah as) disbelievers. [Tafsir At-Tabari]. (Ar-Rum (*the Romans*): 51)
18. ..see you not that Allah sends down water (rain) from the sky, and causes it to penetrate the earth, (and then makes it to spring up) as water-springs, and afterward thereby produces **crops** of different colours, and afterward they wither and you see them turn **yellow**; then He makes them dry and broken pieces. Verily, in this is a Reminder for men of understanding. (Az-Zumar (*the Troops*): 21)
19. ..as if they were **yellow camels** or bundles of ropes. (Al-Mursalat (*the Emissaries*): 33)

The signifiers (representamen) of the yellow-colour sign in Arabic are derived from the triadic root 'S-f-r', some of these derivatives are used to signify an attribute conveyed by adjectival signified (interpretant) (e.g. *baqaratun Safra'* and *djemalatun Sufr*) or verbal signified (interpretant) that refers to the idea of 'yellowing the coloured object' (e.g. *zar'u muSfar*).

The yellow-colour sign is employed in the Quran to reflect positive, negative, or neutral evaluations. There is an intrinsic relationship between the signified (the coloured) and the



signifier (*yellow*) in the verses of the Quran which supports this proposition. Yellow-colour signs convey positively evaluated connotation when it signifies animals (e.g. Bani Israel's cow, camels with enormous size), but it convey a neutral connotation when signifying an object (*bundles of ropes*). On the other hand, a yellow-colour sign is used to convey a negative connotation twice when it signifies the colour of the crops (*plants*) (See Himmod, 2013: p.95). Furthermore, and similar to the other colour-signs mentioned above, the mode of the yellow-colour sign is symbolic at the first level of connotation and indexical signs at the second; signifying the physical appearance of the signified animal or plants as a reflection of inner physical state and conditions.

In instance no.16, the conceptualized signifier phrase *baqaratun Safra'* (*yellow cow*) is used to signify the meaning of a specific yellow cow for a specific aim (*Bani Israel's cow*). This sign aimed to be a challenge to Bani Israel's obedience by slaughtering a specific yellow cow that is hard to find. In this case, the interpretant (signifier) of the yellow-colour sign (in 'yellow camels or bundles of ropes') in no.19 could be denotatively interpreted as the colour of the sparks of Hell. This interpretant -in turn- becomes a representamen of a second semeiosis in which the interpretant conveys the meaning of how huge the Hell's sparks are on the Day of Judgment. And this interpretant becomes another representamen of a third semeiosis in which the interpretant could convey the meaning of the pain and misery of the dwellers of Hell, and so on. And in instances no.17 and no.18, the value of the signifier of the sign '*yellow crops (plants)*' is negatively evaluated at the first level of denotation. This interpretation can be extended to signify spoiling the green growth (tilth) either by wind or by rain. Here, the yellow-colour signs is used negatively when used with '*plants*'; however, the yellow colour means how the crops became yellow and ripe, but here the meaning is understood from the opposite standpoint because it signifies that the yellow colour of the crop are all resulted from rain and wind. So, the Quran here links between water (a symbol of life continuity) and the yellow crops after growing. Certainly, visual signs can be conceptualized and presented in the mind of the reader, or listener, when contemplating these verses. Following Peirce's model, this interpretant could become a new representamen in which the interpretant conveys the meaning of phase of crops' life or the cycle of the life of plants, and this is another message of the Creator's capability and omniscience.

In most verses involving the yellow-colour sign, the meaning of the signifier remains the same at both denotative and connotative levels. For example, the meaning of the signifier *baqaratun Safra'* (*a yellow cow*) in no.16 has the same signified in the first and second orders of signification. At the denotative level, it means the colour of the cow (its physical appearance) that is 'bright in its colour, pleasing the beholders'. In no.17 and 18, the signifier *zar'an muSfaran* (*yellow crops*) has the signified with the same meaning in the first and second order too. At the two levels, the signifier phrase means 'the phase or the life cycle of plants passes by a period of being ready for harvesting; this period of time can be recognised by the crops colour'. On the other hand,

only in one verse, the denotative meaning differs from the connotative one. In instance no.19, the signifier phrase *dje-malatum Sufr* (*yellow camels*) changes from 'the colour of camels' at the first level to become 'the image of the size and colour of Hell fire piece of brass on the Day of Judgment'.

