

A semiotic analysis of the tolerance boundaries in *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* in *Fuṣṣilat* verse 34

Analisis semiotik tentang batas-batas toleransi dalam Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān dalam surat Fuṣṣilat ayat 34

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Abstract

This research analyzes the limits of tolerance in Sayyid Qutb's *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach. The phenomenon of religious tolerance in this tafsir reflects the need for clear boundaries for Muslims in dealing with differences, especially in the midst of conflict over the meaning of tolerance between Western and Islamic perspectives. Roland Barthes' semiotic method is used to identify and interpret the three levels of meaning in the tafsir, namely denotation, connotation, and myth. The main findings show that the limits of tolerance in Islam include the ability to distinguish between good and evil, limiting tolerance to personal issues without involving *aqidah*, and rejecting evil with good patiently and wisely. The study concludes that the connotative and mythical meanings in this text serve as profound social advice, which not only maintains religious values but also supports social harmony. The contribution of this research is to enrich semiotic studies in Islamic studies, especially in the context of tolerance. This research is relevant for understanding the limits of tolerance that can be applied in a global and multicultural context, as well as strengthening the relationship between semiotic theory and Qur'anic interpretation.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis batas-batas toleransi dalam tafsir *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* karya Sayyid Qutb menggunakan pendekatan semiotika Roland Barthes. Fenomena toleransi agama dalam tafsir ini mencerminkan perlunya batasan yang jelas bagi umat Islam dalam menghadapi perbedaan, khususnya di tengah konflik pemaknaan toleransi antara perspektif Barat dan Islam. Metode semiotika Roland Barthes digunakan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menginterpretasi tiga tingkatan makna dalam tafsir tersebut, yaitu denotasi, konotasi, dan mitos. Temuan utama menunjukkan bahwa batas toleransi dalam Islam mencakup kemampuan membedakan antara kebaikan dan keburukan, membatasi toleransi hanya pada isu personal tanpa melibatkan akidah, serta menolak keburukan dengan kebaikan secara sabar dan bijak. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa makna konotatif dan mitos dalam teks ini berfungsi sebagai nasihat sosial yang mendalam, yang tidak hanya mempertahankan nilai-nilai agama tetapi juga mendukung harmoni sosial. Kontribusi penelitian ini adalah memperkaya kajian semiotika dalam studi keislaman, khususnya dalam konteks toleransi. Penelitian ini relevan untuk memahami batasan toleransi yang dapat diterapkan dalam konteks global dan multikultural, sekaligus memperkuat hubungan antara teori semiotika dan tafsir Al-Qur'an.

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A. Introduction

The issue of religious tolerance remains a major concern in Islamic and Western discourse, often giving rise to conflicting interpretations and socio-political tensions. In Western secular frameworks, tolerance is often understood as radical pluralism rooted in individual freedom, secular ethics, and the separation of religion from public life. In contrast, the Islamic conceptualization of tolerance is embedded in religious doctrine, which often balances compassion with moral boundaries. One of the most influential figures to offer a nuanced perspective on this is Sayyid Qutb, particularly in his tafsir *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*. Written during a period of intense political and ideological upheaval in the Muslim world, Qutb's interpretations reflect not only theological stances, but also socio-political commentaries shaped by his confrontation with Western liberalism and secularism during his stay in the United States and later imprisonment under the Nasser regime. Therefore, understanding how Qutb conceptualized tolerance is crucial, especially in today's polarized discourse on Islam and pluralism (Affan, 2021; Hasanah & Sukmawan, 2021; Irwanti et al., 2023; Losano, 2012).

While previous studies on *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* have explored Qutb's political theology, revolutionary rhetoric, and moral absolutism, few have addressed the semiotic dimension of his (Husain, 2017; Ihsan & Drajat, 2024; Leha & Mu'iz, 2020; Sani, 1970). Moreover, semiosis in interpretation—the way meaning is constructed through signs, metaphors, and myths—remains an area that has not been explored much, especially using Roland Barthes' three-stage model (denotation, connotation, myth). Existing research applying Barthes has largely focused on advertising, film, and literature (Amalia et al., 2022; Bahri, 2020; Fiske, 2007; Salim, 2023; Widhiarto, 2024), but applications to Islamic interpretation are scarce. Although some Islamic scholars have adopted semiotics for Qur'anic hermeneutics (Jadou & Ghabra, 2021), few have used Barthes' framework to systematically map the mythification of values such as tolerance in a tafsir text. This study responds to this gap by examining how signs related to tolerance are constructed and mythologized in *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, which offers a new meeting point between semiotics and Quranic interpretation.

This research specifically aims to identify and analyze the denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings of tolerance in *Surah Fuṣṣilat* verse 34 as interpreted by Sayyid Qutb. The aim is not only to understand the rhetorical and symbolic functions of tolerance in his tafsir, but also to reveal the ideological limits Qutb places on what can and cannot be tolerated. As such, this study contributes conceptually by positioning tafsir as a discursive site of meaning-making that reflects social struggle and identity formation.

