

Connotative Meaning of Roland Barthes's Semiotic Perspective: Study of Khomr in the Qur'an

Mohamad Muhtarom Ali¹, Abdul Kadir Riadi²

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

Correspondence: ahmadali928333@gmail.com

DOI: 10.29240/alquds.v9i2.11811

Abstract. This study aims to analyze the connotative meaning of the term *khomr* in the Qur'an using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. This approach is employed to explore the layers of meaning that transcend the denotative dimension and to examine the relationship between signs and their socio-cultural context. The focus of this study is to trace the representation of *khomr* as a social and legal phenomenon in the Qur'anic text and its implications for shaping normative understanding among Muslims. The research data were collected through a literature review by examining Qur'anic verses related to *khomr* as well as classical and contemporary exegeses. The analysis reveals that *khomr* not only refers to intoxicating beverages in a physical sense but also carries connotative meanings reflecting mental, moral, and spiritual conditions. Roland Barthes' semiotic perspective offers a conceptual framework for understanding the symbolism of khomr as a "modern myth" in contemporary Muslim society. These findings broaden insights into how the Qur'an constructs meaning through a system of signs and contribute theoretically to semiotic-based thematic exegesis studies.

Keywords: *khomr*, semiotics, Roland Barthes, connotation, Qur'an.

Introduction

The understanding of khomr in the context of the Qur'an is urgent, both historically and in the application of Islamic teachings in society. Khomr, which is often interpreted as an intoxicating drink, is not only strictly forbidden in Islamic teachings but also a symbol of the prohibition against any form of action that can damage reason and morals. In several verses of the Qur'an, such as Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 219, and Surah Al-Ma'idah, verse 90, khomr is explained through the stages of prohibition, which reflect a gradual approach and wisdom in building awareness in Arab society at that time.¹ This gradual process shows that the prohibition of khomr is not only normative but also has complex social, spiritual, and moral dimensions. The verses also reveal the social dynamics of Arab society, where intoxicating drinks became part of the culture that influenced their outlook and habits.²

In the modern context, *khomr* remains relevant to study because it is not only a religious issue but also a social, health, moral, and legal issue. Although the study of *khomr* has been extensively discussed in the jurisprudence literature and classical interpretation, most research still focuses on legal aspects and the textual-literal dimension. At this point, a research gap emerges: the lack of studies that explore the connotative and symbolic meanings of khomr through the lens of sign science (semiotics). In fact, connotative meaning is significant for understanding how the Qur'an builds a layered, relevant

¹Muhammad Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Message, Impression and Compatibility of the Qur'an*, Vol. 2 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2004), 531.

²Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 54.

moral message across the ages. Therefore, understanding *the prohibition of khomr* is not enough through a literal Reading; it also requires a more in-depth and contextual analysis.³

Several previous studies have employed Barthes' theory to analyze religious texts, for example, by Reading Qur'anic symbols, modern mythology in religious narratives, or connotative meanings in Qur'anic stories. However, the use of Barthes' theory to study specific terms such as *khomr* remains very limited. Hence, this research aims to fill this gap and expand the application of semiotics to the study of thematic interpretation.

Furthermore, this study enriches the analysis by drawing on various interpretive sources. Classical commentaries, such as *al-Razi*'s *Mafatihul Ghaib* and *al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān* by *al-Qurtubī*, excel because they present comprehensive interpretations, include both legal and non-legal verses, and offer a deep normative and historical perspective⁴. On the other hand, contemporary interpretations, such as *Tafsir al-Munir* by *Wahbah Zuhaili*, present contextual understanding by linking *khomr* to modern social issues. By combining these different types of interpretations, the research provides a comprehensive picture of the various interpretations of *khomr* across generations, both from the textual, rational, and social sides. In the study of the modern Qur'an, the semiotic approach, particularly Roland Barthes's theory, offers a different perspective on the Qur'an's texts. Barthes introduced the concepts of denotation and connotation in semiotic analysis, enabling the Reading of the text beyond its literal meaning.⁵ Denotation refers to the literal meaning of a sign, while connotations involve broader cultural, social, and historical associations. Using this approach, the verses on *khomr* can be analyzed not only as a prohibition against intoxicating drinks, but also as representations of broader values, such as purity of reason, self-control, and social harmony. This approach is relevant because it reveals the symbolic meaning in the Qur'an's text, which is often layered and contains contextual messages that can be applied in modern life.⁶

In a methodological framework, this study adopts a qualitative approach, using Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis to uncover the denotative and connotative meanings of the term *khomr* in the Qur'an. The analysis is carried out through *library research* by examining Qur'anic verses related to *khomr* and tracing the interpretations of classical and contemporary mufasir. A descriptive-analytical approach is used to uncover the *layered meaning* of the term *khomr*, which not only represents the prohibition of intoxicating drinks but also symbolizes broader values, such as mindfulness, self-control, and social harmony.

