

The Icons in the Story of *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow] A Semiotic Study

Abdulhameed Saif Alhusami

Arabic Department
King Khalid University, Saudi Arabia

Mohammed Abdullah A. Hizabr Alhusami

English Department
Najran University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

This paper aims to present a semiotic reading of the Icon in the story of *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow] by the Yemeni short story writer and novelist Mohammed Al-Gharbi Imran. This paper is grounded in the critical semiotic approach to seeks to reveal the meaning of the Icons represented in the story by tracing the process of signification and the dynamics of importance within the story discourse. The study explores the implications of the Icons to produce general significance and to embody them in the context of the story discourse where its elements intermingle to reveal close and far meanings. The story of *Al-Zill Al-Ari* revolves around the character Alwan, who strives for a better life for himself. Still, he faces several obstacles that prevented him from fulfilling his aspirations. The story has an implicit criticism of the situation in Yemen. The writer implicitly criticizes the economic, social, and political life in Yemen. The study aims to highlight the importance of the Icon and the semiotic analysis of the literary texts.

Keywords: Icon, index, semiotics, sign, symbol, the naked shadow

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Introduction

This study deals with the Icons in the story of *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow] by Mohammed Al-Gharbi Imran, the contemporary Yemeni novelists, short story writer, and politician. His most important novels are *Mushaf Ahmar* (2010), *Zulmat Yaeel* (2012) [Darkness of Yaeel], *Attariq Ila Makka* (2013), [The Way to Mecca] *Athaer* (2014) [The Revolutionary], and *Musamarat Almota* (2016) [Staying up with the dead]. He wrote five collections of short stories: *Al-Sharashif* (1997) [The Sheets], *Al-Zill Al-Ari* (1998) [The Naked Shadow], *Hareem Azzakom Allah* (2001) [Harem, *Azzakom Allah*] The phrase [*Azzakom Allah*] is used in Yemeni culture as a cynical euphemism for women], *Khitan Bilqis* (2002) [Bilqis Circumcision], *Manarah Sawda* (2004) [Black Minaret]. His novel *Zulmat Yaeel* [Darkness of Yaeel] won the Al-Tayeb Salih Award for Creative Writing in 2012.

The story *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow] revolves around the character of Alwan, a cultured person who strives for self-fulfillment in the society. Still, he faces many obstacles that prevent his dreams from coming true. The setting of the story is of a particular significance. The story is set in Sana'a, the capital of Yemen, in 1994, at midday. It alludes to the suffering of Yemeni people represented by Alwan. The story does not present a detailed view of the political and cultural landscape, but it depicts the suffering of the Yemeni citizens in general, and the cultured in particular. As the years go by, the situation gets worse with no horizon of hope.

This study presents a semiotic reading of *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow] and traces the most prominent Icons in the story. It links the Icons with the events within the context of the story to reveal close and far meanings. The writer weaves his story around several pre-eminent Icons to create a general sense of the text.

This study is significant because it investigates, explains, and analyzes a unique Yemeni short story that employs many Icons used in forming the story discourse and in applying the critical semiotic.

The study aims to apply the semiotic approach to *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow] by analyzing the Icons; explore the techniques through which the writer contrives the story to convey meaning. Furthermore, it aims to introduce Yemeni literature and Yemeni writers to non-Arab writers and readers to create more cultural interaction and cross-fertilization of cultures, also known as acculturation and hybridity.

The research questions in this study are: What are the most prominent semiotic Icons in the story of *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow]? How do the Icons contribute to forming the meaning of the narrative text? How do the Icons support each other within the story discourse to produce general semiotic sense.

Semiotics is a practical approach that traces and explores the Icons represented in this story. These Icons shape the aesthetics of text and the interaction mechanisms of the narrative elements of the text.

Literature Review

There are a plethora of books about semiotics in both Arabic and English languages. But the published studies that deal with the semiotics of literary texts, particularly the semiotic analysis of the Icons are very few.