### The Colour Sign 'Red'

Red-colour terms are mentioned only twice in the Quran; one of them is overt, and derived from its Arabic triadic root '*H-m-r*', and in the second instance, it is mentioned implicitly by a metaphoric representation. Still, in the two instances, the red-colour sign is used neutrally to signify the physical appearance of the signified (See Table 6 in the Appendix). The two instances of the colour 'red' and their contexts in the Quran are:

20. ..., and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colours and. (Fatir (*the Creator*): 27)
21. ... then when the heaven is rent asunder, and it becomes rosy or red like red -oil, or red hide -' (ar-Rahman (*the Beneficent*): 37)

The signifiers (representamen) in the red-colour signs are all derived from the triadic root 'H-m-r'. All of these derivatives are only used to signify an attribute conveyed by adjectival signified (interpretant) (*djudud humron*) or by a nominal signified (interpretant) (*wardatan*). In the two instances, the red colour signifies to the object it modifies (the coloured) neutral denotations and connotations. And like all colours in the Quran, the mode of the sign red-colour is symbolic at the first level of denotation, and indexical at the second level.

In instance no.20; the interpretation of the signifier 'red mountain' sign signifies a tangible example from the universe that proves how Allah's capability to create, and challenge the creatures, the various forms of mountains. In the second instance, in no.21, the signifier *as-samaa' wardatan* (*the sky turns rosy-red*) signifies an extraordinary phenomenon that will happen on the day of resurrection. And it is another invitation to think about how innovative the creation is. The books of the interpretation of the Quran say that the denotation of the conceptualized signifier 'rosy-red sky' in no.21 changes from 'the skies turned rosy-red' to become 'a universal phenomena in which the sky appears as red as a flower'. While the signifier *humron djudud* (*red mountains*) in no.20 signifies the same meaning of diversity and variety of mountains forms which represents the Creator's ability at both denotative and connotative levels.

According to Peirce, the most common reading of the previous signs would be by assigning fruits and mountains to the red-colour sign. Here, we talk about God's omnipotence in creation when He sends down water (rain) from the sky. In this regard, the representamen *humron djudud* (*red mountains*) has the interpretant 'the Creator's capability', and this interpretant, in turn, becomes a new representamen of a second semeiosis in which the interpretant conveys the meaning of the Creator's ability and mercifulness of sending down water (rain) from the sky, and how earth grows fruits of various colours and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colours. This implies a sign of diversity in the

universe which provokes the addressee to contemplate the Creator's omnipotence.

### The Colour Sign 'Blue'

The blue-colour is the least mentioned colour in it, and it appears only once and with negative connotation (See Table 7 in the Appendix). The verse of the colour 'blue' is:

22. ... he said, '....., we shall assemble all the sinners with **blued eyes**'. (Taha (*Ta-ha*): 102)

The only signifier (representamen) of the blue-colour sign is derived from the Arabic triadic root 'z-r-k'. This derivative is used to signify an attribute conveyed by adjectival signified (interpretant) that refers to the idea of that the coloured object has turned blue in its appearance (*mujrimun zurka*). Here, the blue-colour sign negatively refers to the colour of a body organ (eyes), and this body organs metonymically stands for its bearers' *mujrimun* (i.e. the criminals, polytheists, sinners, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah). Here, the denotative meaning of 'blue eyes' changes from 'the colour of the sinners' eyes' at the first level of denotation to become 'a blind in a very crowded area on the Day of Judgment at the second level of connotation.

In addition, the symbolic blue-eyes sign here acquires an indexical sign mode because it is associated in Arabic culture with blindness and deformity at the second level of connotation. This indexicality reflects the state of hopelessness and misery that characterizes the *mujrimun* on the Day of Judgment. Here, the signifier *zurka* (*blue eyes*) signifies that the *mujrimun* will be gathered deformed and blind in a very crowded area on the Day of Judgment. At this point, this interpretant becomes a representamen of a second semeiosis in which the interpretant conveys the meaning of the state of vulnerability and impotence of a blind person in a very crowded place where each individual is looking for his own salvation, and the blind is constantly being hit from each side because of the state of disorder and confusion and horror of all the sinners around him.