The connotative study of the Qur'an's texts is of great significance in deepening the understanding of the divine messages they contain. Connotations allow the reader to dig into the hidden meanings behind the text, which may not be immediately apparent through a literal Reading.⁷ For example, the prohibition of *khomr* can be interpreted not only as a rejection of individual behavior but also as a symbol of self-control and the struggle against lust. These verses describe the dynamics among individuals, society, and religious teachings in building a harmonious life.⁸ In the context of modern society, understanding *khomr* as a symbol can help Muslims understand similar challenges faced today, such as substance abuse or other destructive behaviors that threaten social stability.

³ M. Quraish Shihab, *Grounding the Qur'an: The Function and Role of Revelation in Community Life* (Bandung: Mizan, 1994), 134.

⁴ Abdullah AS, —Study of the Book of Tafsir —Al-Jami'Li Ahkam Al-Qur'an|Works: Al-Qurthubi, Al-I'jaz, Journal of Islamic Revelation Vol.4, No.4, no. January-December (2018)

⁵ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 113.

⁶ Asep Saepudin Jahan, "Semiotic Approach in the Study of Qur'an Interpretation," *Ushuluddin* Journal 29, no. 1 (2022): 15.

⁷ M. Amin Abdullah, *Islamic Studies: Normativity or Historicity?* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Siswa, 1996), 128.

⁸ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Theological Approaches to Qur'anic Exegesis* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 43.

In addition, the semiotic approach provides analytical tools for understanding the Qur'an's messages within a cultural framework. Roland Barthes, in his theory, asserts that text is not only a system of signs, but also a cultural product influenced by social and historical contexts.⁹ Therefore, semiotic analysis can help uncover the hidden meanings behind the symbols in the Qur'an, including khomr, as representations of universally relevant issues throughout time. Through Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, this study seeks to uncover the connotative meaning of *khomr* in the Qur'an by examining various classical and contemporary interpretations to demonstrate the diversity of interpretations. The involvement of multiple *tafsir* works is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of how *khomr* is understood across interpretive traditions. In addition, this study utilizes the latest findings on the application of semiotics to the study of the Qur'an to demonstrate methodological developments in this field. Thus, this study not only offers a more holistic understanding of the *symbolism of khomr* but also enriches modern hermeneutic approaches to Reading sacred texts more contextually and comprehensively.

Discussion

Biography Rolan Barthes

Roland Barthes was born in Cherbourg in 1915 and lost his father as a child, so he was raised by his mother and grandparents. His childhood was spent in Bayonne, and he completed primary and secondary education in Paris. In the period 1943–1947, he suffered from tuberculosis and took advantage of his recovery period to read and write, until he published his first article on André Gide. Barthes then taught in several countries, joining the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, and was appointed a member of the Collège de France in 1977 until he died in 1980.¹⁰

Barthes's education began at the Sorbonne University, where he studied classical philology, a discipline that deepened his study of language, literature, and history. At the Sorbonne, he was inspired by the thinking of intellectuals such as Ferdinand de Saussure, which underpinned Barthes' approach to semiotics. Barthes completed his education with flying colors, but health problems, especially tuberculosis, forced him out of academic life to undergo treatment in a sanatorium for several years.¹¹ Nevertheless, this period of rehabilitation gave him time to read and write, and to deepen his thinking about society and culture.

Barthes argued that there is a second-level system of meaning built on the previous system. Literature is a clear example of a second-level system that relies on language as the first system. This second-level system of meaning is called connotation and is expressly distinguished from denotation as a first-level meaning.¹² He expressed this thought in his famous work, *Elements of Semiology* (1964). Barthes also developed an analysis of the sign system in popular culture in *Mythologies* (1957), in which he discussed how modern myths are constructed through media such as advertising, fashion, and art.¹³

Barthes had a special interest in cultural analysis, where he showed how popular culture created and spread myths that influenced the way people thought. One example of the analysis is how

⁹ Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, translated by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 89.