Allag (2009) conducted a study on the semiotic analysis of the poetic discourse. He dealt with the analysis of some poetic texts by a group of contemporary Arab critic in the light of the semiotic approach. Yakin and Totu (2014) conducted a comparative study between semiotics of Peirce, and semiology of Saussure. Beltagy (2017) conducted a semiotic study about the contemporary Saudi short story. In her research, she applied the semiotic approach to many of the Saudi short stories. The study investigated the divergence between semiotics and semiology and the aesthetics of semiotics employed in the Saudi short story.

Radwan and Abbas (2017) conducted a study about Semiotic analysis of literary texts. However, this study is the first one dealing with the short story *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow] from a semiotic perspective.

Concept of Semiotics

“The term semiotics is derived from the Greek word *semeion* denoting sign” (Martin & Ringham, 2000, p. 1). John Locke, a British philosopher coined this term in the 17th century. As Clarke (1990) noted “the third branch may be called Semeiotike, or the doctrine of signs (Locke, 1690)” (p. 40). “In modern usage the concept semiotics refers to a theory of signification” (Martin & Ringham, 2000. P. 1).

There are two prominent figures formulated the term in two ways: the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure and the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce. Mitcham, (2005) noted that it is Saussure who coined the word semiology to designate this study, whereas Peirce used the term semeiotics. Saussure dealt with the concept “sign” from a linguistic perspective. Peirce distinguished three types of signs: Icon, index, and symbol. However, some critics use terms “semiotics” and “semiology” interchangeably because both refer to the science of signs. (Hawke, 1977). Semiotics of Peirce has become more common than semiology of Saussure. Literary semiotics is among the most critical modern trends that consider the literary text as a system of signs, and therefore, it focuses on the verbal cues.

Semiotics from Arabic Perspective

Assimiyaaiyah [semiotics] is an Arabic word with a root in the Arabic lexicons as a “sign.” Arabic heritage does not refer to semiotics as a kind of criticism or linguistic study. However, Hazim Al-Qartajanniⁱ and Abu Hamid Al Ghazaliⁱⁱ indicated to the science of the sign system in some of their works. Al-Ghathami (1998) states that Al-Qartajanni alluded to the linguistic communication elements and their relationship to literature such as the addresser, the message, the context, and the addressee. He adds that Al-Qartajainni dealt with these elements some seven hundred years before Jacobson (Al-Ghathami, 1998, p. 17). Al Ghazali alludes to the relationship between the signifier and signifying: “Let us determine the meanings, and say that the object

(thing) has four levels in existence: the first: in its entity, the second: in mind, the third: in speech and sound, the fourth: in writing.” (Al Ghazali, 1993, p. 65-66). The Sufis also used the symbols and signs among themselves. Even Al-Qushairi entitled his interpretation of the Quran *Lataef Alisharat*ⁱⁱⁱ [Subtle Allusion].

Al-Ghazali (1990) claims that the objects are multi-existent. He explains that there are four levels of existence: “the existence of the thing in reality (visible by the naked eye), its existence in the minds, its existence in the utterances, and its existence in writing” (Al-Ghazali, 1990, p. 47). Each existence has its mechanism and its unique nature. According to Begrad (2007), Al-Ghazali by his phrase “the existence of the thing in reality” means the signifier; and by his phrase “its existence in the minds”, Al-Ghazali means the signified.

The word ‘semiology’ entered the modern Arabic criticism through translation and acculturation to the Western culture, particularly, Saussure’s definition: “semiology is a science that studies the life of signs within society” (Saussure, 1915, p. 16)

Icon

Fontanille (2007) noted that Icon according to Peirce is a sign that resembles the object that it signifies:

A sign, or *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, p. 8)

Abd al-Malik Murtad, an Algerian critic, translates the term “Icon” into Arabic as *Momathel*: the object that is similar to the other in the outside world, i.e., the present image corresponding to the absent image (Murtad, 2001)

Bougara (2009) also defines the Icon as every linguistic or non-linguistic index dominated by pictorial characteristics. The Icon occupies an essential place in semiotic studies. According to Murtad (2001), doing research and semiotic analysis on the Icon seems problematic. The researchers analyzed the story, and observed a set of abstract and physical Icons through which the readers can interpret the text critically.