### CONCLUSION

The analysis of instance s of colour in the Quran reveals that colour terms can be recognised as semiotic signs. These signs are predominantly symbolic in their written or oral forms. Almost all colour signs involve their signifier derived from the typical and conventional Arabic triadic root of the colour. Alternative signifiers of the colour (such as synonymous words or metonyms) were rarely used (*cf.* Amjad, 2012). In addition, it is found that the value of the colour sign remarkably affect the value of the sign it modifies in the colour sign phrase (the colour + the coloured). This effect takes two forms: changing the denotation of the signifier phrase to a new connotation and changing also its evaluation (positive, neutral, or positive). This finding coincides with previous studies which emphasise the assumption that the value of a sign is determined by its co-occurrence with other signs (*See* Setia et. al., 2009).

In addition, one of the key characteristics of the colour signs in the Quran is their indexicality at the second level of

connotation (or semeiosis). Symbolic colour-signs turns to the indexical mode in the mind of the Quran reader, or listener, because the colour sign here represents an inner state that is mirrored on the external appearance of the coloured object or idea (e.g. *the face*). In view of this, we must not ignore that visual signs can be conceptualized and presented in the mind of the reader, or listener, when encountering, and thoroughly, contemplating instances of symbolic signs (texts or sounds). This entails that the colour signs which can be deemed difficult to interpret are better be visualised into an indexical or iconic modes. In other words, coloured images or pictures can be of great help in understanding the denotations and connotations of the described object. This can be accentuated in many instances in the Quran where iconic and indexical signs, along with the symbolic (textual) sign, can significantly contribute in facilitating the interpretation of the verse and its intended message (for instance, the difference between the red and *black mountains* and *streaks*, or the *yellow cow* in Bani Isra'il's story). Barthes (1977) accentuates how the analogical reproductions of reality by drawings and paintings can represent denoted messages because 'the role of the denoted image... is one of naturalizing the symbolic message – supporting and contextualizing the connoted elements, making them innocent' (Barthes 1964). Thus, pictorials, text, and context are all elements which contribute a meaning in both denotation and connotation meanings (*See* Rifa'i, 2010).

The values (the denotations and connotations) of the colour signs in the Quran change considerably in their behaviour according to the context where the colour occurs. While some colours are constantly positive (e.g. green), other colours are predominantly negative (e.g. black) in the language of the Quran. Such constant representations are based on how colour signs in the Quran are culturally motivated to convey certain social or religious messages to its Muslim and Arab target audience. For instance, colour signs and indications of colour has influence on Islamic concepts of ruling such as purity, prayer timings, menstruation, gray hair, dressing-up (*cf.* Taha and Abdel-Azim, 2012). The green colour has become of particular significance because it evokes positive indications about life of prosperity and fertility, optimism and happiness, and it coincides also with psychological comfort and the meditation towards the viewer (*cf.* Al-Domi, 2015). In addition, following Peirce's model demonstrates that that the colours can influence the psychological inner soul of the reader of the Quran; especially once colour signs are used to foretell the events on the Day of Judgement. Here, colours signs have the signifiers to signify the 'the Creator ability'.

Accordingly, we conclude that the primary colour terms in the Quran (black, white, red, green, yellow, and blue) conform to Berlin and Kay's theory of basic colour terms and colour universals (*See* Berlin and Kay, 1969). The colours in the Quran come at the first three levels of this theory. In addition, semiotic analysis using both Saussure's dyadic and Peirce's models is considered as an effective tool to analyze the significance and representation of colours in the Quran. Furthermore, colours in the Quran themselves are symbolic