¹⁰ Hamidah, *Roland Barthes's Semiotic Analysis of the Jilboobs Phenomenon* in the Journal of Studia Insania, October 2016, p.117-126

¹¹ Jonathan Culler, *Barthes: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 12.

¹² Choiron Nasirin, *Semiotic Analysis of the Concept of Violence in The Raid 2: Berandal* in the Journal of Discourse and Media Research June2022, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 28-43

¹³ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 10.

advertising images or media narratives not only convey literal information but also contain certain ideologies.¹⁴ This made Barthes one of the crucial figures in critical theory and cultural studies.

In addition, Barthes introduced the idea of the “death of the author” in his famous 1967 essay.¹⁵ In this essay, Barthes rejects the idea that the meaning of a text depends entirely on the author’s intentions. Instead, he asserts that the meaning of the text arises from the interaction between the reader and the text itself. This idea changed the way people understood literary texts and provided the basis for the deconstruction approach popularized by Jacques Derrida.

Throughout his career, Barthes wrote other important books, such as *The Fashion System* (1967), which analyzed fashion as a system of signs, and *S/Z* (1970), an in-depth analysis of literary works. In 1977, Barthes was appointed professor at the Collège de France, a prestigious position he used to explore the relationship between language, image, and culture.¹⁶

Barthes died on March 26, 1980, after a traffic accident in Paris. His passing leaves an invaluable intellectual legacy. His ideas continue to be influential across literature, semiotics, media, and cultural studies. His thoughts on how signs and texts shape cultural reality remain relevant today, making him one of the most influential thinkers in the modern humanities.¹⁷

Semiotics Roland Barthes

Roland Barthes was one of the central figures in the development of modern semiotic theory, which focused on the study of signs and how they form meaning. He emphasized that language functions as a sign system that reflects the assumptions prevailing in a given society at a given time period. Barthes’ approach to semiotics draws on Ferdinand de Saussure’s linguistic theory, which defines signs as combinations of signifiers and signifieds. Barthes expanded this concept by adding a new layer of analysis, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation refers to the literal or direct meaning of a sign, while connotation involves additional associations influenced by cultural, historical, and social contexts.¹⁸

Within the framework of his theory, Barthes sought to position semiology as a separate discipline from linguistics. Nevertheless, he adopted and clarified several semiological concepts derived from the thought of Ferdinand de Saussure and then arranged them into four dichotomous pairs. The four pairs include *langue* and *parole*, markers and signs, *syntagma* and *systems*, and denotations and connotations. It is through these four concepts that Roland Barthes’ semiotic building was formulated.¹⁹

In his seminal work, *Mythologies* (1957), Barthes showed how signs in popular culture, such as advertising, fashion, and art, not only conveyed literal meaning but also constructed modern myths.²⁰ He explained that these myths represent the underlying ideology of a particular culture. For example, Barthes analyzed toothpaste advertisements that not only sold products but also represented values such as cleanliness, success, and modernity.²¹ In other words, Barthes shows that every sign has two

¹⁴ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Theological Approaches to Qur'anic Exegesis* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 43.

¹⁵ Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 142–148.

¹⁶ Michael Moriarty, *Roland Barthes*, 42.

¹⁷ Jonathan Culler, *Barthes: A Very Short Introduction*, 29.

¹⁸ Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, translated by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 87.

¹⁹ Muhamad Jamaludin, *Mythology in QS. Al-Kafirun Semiotic Perspective Roland Barthes*, in JALSA Journal: The Journal of al-Quran andas-Sunnah Studies Faculty of Ushuludin IIQ An-Nur Yogyakarta Vol. 1 No. 1 2021 p. 45

²⁰ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 11.

²¹ Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, 24.

levels of meaning: (1) denotative meaning, which is what the sign directly refers to, and (2) connotative meaning, which is the value or ideology attached to the sign.²²

Barthes' paradigm comprises three main aspects: denotation, connotation, and myth. Barthes's approach to semiotics is often referred to as cultural semiotics because it emphasizes how signs are used in the production and reproduction of meaning in society.²³ One of his significant contributions was his analysis of "myths" as a secondary form of communication. Barthes defined myth as a system of signs that are taken from previous signs and given new meanings in a particular context.⁶ In this process, the myth hides its ideological nature and appears as something natural. For example, an image of a national flag not only signifies a fabric with a specific pattern (denotation), but also represents patriotism, pride, or power (connotation).