Method

The study is based on the semiotic analysis the text. The researchers applied the semiotic analysis on the Icons in the story.

Semiotic Analysis of the Icon

When looking at the story of *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow], The researchers found that a group of Icons are remarkably present, starting from the title of the story. The researchers elucidate a number of these Icons as follow:

The Shadow Icon

Shadow is the first Icon that appears to the reader. It helps the reader to form a sense of the story discourse, and guides him for further interpretation. The writer mentioned 'shadow' several times in the text. First, he structured the title from the noun 'shadow' and the adjective 'naked': *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow]. Here, the adjective creates a paradox for the recipient; how can a shadow be naked? The signs in the story may contribute to giving answers to this question. The shadow Icon is mentioned in the text when the narrator speaks about Alwan, the hero: "he went on to look for another newsstand to continue reading his page and to get a shadow for himself because the sun of Sana'a exhausted him" (Imran, 1999, p. 29). Alwan just hopes to get a shadow. The story discourse depends on the 'theme of quest.' Alwan is in constant search for some shadow because it is the only remedy for the fatigue caused by the sun of Sana'a. The sun, in the text, is the antithesis of the shadow. There is no shadow without the sun, simultaneously; the sun dissipates the shadow, without the sun's heat, Alwan would not seek a shadow. The repetition of the word 'shadow' in the story several times made it linked with the other Icons: "He passed in front of the *Mared Althawrah* [Revolution Giant], he admired the shadow next to it" (Imran, 1999, p. 29) "he noticed that there is a great shadow," (Imran, 1999, p. 29), "he tried to sneak into the shadow," (Imran, 1999, p. 29), "heading towards *Alqasr* street searching for shadow," (Imran, 1999, p. 31), "looking for a shadow after the huge larvae have liberated him." (Imran, 1999, p. 31) According to Arabic lexicons, 'shadow' is the antithesis of sunlight^{iv}. But in the context of the story, it shifts to other meaning, particularly in the phrase "naked shadow" and also when Alwan continually searches for it: He looks for a shadow next to the newsstand, next to the war museum, in the palace street, and *Attahrir*^v square. The search for a shadow in these places that symbolize the political change brought about by the revolution of September 26, 1962, made the word 'shadow' differs from its linguistic meaning.

The meaning of the word 'shadow' in the story has nothing to do with its linguistic significance. Indeed, there is a profound semantic shift or transfer of the name 'shadow' from the lexical or linguistic connotation to another connotation. That is to say, Alwan's expectations of a shadow next to the *Attahrir* newsstand shape that semantic shift. As he cannot stay in the shadow next to the newsstand, he tries to find another shadow next to *Mared Athawrah* [Revolution Giant]. Such connotations are related to Alwan's hope, his aspiration, and his search for a better social position, where he can move from misery to the shades of knowledge and prosperity and from backwardness to development. He seeks collective shades where man's humanity and the meaning of the homeland would come true. Here, shadow refers to the possible land, not the real one. It is a dream homeland that the intellectuals and the aspirants of a better life aspire to live.

The title of the story, *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow], grants the text actual dimensions and various interpretations that become apparent throughout the storytelling. The relationship between the title and the narrative text reveals the writer's linguistic ability to create innovative text. The title of the story carries a set of political overtones that motivate the readers to search between the lines for the meaning of the 'naked shadow'. The title also alludes to the suffering of the Yemeni citizen and alludes to manifestations of the cultural backwardness and corruption in general.

The semantic scholars stipulate the correspondence between syntactic structure and semantic structure to make the title statement understandable or meaningful. But in this narrative text, the writer transcends that compatibility when he puts the two inconsistent words 'naked' and 'shadow' as a title of the story to create a linguistic displacement. This displacement occurred because he describes the shadow as a naked. This displacement made a gap between the signified 'naked' and the signifier 'shadow'. The word 'shadow' refers to a veil or a cover, whereas 'naked' carries the sense of uncovered, which is contradictory to 'shadow.'