signs that refer to a representational conceptualised contents that resides outside the text of the Quran. However, they have indexical and some iconic mode at the higher abstract level (the second semiosis) in the mind of the reader or listener. Moreover, colour-sign phrases in the Quran have two levels of meanings: the first level reveals the literal meanings of signs (denotative level), and the second level reveals the extra meanings of signs according to the interpretation books (connotative level). What is more, colours in the Quran have more positive connotations than negative ones (See the Appendix). However, there are some differences within the colour signs *white*, *yellow* and *blue*. Finally, analyzing and interpreting the verses which involve colour terms from a semiotic point of view reveals much information of the cultural, social and psychological motivations of the Quran messages. Such an approach of analysing and interpreting the Quran helps in understanding the connotation of several difficult verses; especially if it is based on motivating the Quran reader to sail into the unlimited levels of semeiosis. This can be aided by means of multi-modal interpretations of the Quran that address the necessity of reliance on indexical and iconic signs.

We here recommend that further studies should be conducted to highlight the significance of semiotic approaches to text analysis; especially in didactic discourses. In addition, it is of great significance to raise the awareness on the significance of semiology as a scientific domain to study meaning in language. Thus, it is imperative to develop semiotic-analysis competence among students, researchers, and even religion preachers. This competence can be beneficial to students of humanities and literary studies in tackling the analysis of semiotic signs. Finally, it becomes of great importance to launch a project of a new-interpretation of the Quran that is based on the multi-modality resource which can employ both indexical and iconic signs alongside the symbolic signs in facilitating the understanding of the message of the Quran.

## END NOTES

- 1 Oxford Living Dictionaries: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/colour>
- 2 Available via <http://corpus.quran.com/verbs.jsp>.
- 3 Among the many translations of the Quran, this study relies on a translated English version of the Quran that is accredited by King Fahd Glorious Quran Printing Complex (See <http://qurancomplex.gov.sa/>)
- 4 Available on line via: <http://quran.al-islam.com/Loader.aspx?pageid=215>
- 5 <http://quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer/katheer/sura3-aya106.html>

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APPENDIX

Table 2. The different characteristics of the semiotic and semantic analysis of the colour sign (white) in the Quran.

Verse	Translation	Syntagmatic relation [1 <sup>st</sup> order]				Value of the two signs [2 <sup>nd</sup> order]				Denot. vs. Connot.
		Colour sign		Coloured sign		Colour+Coloured		Sign mode		
		Signifier [Representamen]	Signified [Interpretant]	Signifier [Representamen]	Signified [Interpretant]	Denotation	Connotation	Evaluation	Sign mode	
1	...and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you	<i>alabiaD</i>	colour adj.	<i>alkhaiT</i> thread	Sewing object	A thread that is coloured in white	Time (prohibition after permission)	Neutral	Indexical	Different
2	some faces will become white	<i>tabiaDu</i>	colouring v.	<i>wujtuH</i> faces	Body part	A face that looks white	Happiness, success, and safety of punishment	Positive	Indexical	Different
3	some faces will become white	<i>ebiaDat</i>	colouring v.	wujuhuHm Their faces	Body part	A face that looks white	Happiness, success, and safety of punishment	Positive	Indexical	Different
4	it will come forth white (and shining)	<i>baiDa'</i>	colour adj.	<i>yaduka</i> your hand	Body part	A hand that looks white	Tangible seen miracle/sound and healthy	Positive	Indexical	Equal
5	it was white to all beholders!	<i>baiDa'</i>	colour adj.	<i>yadahu</i> hand	Body part	A hand that looks white	Tangible seen miracle/sound and healthy	Positive	Indexical	Equal
6	And he lost his sight because of the sorrow that he was suppressing	<i>ebiaDat</i>	colouring v.	<i>caynaahu</i> his eyes	Body part	Eyes that turned totally white	Grief which leads to blindness as a result of tears	Negative	Indexical	Different
7	and among the mountains are streaks white	<i>biD</i>	colour adj.	<i>Djudud</i> streaks/paths	Streaks/paths	A streak/path that is white	Diversity and variety of mountains forms which represents the creator ability.	Neutral	Indexical	Equal
8	White, delicious to the drinkers.	<i>baiDa'</i>	colour adj.	<i>ka's sharaab</i> drink	Drink	White drink	A tasty beverage	Positive	Indexical	Equal
9	as if they were (hidden) eggs (well) preserved	<i>baiD</i>	colour n.	<i>Houri</i> (met. Pearls)	Pearls	White pearls	Beauty, preciousness, and unapproachable Hours (maids)	Positive	Indexical	Different

Table 3. The different characteristics of the semiotic and semantic analysis of the colour sign (green) in the Quran.