In addition to myths, Barthes is also known for his theory of the "*death of the author*", which is part of his semiotic approach to text. In this essay, Barthes asserts that the meaning of a text should not be determined solely by the author's intentions, but should be read as a system of signs that has an autonomous meaning.²⁴ Barthes invites readers to play a more active role in understanding the text rather than relying solely on the author's interpretation. Thus, Barthes changed the paradigm in textual analysis from a focus on the author to a focus on the reader.

One of his most profound works is *S/Z* (1970), in which Barthes analyzes Honoré de Balzac's short story, *Sarrasine*. In this book, Barthes breaks the text into small units called "lexia" and shows how each unit contains a variety of possible meanings.²⁵ This approach highlights the text's multivocality and how the reader can construct meaning through its interaction.

In *Elements of Semiology* (1964), Barthes also introduced the concept that any cultural system can be understood as a system of signs, similar to language. It describes semiotic elements such as syntagmatic (the linear structure of signs) and paradigmatic (the relationship of signs in a system of choice).²⁶ This approach helps the reader understand that meaning in a text or culture is shaped not only by individual elements but also by the relationships among them.

Roland Barthes' semiotics has influenced a wide range of disciplines, including cultural studies, media studies, literature, and communication. By focusing on how signs create and reproduce meaning, Barthes provides an analytical tool essential for understanding a modern culture laden with symbols and myths. Here is a semiotic diagram of Roland Barthes:

²² Jonathan Culler, *Barthes: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 22.

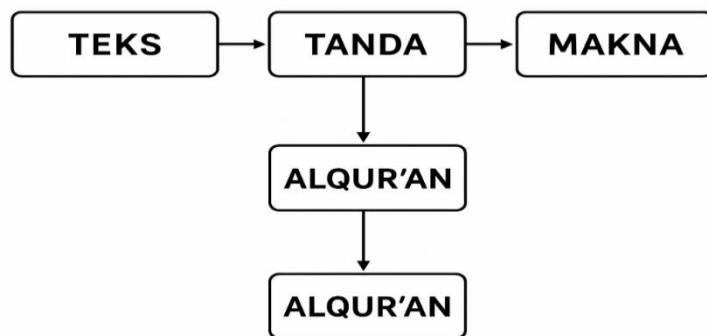
²³ Bagus Fahmi Weisarkurnai, *Representation of Moral Messages in the Film Rudy Habibie by Hanung Bramantyo (Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes)* in Jom Fisip Journal Vol. 4 No. 1 - February 2017.

²⁴ Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), 146.

²⁵ Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, translated by Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), 15.

²⁶ Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, 97.

MODEL SEMIOTIK BARTHES YANG DITERAPKAN PADA AYAT-AYAT AL-QUR'AN



Description:

This diagram explains the flow of Roland Barthes' semiotic model in Reading the Verses of the Qur'an. First, text (such as the word *khamr*) is understood as a sign, which is a combination of a marker (word form) and a sign (an imagined concept). Second, this sign produces meanings, both denotative (literal) and connotative (additional meanings influenced by culture and context), for example, *khamr* is understood not only as an intoxicating drink, but also as everything that damages reason and morals. Third, the sign is then placed back in the Qur'an's meaning system, so that it is connected to the context of the verses, the structure of the surah, and the purpose of the sharia. Finally, this meaning is deepened through interpretation, yielding legal, moral, social, and spiritual meanings. Overall, the plot is: the text → signs → meaning → meaning intact within the framework of the Qur'an.

Qur'anic Texts Related to Khomr

In the Qur'an, the theme of *khamr* (liquor) is discussed in several verses that highlight its benefits and harms, its influence on the sanctity of worship, and its total prohibition. These verses reflect a gradual approach in conveying the prohibition of *khamr* consumption to Muslims. This gradual approach shows wisdom in conveying teachings that are in accordance with the social and psychological conditions of the community at that time. Here are some of the main verses that talk about *khamr*:

QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 219

Allah said:

The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “The Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: ‘O Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).’²²⁷ and blessings of Allaah be upon him

“They ask you about khamr and gambling. Say, In both there is a great sin and some benefit to man, but the sin of both is greater than the benefit.”