In terms of the semantic dimension of the title, the word 'shadow' represents the hope and aspiration that Alwan seeks to achieve such as getting rid of poverty and achieving self-actualization. On the other hand, the word 'naked' represents a citizen seeks that shadow.

The writer used the word 'shadow' six times in the story, and the word 'naked' once at the end of the story:

He crawled, and the larvae were stuck to him until he reached the edges of the other pavement. Then larvae left him happy and Joyful because he is still alive. He looks at his body, checks his organs, and roams the streets freely naked. He seeks for a shadow after the giant larvae freed from the mulberry leaf (Imran, 1999, p. 31).

The writer commented that these larvae are giant and crawl on the ground devouring everything: clothes, shoes, loaves and even dreams and dignity. The constant search for shadow signifies that Alwan failed to achieve his desired wishes. Alwan could not get rid of poverty and deprivation. The poverty defeated and became homeless, and his dreams faded away due to the painful situation and the cruel position towards him. The events of the story are repetitive, and every event ends disappointingly.

The Sun Icon

The sun Icon comes against the shadow Icon in the short story *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow]. The sun as a noun is mentioned in the text three times: "Alwan stood up with his long stature, and his dark clothes, under the dust of the noon-sun to reads the headlines of newspapers that spread out on the ground, in front of *Attahrir* newsstand" (Imran, 1999, p. 28)

The sun, here, denotes its real sense, which people agreed to call. Alwan stands up in *Attahrir* square, in front of the newsstand, and the sun is hot at noon, and Alwan bears the heat of the sun just to read the news headlines.

The writer uses the Icon of the sun in many statements: "a smile appeared upon his countenance, and he went to looking for another newsstand to read the rest of his page, and to find a shadow; Sana'a sun exhausted him." Here, the Icon of the sun unfolds to the readers. It shifts from its real sense. The sun that exhausted Alwan is Sana'a sun and not the known sun. This displacement of meaning here is in the phrase "Sana'a sun." There is no particular sun for Sana'a!

He passed in front of the *Mared Althawrah* [Revolution Giant], he admired the shadow next to it, he spread out on the ground and felt the cold stones under his shoulders. He felt pleasure, but never enjoyed. He was repulsed by the soldier's guard, he melted more. He

got up after several kicks by the guard to roam the streets, wondering what is the secret of the stability of the sun above his head without the rest of people! He did not wait for the answer (Imran, 1999, p. 29).

In this narrative context, the sun has another meaning that differs from its linguistic meaning. The icon of the sun seems as an icon of oppression; it hits Alwan like the guard soldier, who kicks him too. Therefore, Alwan felt the injustice of the situation. How could an educated person like him find nowhere to rest! And how could a guard soldier (guard of Giant of Revolution) treats him in such a humiliating manner. Alwan wonders why the Sana'a sun is over his head, unlike the rest of the people? He alludes that misery burns like the sun, and it follows him wherever he goes.

Alwan is a name derived from the Arabic word (*ulu*), which means 'height.' In the whole narrative discourse, it refers to a man of high stature. Furthermore, it refers to him as an educated person who wants to keep up with times and to reform the situation. In the context of the story, (Alwan) has a tall stature and wears dark clothes. Though he is a poor person, he is cultured, meditative, persistent, adventurous, rational and has an inquiring mind, he knows no surrender. With such character, he was in a confrontation with an oppressive power represented by sun Icon. According to the narrative discourse of the story, the Icon of the sun denotes a repellent force. It seems an equivalent to the economic situation that burdens Alwan. In other words, it refers to the responsibilities of the status quo. Though the sun represents the positive side of life and bears positive semantics, the narrative discourse shows that there is no intimate relationship between Alwan and the 'sun', furthermore, it represents an antagonist to Alwan. It confronts him and hinders his movement.

The Newsstand Icon

The story events take place in various and open spaces in Sana'a. These places have meanings and cultural significance. The writer employs actual sites, which have semantic aesthetic function to reveal the paradox of situation. Among these sites is a newsstand. It takes its semantic value from two factors: the first is its nature. It is a place that houses newspapers, magazines, and books, and where the people go in the morning to read and buy the newspapers lying on the ground. In other words, it is a small enlightening institution.