Verse	Translation	Syntagmatic Relation [1 <sup>st</sup> Order]		Value Of The Two Signs [2 <sup>nd</sup> Order]		Denot. vs. Connot.	
		Signifier [Representamen]	Signified [Interpretant]	Coloured sign Signifier [Representamen]	Signified [Interpretant]		Colour+Coloured Connotation
1	به تيات كل شيء فأخضرنا منه خضرا and out of it we bring forth green stalks	<i>hkuDran</i> stalks	colour adj.	<i>nabattan</i> stalks	The colour of Stalks are green	Green plants grown as a sign of The Creator's ability.	Indexical Equal
2	عجاف وسبع سنبلات خضر and seven green ears of corn, and (seven) others dry .	<i>khuDoren</i> spike wheat	colour adj.	<i>sunbulaten</i> spike wheat	The colour of spike wheat is green	The meaning of green spike wheat in the King's dream implies hope and optimism. A welfare, abundance of crops (green ears)	Indexical Different
3	جعل لكم من الشجر الأخضر نارا (He who produces for you fire out of the green tree, when behold you kindles therewith	<i>alakhDar</i> trees	colour adj.	<i>shajjar</i> trees	The colour of trees is green	Green trees used as a sign of the ability of The Creator.	Indexical Equal
4	عاليمهم ثياب سندس خضر Their garments will be of fine green silk	<i>khuDoren</i> clothes	Colour adj.	<i>thiaban</i> clothes	Description for the clothes of those people who win Paradise.	Description for the clothes of those people who win Paradise.	Indexical Equal
5	نريهم فرفر على رضح مجدوب واسح Reclining on green cushions and rich beautiful mattresses	<i>khuDoren</i> cushions	colour adj.	<i>rofroufn</i> cushions	Description for the furniture of those people who win Paradise	Description for the furniture of those people who win Paradise	Indexical

Table 4. The different characteristics of the semiotic and semantic analysis of the colour sign (black) in the Quran.

Verse	Translation	Syntagmatic relation [1 <sup>st</sup> order]				Value of the two signs [2 <sup>nd</sup> order]				Denot. vs. Connot.
		Colour sign		Coloured sign		Colour+Coloured		Sign		
		Signifier [Representamen] [Interpretant]	Signified [Interpretant]	Signifier [Representamen] [Interpretant]	Signified [Interpretant]	Denotation	Connotation	Evaluation	Sign mode	
1 الْخَيْطُ الْأَسْوَدُ	and eat and drink until the white thread (light) of dawn appears to you distinct from the black thread (darkness of night)	<i>al-aswad</i>	colour adj.	<i>alkhaiT</i> thread	Sewing object	A thread that is coloured in black	Time (an interval between what is allowed and what is prohibited) time for permission after (prohibition)	Neutral	Indexical	Different
2 وَسَوَدُّ وُجُوهُ	and some faces will become black	<i>taswadu</i>	colouring v.	<i>wijuu</i> faces	Body part	A face that looks black	Shame, fear, catastrophic destiny, and being punished	Negative	Indexical	Different
3 اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ	as for those whose faces will become black	<i>eswadat</i>	coloured v.	<i>wijuu</i> their faces	Body part	A face that looks black	Shame, fear, catastrophic destiny, and being punished	Negative	Indexical	Different
4 ظَلَّ وَجْهَهُ مُسْوَدًّا	..., his face becomes dark, and he is filled with inward grief!	<i>moswaddan</i>	coloured adj.	<i>wijuu</i> his face	Body part	A face that looks black	Dissatisfaction and gender discrimination	Negative	ndexical	Different
5 لَابِجَالٍ نَجْوًا مِنْ جِبَالٍ أَبْيَضَةٍ وَأَسْوَدَةٍ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَسْوَدَةٍ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ (دوس)	..., and among the mountains are streaks white and red, of varying colours and (others) very black.	<i>suud</i>	colour adj.	<i>gharabib/djudud</i> mountains/streaks	Mountains	A mountain that is very black	Diversity and variety of mountains forms which represents the creator ability	Neutral	Indexical	Equal



Table 5. The different characteristics of the semiotic and semantic analysis of the colour sign (yellow) in the Quran.