This verse is among the earliest discussions of *khomr* in the Qur'an. In this verse, Allah acknowledges that *khomr* has certain benefits, such as the economic and social aspects of that time. However, this verse emphasizes that the moral and social harm caused by *khomr* far outweighs the

²⁷ Al-Qur'an, 2:219

benefits. This verse prepares the ummah to understand that although *khamr* has a positive side, its negative impact cannot be ignored.

QS. An-Nisa [4]: 43

Allah said:

O you who believe, do not draw near to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of what see Allaah be upon him) and do not know what you are saying. And if you do not know what you are doing, then you will not be able to do anything about it, and you will not be able to do it. And if you do not know what you are saying, then you will not be able to do so, and you will not be able to do it. And if you do not know what you are doing, then you will not be able to do so, and you will not be able to do so.

“O you who believe! Do not approach prayer when you are drunk, so that you may understand what you are saying...”

This verse indicates the next stage in the prohibition of *khamr*. This prohibition is not total; it applies only in the context of worship, that is, when a person wants to perform prayers. In this context, *khamr* is seen as a barrier to consciousness, potentially affecting the integrity and solemnity of worship. This verse illustrates the importance of complete awareness and spiritual responsibility when dealing with God.

QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 90-91

Allah said:

O you who believe, and do not believe in the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) and do not believe in the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him).” The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) said: “O Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him), and I am the Messenger of Allaah (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

“O you who believe! Indeed, khamr, gambling, idols, and casting lots with arrows are rijs (abominable acts), including the deeds of Satan. So please stay away from it so that you are lucky. Indeed, Satan intends to create enmity and hatred among you because of khamr and gambling, and to prevent you from remembering Allah and performing prayers. Then don’t you want to stop?”

This verse is the culmination of the prohibition of *khamr* in Islam. This verse forbids the total consumption of *khamr* by calling it “rijsun” (dirty) and “satanic deeds”. This prohibition is not only related to the individual, but also its impact on social and spiritual relationships. This verse affirms that *khamr* is a tool of Satan to create conflict, hatred, and disregard for Allah.

The Meaning of Khomr Connotations According to Barthes

In Roland Barthes' theory of semiotics, the connotative meaning of a sign includes layers of meaning that are deeper and more complex than just its literal meaning. Barthes distinguishes two levels of meaning in signs, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation is the direct and objective

²⁸ Ibid., 4:43.

²⁹ Ibid., 5:91.

meaning of a sign, while connotation includes additional meanings formed from the cultural, social, and historical context surrounding the mark.³⁰ In the context of the *khomr* (liquor) mentioned in the Qur'an, this connotative approach provides a deeper understanding of the moral, social, and spiritual values contained in the Qur'anic texts.

At the denotative level, *khomr* refers to alcoholic beverages that have an intoxicating effect.³¹ According to al-Qurtubī, *khamar* is a grape juice that undergoes a boiling or maturation process to cover the intellect, but it also emphasizes that any grape other than wine that has an intoxicating effect still falls under the category of *khamar*³². This is a clear, direct meaning that anyone Reading the verses about *khomr* can understand without the need for cultural or contextual interpretation. However, the connotative meaning of *khomr* goes beyond this understanding. According to Barthes, the connotation of a sign is not only related to the visual image or the object itself, but rather to the meaning constructed by the society, culture, and ideology that exists behind the mark.³³ In this sense, the *khomr* becomes a symbol of various values that can be understood more deeply by paying attention to the social and moral context.

The connotation of Khomr in QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 219

One of the verses that discusses *khomr* is QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 219, which states that although there are benefits in *khomr*, the harm is much greater. In a denotative sense, this verse clearly mentions the advantages and disadvantages of *khomr*.³⁴ According to Wahbah al-Zuhailī, *khamar* brings significant harm to humans, both to the body, soul, intellect, and property. Khamar not only damages physical and mental health, but it also triggers destructive social behaviors such as hostility, insulting each other, and speaking profanely. While *khamar* can provide momentary enjoyment and economic benefits for its drinkers and sellers, these benefits are not worth the harm it causes. Thus, in al-Zuhailī's view, *khamar* brings more harm than benefit, both in moral, social, and public health aspects.³⁵ However, fundamentally, this verse teaches the principles of prudence, avoidance of danger, and a deep understanding of how moral decisions made can affect the lives of individuals and society. Barthes emphasizes that the connotation of signs can lead the reader to a broader sense, which in this case includes moral ideologies that prioritize social and spiritual well-being over temporary gain. This verse shows that while something may seem advantageous at first glance, its negative impact can be much more damaging, both for the individual and for society.