Alwan is concerned about going to the newsstand to read despite the heat of the sun over his head. Such a thing deepens the significance of the correlation between this Icon and Alwan. If the sun repels Alwan, the newsstand attracts him. Here, the newsstand has a positive connotation, refers to Alwan's interest in knowledge and reading. It goes beyond the traditional function of selling newspapers and other cultural materials. However, there is no intimate relationship between Alwan and the newsstand, and cannot get what he needs from it because of his poverty.

Everyone comes to pick up his need and leave except Alwan, who feels his pockets. The owner of the newsstand smiles at him; he monitors everything with experienced eyes. When the owner of the newsstand was busy, Alwan got the chance to pick up a newspaper, turns it over, looking for pictures and his favorite page to read. (Imran, 1999, p. 28)

The failure to build a relationship with the owner of the newsstand is due to an economic factor. Alwan is a needy man, and his begging looks do not help him.

He calmed! He buried his face momentarily. The voice of the newsstand owner alerted him. Alwan realized that he had failed to create a relationship with him despite his repeated attempts. He begged him, but when he refused, Alwan put his hand in his pocket (Imran, 1999, p. 28)

Alwan told him: “Today I will buy. He repeated that without raising his head, and he did not take his hand out of his pocket”. However, the phrase “I will buy” refers to a hope that will come true someday. Hope is still a mantra of survival for every broken-hearted person, for the poor and the oppressed. In the narrative discourse, the newsstand denotes knowledge, but in its implied connotation it is a place of the exiled intellectual.

Clock Icon

A clock is a machine for measuring time. It is mentioned five times in the story. The clock Icon begins for the first time in the story when Alwan asks one of the passersby (what time is it?) His question about time indicates that he is a poor man and does not have a watch. His question about the time, in its surface meaning, is just to know the daily time. But in its general connotation, it refers to the time of civilization that the intellect seeks. The passersby, including the person whom Alwan asked do not respond to his question. Their silence indicates that they are not aware of how they live; they don't know their duties to keep up with development. The absence of time for Alwan, and the others, means that they face a profound cultural problematic.

The sentence “He looked at the hanging clock” let the reader imagine the clock (the Icon) as a real one. The context describes it as ‘hanged’ on the wall of the Ministry of Transportation. Here, the Icon is an indicator of time because it is on the wall of the Ministry building. The Ministry of Transportation is responsible for communication with the world and the technological changes in communication and transportation. It is still, unfortunately, a broken-down clock. Alwan wished to know who hanged it there some years ago and broke it down. “He talked to himself: the decision to hang it may have been made by the minister of transportation, Alansi, and I have to help him.” (Imran, 1999, p. 29-30)

The main character's interior monologue makes the reader think of the hero's vision of the clock. He believes that it must work, and he blames Alansi, the Yemeni minister of transportation. The minister may have hanged it. Here, the minister is a representative of the political authority. He puts the reader before a strange paradox: the person in charge of running the clock and moving the wheel of time damaged the clock (metaphorically, hanged it to the dead). But Alwan believes that he must help the minister to return the clock. Thus, the enlightened, intellectual person is responsible for supporting the politician to reform the situations and achieve happiness for the community. Alwan's statement: “and I have to help him” (Imran, 1999, p. 30) establishes the role of the well-balanced intellectual who is committed to life issues and can take initiatives and light a candle instead of cursing the darkness and the oppressive regime. The malfunction of the clock is metaphorical. It refers to the cultural malfunction and civilized retreat in Yemen.

Alwan tries ‘to repair the clock remotely,’ according to the story. It requires the efforts of a specialist; the fictional narrative refers to Alwan, who recollects his readings of various sciences. “He remembered a topic that he had read since years in a magazine interested in Roman science about moving things remotely. He asked himself: why I do not try.” (Imran, 1999, p. 30) The attempt emanating from knowledge is a way of self-achievement in life.