Verse	Translation	Syntagmatic relation [1 <sup>st</sup> order]		Value of the two signs [2 <sup>nd</sup> order]		Denot. vs. Connot.
		Signifier [Representamen]	Signified [Interpretant]	Signifier [Representamen]	Signified [Interpretant]	
		Coloured sign		Colour+Coloured		Sign
		Signifier [Representamen]	Signified [Interpretant]	Denotation	Connotation	Evaluation mode
1	he says, 'It is a yellow cow, bright in its colour, pleasing the beholders	<i>Safra'</i> colour adj.	Cow	The colour of the cow	Confirmation for the colour of cow that Israel disobeyed to slaughter; bright in its colour, pleasing the beholders.)	Positive Indexical Equal
2	and they see (their tilth) turn yellow-behold	<i>musSaran</i> coloured v.	Crops	Crops turned yellow	The phase or the life cycle of plants passes by a period of being ready for harvesting; this period of time can be known by the crops colour .	Negative Indexical Equal
3	and afterward they [crops] wither and you see them turn yellow	<i>musSaran</i> coloured v.	Crops	Crops turned yellow	The phase or the life cycle of plants passes by a period of being ready for harvesting; this period of time can be known by the crops colour .	Negative Indexical Equal
4	as if they were yellow camels or bundles of ropes.	<i>Sufra</i> colour adj.	Camels	Yellow camels	Holding a similarity in Quran always narrows down the gap between two pictures (the size and colour of Hellfires' on Judgment Day)	Neutral Indexical Different

Table 6. The different characteristics of the semiotic and semantic analysis of the colour sign (red) in the Quran.

Verse	Translation	Syntagmatic relation [1 <sup>st</sup> order] { <i>sign mode at this order is invariably symbolic</i> }		Value of the two signs [2 <sup>nd</sup> order]		Denot. vs. Connot.			
		Colour sign	Signified [Interpretant] [Representamen]	Signifier [Representamen] [Interpretant]	Colour+Coloured Connotation		Colour Denotation	Colour+Coloured Evaluation	Sign mode
1	ومن الجبال جندٌ بيضٌ وخضرٌ مختلف ألوانها red, of varying colours	<i>humron</i> colour adj.	colour adj.	<i>djudud</i> streaks/paths	Streaks/paths [Interpretant]	Innovative and creative ability of the creator of the universe	Neutral	Indexical	Equal
2	وتقطنها اذف تسكنها اذف becomes rosy or red like red –oil, or red hide	<i>wardatan</i> coloured v.	coloured v.	<i>samaa'</i> sky	Sky	A universe phenomena in which the sky appears as red flower	Neutral	Indexical	Equal

Table 7. The different characteristics of the semiotic and semantic analysis of the colour sign (blue) in the Quran.

Verse	Translation	Syntagmatic relation [1 <sup>st</sup> order] { <i>sign mode at this order is invariably symbolic</i> }		Value of the two signs [2 <sup>nd</sup> order]		Denot. vs. Connot.			
		Colour sign	Signified [Interpretant] [Representamen]	Signifier [Representamen] [Interpretant]	Colour+Coloured Connotation		Colour Denotation	Colour+Coloured Evaluation	Sign mode
1	في ذلك يوم يجمع الله الذين كفروا الذين كفروا polytheists, sinners, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah) blue or blind-eyed with thirst.	<i>zurka</i> coloured adj.	coloured adj.	<i>mujrimun</i> the sinners	the sinners [Interpretant]	A blind in a very crowded area on the judgment day which represents horror for all the sinners.	Negative	Indexical	Different