This connotation can also be understood in the context of Islamic values that prioritize common interests. Liquor, while in some situations can provide pleasure, can damage the social and spiritual order. From Barthes' point of view, this connotation creates a myth about *khomr*, which in a social context is considered a symbol of corruption, confusion, and instability. This myth is used to reinforce social norms in Islam that prioritize balance, health, and self-purity.

The connotation of Khomr in QS. An-Nisa [4]: 43

Another verse that discusses *khomr* is QS—An-Nisa [4]: 43, which forbids Muslims from performing prayers while drunk.³⁶ In a denotative sense, this verse sets out practical rules for worship, namely prohibiting prayer when a person is drunk. According to al-Rāzī, *khamar* is a heinous act because it has a substantial adverse impact, especially on human intellect and behavior. Khamar causes

³⁰ Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, translated by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 87.

³¹ Thias Arisiana, *Insight of the Qur'an About Khamr According to Al-Qurthubi in Tafsir Al-Jami' Li Abkam Al-Qur'an* in Fikri: Journal of Religious, Social and Cultural Studies Volume 4, Number 2, December 2019 p. 256

³² Imam al Qurtubi " *Tafsir Al-Qurthubi* " (Jakarta, Pustaka Azzam, 2008) 116

³³ Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Qur'anic Exegesis: Cognitive and Linguistic Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2010), 83.

³⁴ Al Zuhaili " *Tafsir al Munir* " (Damascus, dar al fikr, 2007) Volume p. 273

³⁵ Al-Qur'an, QS. An-Nisa [4]: 43.

a loss of mind so that a person is overcome by lust and anger, which then triggers enmity, quarrels, and crime. He also explained that although at first drinking khamar seemed to create a familiar atmosphere, the relationship easily turned into conflict due to loss of self-control. In addition to damaging morals and social relationships, khamar also damages worship because it makes a person unable to remember Allah and dhikr. In fact, the smell of his feelings alone can disturb solemnity. Thus, al-Rāzī asserts that the harm of khamar far outweighs the benefits. However, the connotative meaning of this verse contains a more profound message about self-control and spiritual awareness. Barthes would say that the connotation of *khomr* here is symbolic of losing control over oneself and of failing to maintain a pure relationship with God. In this case, *khomr* is not only a physical symbol of alcohol, but also a sign that depicts a threat to the sanctity of worship and spiritual communication with God.

This connotation shows that the prohibition of *khomr* is more than just a social or health rule; it is also related to the spiritual essence and purity of the practice of worship. Barthes would suggest that this verse describes an Islamic ideology that prioritizes purity and clarity of thought and invites people to maintain a good relationship with Allah, free from destructive external factors.

The connotation of Khomr in QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 90-91

In a more explicit verse, QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 90-91, *khomr* is expressly mentioned as “rijsun” (dirty deeds) and “deeds of satan.”³⁶ Denotatively, this verse explains that *khomr* is something haram and must be avoided. According to al-Rāzī, khamar is a heinous act because it has a substantial adverse impact, especially on human intellect and behavior. Khamar causes a loss of mind so that a person is overcome by lust and anger, which then triggers enmity, quarrels, and crime. He also explained that although at first drinking khamar seemed to create a familiar atmosphere, the relationship easily turned into conflict due to loss of self-control. In addition to damaging morals and social relationships, khamar also damages worship because it makes a person unable to remember Allah and dhikr. In fact, the smell of his feelings alone can disturb solemnity. Thus, al-Rāzī asserts that the harm of khamar far outweighs the benefits.³⁷ However, the connotative meaning of this verse leads to a deeper idea of the moral and social damage caused by *khomr*. In Barthes's view, the use of the terms “rijsun” and “satan” here serves to create a myth that links *khomr* to everything harmful and destructive, both physically and spiritually. This myth contains the ideological message that *khomr* is not only dangerous because of its physical impact, but also because of its role in undermining spiritual relationships with God and undermining social peace. Connotatively, the *khomr* in this verse is more than just an alcoholic beverage. It became a symbol of misdeeds that aroused addiction and corruption in man. Thus, the prohibition of *khomr* not only leads to the avoidance of alcohol consumption but also invites the ummah to refrain from all forms of acts that can damage the harmony of life.