Alwan’s attempt “to repair the clock remotely” (Imran, 1999, p. 30) has an abstract connotation of his attempts to change the society. “The gut of the clock started moving.” “The clock started working.” (Imran, 1999, p. 30) The clock here has an abstract connotation of the community movement and development. He finally manages to fix the clock and expects the praise, but instead the soldiers berated him and dragged to the sidewalk.

There was a strong cry in his inner: the clock has started working, he looked right and left; he finds the street crowded with people around him! Everyone looks at him stupidly. And three soldiers kicked him severely. Then they pull him towards the opposite pavement. One of them shouted at him ‘You have disrupted traffic, and if you do it again, you will regret’ (Imran, 1999, p. 30)

But the cry of the guard soldier versus Alwan’s cry of joy denotes to the ignorance versus knowledge, the oppression versus the intellectuals. Alwan’s cry of joy was due to his achieving knowledge accomplishment while the guard’s cry was to rebuke the intellectual Alwan. The narrative discourse connected the cultural, political, and social meanings of the clock and intertwined them together. The suffering of the problematic hero in this story manifests in his seeking to create a possible world, but he gets trapped in the challenges of the complicated situation.

The Icon of Giant of Revolution

Mared Althawrah [Giant of Revolution] is mentioned once in the story. However, it is among the crucial Icons that form the narrative discourse in the story of *The Naked Shadow*. Giant of Revolution, in the pragmatic context in Yemen, refers to the old tank parking on *Attahrir* square (public park) in Sana’a, Yemen. That old tank became the symbol of the Yemeni revolution because it shelled the palace of the Imam (*Al Bashayer Palace*) on September 26, 1962. It became a monument to the end of Imams’ reign and the victory of the revolution. ‘Giant of Revolution’ is the symbol of the Yemeni revolution, which aims to achieve the welfare of the people and the community development, but in the context of the story this Icon (Giant of Revolution) seems a symbol of oppression!

Alwan passed in front of the *Mared Althawrah* [Giant of Revolution]; he liked the shadow next to it. He spread out on the ground and felt the cold stones under his shoulders. He felt pleasure, but never enjoyed; he was repulsed by the soldier’s guard, he melted more. Alwan rose after several kicks to roam the streets, wondering what is the secret of the stability of the sun above his head unlike the rest of the people! But no answer. (Imran, 1999, p. 29)

Alwan finds a shadow next to the Giant, though it locates in a public park, the authority represented by the soldier's guard kicks him and humiliates him! Alwan leaves that place and keeps seeking a shadow. He flees from the 'sun' and the 'soldier's guard' to the hell of suffering. Thus, his suffering becomes part of his identity.

The Icon of the Military Museum

The military museum is among the Icons of the story that the writer selected. He mentioned it one time in the narrative discourse. The military museum also locates in *Attahrir* area; it contains some of the military tuff that belonged to the army during the Imams' era. But in this narrative text, it an Icon denotes to a collective memory of the community. It is an institution of the Republic, and Alwan hopes to get nothing more than a shadow next to it. He notices an ample shadow at the military museum gate, and attempts to sneak into it. Alwan sat down, and the gatekeeper gave him one Rial, and it seems another insult to him.

The Icon of Larvae

The Icon of larvae in the story is more hurting to the hero than the other Icons. If the previous Icons contribute to the exile of the intellectual, the creeping larvae, in the story, strip him of everything:

He stumbled several times with creatures licking his face. Their shapes scared him. He was surprised by the proliferation of these creatures in every corner of the alleys nearby! Giant larvae crawling on the ground devour everything: clothes, shoes, loaves, everything, even dreams and dignity. Some of these larvae were crawling over his skin and lick his organs and his eyes. He cried for help. He has nothing, but rags cover his body. He crawls, and the larvae croak: exchange, dollar, sterling, exchange (Imran, 1999, p. 31).

These words: "exchange, dollar, sterling, exchange" reveal the identity of larvae; they refer to the beneficiaries, merchants, and the inner circle of the ruler, who mess with people's lives in Yemen, and devour everything like the giant larvae.