The connotative implications of the values contained in the Qur'anic verses about khomr

Roland Barthes' semiotics of connotation can offer a new perspective on the values inherent in the Qur'anic verses on khomr (liquor). The Qur'an discusses khomr in several verses, adopting a gradual approach that conveys a profound moral and spiritual message. One of the verses about khomr is QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 219, which states that although there are benefits in khomr, the harm is much greater.³⁸ This verse has a clear denotative meaning: it explains the benefits and harms of liquor. However, connotatively, this verse teaches the principle of caution and avoidance of harmful things, both individually and socially. This message embodies ethical values that foster self-control and social responsibility.

³⁶ Al-Qur'an, QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 90-91.

³⁷ Muhamad fakhr al din Al razi "Tafsir Al Kabir Mafajibul Ghaib" (Beirut, Dar al Fikr, 1990) juz 12 p. 84-85

³⁸ Al-Qur'an, QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 219.

In QS. An-Nisa [4]: 43, khomr is mentioned in the context of the prohibition on praying while drunk.³⁹ Denotatively, this verse establishes specific rules to maintain the sanctity of worship. However, connotatively, this verse implies the importance of full awareness in man's relationship with Allah (hablum minallah). This connotative value shows how Islam encourages its people to maintain a clear mind and a sense of spiritual closeness.

The peak is found in QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 90-91, where khomr is referred to as “rijsun” (impure deeds) and is strictly prohibited.⁴⁰ Denotatively, this verse prohibits the consumption of liquor. Connotatively, this prohibition carries a broader moral message: the avoidance of all actions that can disturb the harmony of society and draw people closer to sinful acts. The ban on khomr also reflects the values of sharia maqashid, such as maintaining reason (*hifz al-'aql*) and heredity (*hifz al-nasl*).⁴¹

Barthes's semiotic approach to connotative meaning can help unearth implicit values relevant to the context of modern life. For example, the ban on khomr can be linked to mental and physical health issues, as well as its impact on social stability.⁴² In a complex society, the Qur'an's connotative message teaches the importance of avoiding substances that can harm individuals and communities. Another connotative value that can be drawn from the verses about khomr is the concept of self-control and sacrifice for the common good. In a social context, the prohibition of khomr can be understood as an attempt to create a society that is free from conflict, violence, or destructive behavior that is often associated with alcohol consumption.⁴³ Thus, the verses on khomr not only speak of liquor literally but also convey a universal message of ethics, responsibility, and social harmony.

This connotative approach makes an essential contribution to the study of interpretation, as it helps to bridge the textual meaning of the Qur'an with the ever-evolving socio-cultural context. By understanding its connotative message, the Qur'anic verses on khomr can be applied in various contemporary issues, such as the abuse of addictive substances, public health policies, and the formation of a more ethical society.

Conclusion

The connotative meaning from a semiotic perspective, as Roland Barthes provides a rich approach to understanding the Qur'anic verses on *khomr* (liquor). This approach shows that the signs in the Qur'an not only contain literal (*denotative*) meanings but also have additional layers of meaning (connotative) relevant to the social, cultural, and moral context. In his semiotic analysis, Barthes introduced the concept of two levels of meaning: denotation, the direct meaning, and connotation, meaning influenced by a particular context. The Qur'an's verses on *khomr*, such as QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 219, QS. An-Nisa [4]: 43, and QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 90-91, not only establishes rules and prohibitions, but also contains a broader moral message. The messages include the importance of self-control, maintaining spiritual awareness, and creating social harmony. The connotative approach to the verses on *khomr* underscores the relevance of the Qur'an's message in modern life. The prohibition of *khomr* is not only a legal command, but also a reflection of the values of sharia maqashid, such as maintaining reason (*hifz al-'aql*) and creating an ethical and healthy society. By understanding this layer of connotative meaning, the Qur'anic verses about *khomr* can be interpreted as a guide to dealing with

³⁹ Al-Qur'an, QS. An-Nisa [4]: 43.

⁴⁰ Al-Qur'an, QS. Al-Maidah [5]: 90-91.

⁴¹ Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (London: IIIT, 2008), 45.

⁴² Hussein Abdul-Raof, *Qur'anic Exegesis: Cognitive and Linguistic Analysis* (London: Routledge, 2010), 83.

⁴³ Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*, trans. Kamal El-Helbawy et al. (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1994), 53.

various social challenges, including the abuse of addictive substances and the social conflicts they cause. Overall, the connotative meaning, as understood through Barthes's semiotic theory, broadens the horizon for understanding the moral and spiritual dimensions of the Qur'anic text. By combining semiotic analysis and Islamic values, this study not only enriches the method of interpretation but also affirms the relevance of the Qur'an in answering the problems of human life in various eras.

Bibliography

Al-Qur'an al-Karim.

Abdullah, AS. 2018. "A Study of the Book of Tafsir *Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* Karya Al-Qurtubi." *Al-Ijaz: Journal of Islamic Revelation* 4.

Abdullah, M. Amin. 1996. *Islamic Studies: Normativity or Historicity?* Yogyakarta: Student Library.

Abdul-Raof, Hussein. 2010. *Qur'anic Exegesis: Cognitive and Linguistic Analysis*. London: Routledge.

Abdul-Raof, Hussein. 2012. *Theological Approaches to Qur'anic Exegesis*. New York: Routledge.

Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf. 1994. *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam*. Translated by Kamal El-Helbawy et al. Indianapolis: American Trust Publications.

Al-Qurtubi. 2008. *Tafsir al-Qurtubi (Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān)*. Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam.

Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. 1990. *Tafsir al-Kabir (Mafātiḥ al-Ghaib)*. Beirut: Dar al-Fikr.

Al-Zuhaili, Wahbah. 2007. *Tafsir al-Munir*. Damascus: Dar al-Fikr.

Arisiana, Thias. 2019. "The Qur'anic Insight on Khamr According to the Qurtubi in Tafsir *Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*." *Fikri: Journal of Religious, Social and Cultural Studies* 4.

Auda, Jasser. 2008. *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*. London: IIIT.

Barthes, Roland. 1967. *Elements of Semiology*. Translated by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith. London: Jonathan Cape.

Barthes, Roland. 1972. *Mythologies*. Translated by Annette Lavers. New York: Hill and Wang.

Barthes, Roland. 1974. *S/Z*. Translated by Richard Miller. New York: Hill and Wang.

Barthes, Roland. 1977. "The Death of the Author." In *Image-Music-Text*, edited and translated by Stephen Heath. London: Fontana Press.

Culler, Jonathan. 2002. *Barthes: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

De Saussure, Ferdinand. 1966. *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by Wade Baskin. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hamidah. 2016. "Roland Barthes's Semiotic Analysis of the Jilbab Phenomenon." *Studia Insania*.

Jahar, Asep Saepudin. 2022. "Semiotic Approach in the Study of Qur'an Interpretation." *Ushuluddin Journal* 29.

Jamaludin, Muhammad. 2021. "Mythology in QS. Al-Kafirun: Roland Barthes's Semiotic Perspective." *JALSAH: The Journal of al-Qur'an and as-Sunnah Studies*.

Moriarty, Michael. 1991. *Roland Barthes*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Nasirin, Choiron. 2022. "Semiotic Analysis of the Concept of Violence in *The Raid 2: Primary*." *Journal of Discourse and Media Research*.

Promise, Admiral Tatas. 2022. "The Representation of Social Class in *the Film of Gundala* (Roland Barthes's Semiotic Analysis)." *Audiences*.

Rahman, Fazlur. 1982. *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Shihab, M. Quraish. 1994. *Grounding the Qur'an: The Function and Role of Revelation in People's Lives*. Bandung: Mizan.

Shihab, Muhammad Quraish. 2004. *Tafsir Al-Misbah: Message, Effect and Compatibility of the Qur'an*. Vol. 2. Jakarta: Lentera Hati.

Weisarkurnai, Bagus Fahmi. 2017. "The Representation of Moral Messages in the *Film Rudy Habibie* by Hanung Bramantyo (Semiotic Analysis of Roland Barthes)." *WE're GOING to THINK*.

Wibisono, Panji. 2021. "Roland Barthes' Semiotic Analysis in *the Film of Bintang Ketjil*." *Dynamics of Communication Sciences*.