The Icon of Al-Qasr [The Palace]

The Icon of Al-Qasr [The palace] is the last one among the Icons of the story. It is the Republic Palace and the sovereign symbol, but it shifts from its linguistic meaning to another semantics. It refers to the political power, the relationship between business and politics, and how politicians are busy with business compared with the poor, the crushed, the intellectual, and the homeless people represented by Alwan, whom the larvae devoured his organs.

He crawled, and the larvae were stuck with him until he reached the edges of the other pavement. And then they left Alwan happy and joyful of his survival to inspect his body and his organs and to roam the streets naked freely (Imran, 1999, p. 31)

The larvae in Al-Qasr street managed to exile Alwan, the symbol of the intellectual and the Icon of challenge, to the other pavement. He tries to extract from this tragic situation the feeling of freedom to move and even naked.

These Icons in general, denote to an intellectual who strives to achieve self-actualization. But, in reality, he can neither change the situation nor get self-achievement. Everything around him enhances his alienation until it became a complex alienation.

Discussion

- The story of *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow] invested a system of Icons to form the semiotic connotations embodied in the story.
- The Icons in the story have their signification at two levels: the particular level of each Icon, and the general level of all Icons and their relationship with the elements of the narration.
- Icons in the story revealed the dialectic between the educated person and the situation, and to what extent the cultured person sought to change the situation.
- Icons contributed to shaping the identity of a problematic intellectual that the political and social authorities hinders him.
- The study highlighted the adequacy of semiotics – Icon model – in analyzing texts and questioning their connotations.

Conclusion

The semiotic study of the Icon in the story of *Al-Zill Al-Ari* [The Naked Shadow] presented a new reading of the text. It showed the ‘naked shadow’ as a symbolic Icon of the situation. Alwan, though he is an educated person, he suffered from poverty, instability, and homelessness. He tried to better his position and to change the society, but the authority stood against him. The story of *Al-Zill Al-Ari* showed the writer’s critical view of the economic, social, and political situation in Yemen.

The importance of the semiotic analysis of the Icons in the story lies in shifting the linguistic meaning of the words ‘shadow,’ ‘sun,’ ‘newsstand,’ ‘clock,’ ‘larvae’ to other connotations. In *Al-Zill Al-Ari*, the writer employed the system of Icons to form the semiotic connotations embodied in the story. Icons in the story revealed the dialectic between the cultured person and the everyday reality and to what extent the cultured person seeks to change the situation to the better.

Notes:

¹Hazim Al-Qartajainni (1211- 1386) is a poet and a writer, born in Cartagena, Spain, in 1211.¹Abu Hamid Al-

²Ghazali (1056 - 1111) is a prominent and influential philosopher, a theologian, jurist, and mystic.

³*Lataif Alesharat* [Subtle Allusions], also translated as [Subtleties of the Allusions], is a line-by-line Arabic Quranic commentary by Sufi scholar Abd al-Karim ibn Hawazin Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri (d.465/1074).

⁴*Lisan Al-Arab* [The Arab Tongue] also translated as [Tongue of The Arabs], a large Arabic dictionary by Ibn Manzur .

⁵*Attahrir* means liberation and the newsstand has this name because it locates in *Attahrir* square (a public park in Sana’a).

About the Authors:**Prof. Abdulhameed Saif Alhusami**

Prof. Abdulhameed Saif Alhusami is a Yemeni writer and critic in Arabic literature. Currently, He works at the King Khaled University, KSA as full professor of modern Arabic literature and criticism. He has been teaching at the College of Humanities, King Khaled University since 2008. He earned his PhD in literature from University of Mosul, Iraq, in 2003. He wrote many books and received several literary awards.

Dr. Mohammed Abdullah Abduldaim Hizabr Alhusami

Mohammed Abdullah Abduldaim Hizabr Alhusami, a Yemeni national, works at Najran University, KSA, as an assistance professor of English literature. He has been teaching at the College of Science & Arts, Sharurah, Najran University since 2012. He earned his PhD in comparative literature from University of Hyderabad, Indi, in 2011. ID ORCI: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3472-8481>

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