Methodologically, this study shows the application of Roland Barthes' semiotics in the field of Quranic studies, expanding the methodological horizons of Islamic scholarship and literature. The findings are expected to clarify how Qutb redefines tolerance as a moral act constrained by *aqidah*, and how this reinterpretation is encoded in a layered process of signification that resonates with the broader Arab-Islamic socio-political narrative.

B. Method

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with Roland Barthes' semiotic analysis framework, which is considered relevant to reveal the layers of meaning in religious texts. The object of research is the text of Sayyid Qutb's *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, especially in *Surah Fuṣṣilat* verse 34, which discusses the concept of tolerance (*al-tasāmuḥ*, *al-samāḥah*) in inter-religious and intra-religious relations.

The unit of analysis in this research is in the form of interpretation quotations that explicitly or implicitly contain the concept of tolerance. The data was collected by purposive sampling based on three criteria: (1) it contained keywords or terms related to tolerance, (2) it had thematic relevance to social relations and religiosity, and (3) it contained rhetorical or symbolic richness that

could be semiotically deconstructed. The analyzed verse, such as *Surah al-Fuṣṣilat* [41]:34, is taken from the Arabic edition of the commentary *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* published by Dār al-Shurūq (2004).

Data were obtained through documentation studies and close reading, then analyzed using Barthes' three-level model of semiotic meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. Denotative meaning identifies the literal meaning of a term or phrase in a tafsir text. Connotative meaning explores the cultural, emotional, or normative associations attached to the expressions. Mythological meaning traces how Sayyid Qutb constructs ideological narratives or moral archetypes (e.g. the figure of the "tolerant Muslim" vs. the "deviant") through an iterative process of signification.

To ensure the validity of the interpretation, the analysis is supported by triangulation with classical Arabic dictionaries (such as al-Munawwir), a review of Sayyid Qutb's other works, and secondary studies on tolerance in Islam. With this design, this research is structured so that its replicability and methodology can be accounted for, especially for future researchers who want to study Qur'anic interpretation with a semiotic approach.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Tolerance of Sayyid Qutb's Interpretation (Denotation)

In the interpretation of Al-Qur'an *Surah Fuṣṣilat* verse 34, Sayyid Qutub mentions the word *al-samāhah*. The following is an explanation of the denotation and connotation meaning of *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān Surat Fuṣṣilat* verse 34. The way to determine the denotation meaning used by researchers in analyzing Tafsir Al-Qur'an *Surat Fuṣṣilat* verse 34 in Tafsir *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Qutb uses Roland Barthes' theory by referring to the understanding of the meaning contained in the Munawwir dictionary. Roland Bartes also explained that there are three ways the sign works at the connotation stage. Namely, the signification of signs, interactions that occur when signs meet feelings or emotions, and values in their culture (Fiske, 2007).

وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ (فصلت: 34)

The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal (Al-Hilali & Khan, 1984).

Data 1

وليس له أن يرد بالسيئة، فإن الحسنه لا يستوي أثرها - كما لا تستوي قيمتها - مع السيئة والصبر والتسامح ،
والاستعلاء على رغبة النفس في مقابلة الشر بالشر ، يرد النفوس الجاحمة إلى الهدوء والثقة ، فتتقلب من الخصومة
إلى الولاء، ومن الجماح إلى اللين
(Qutb, 2004)

Denotation: It is not for him to repay with evil, for indeed it is not the same as the effect of a good - as it is not the same in value - with evil, patience and tolerance, and pride in the soul's desire to meet evil with evil, and he drives the unruly souls to obedience and trust, so will change from enmity to loyalty, and from harshness to gentleness, namely:

Connotation: in the initial explanation of the verse, Sayyid Qutb mentions the word tolerance, using the word التسامح the equation is التساهل meaning is ease (Munawwir, 1997). In Sayyid Qutb's view, at the beginning of the explanation of tolerance there is an emphasis on the difference between good and bad. It shows that one must really distinguish between good and bad deeds

before committing acts of tolerance. The values contained in good and bad are very different. Good deeds are deeds that have been taught in religion, and bad deeds are deeds that are prohibited by religion. Tolerance and patience are forms of goodness, while intolerance and anger are forms of badness. Distinguishing between good and bad deeds is one of the boundaries of Islamic tolerance.

ادفع بالتي هي أحسن، فإذا الذي بينك وبينه عداوة كأنه ولي حميم

Repel (the evil) with one which is better (i.e. Allah orders the faithful believers to be patient at the time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them badly) then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend (AI-Hilali & Khan, 1984).

Repel (evil) with better behavior so that the person with whom you have enmity will immediately become like a very loyal friend.

Sayyid Qutb explains that rejecting evil with better behavior is one of the attitudes of tolerance. This is shown by the explanation of the verse by mentioning the word *al samāhah* four times, as follows.

Data 2

The first word *al samāhah*:

غير أن تلك السماحة تحتاج إلى قلب كبير يعطف ويسمح وهو قادر على الإساءة والرد.

Denotation: But tolerance requires a big heart, pity, and permission, and she is capable of destruction and rejection.

Connotation: Sayyid Qutb uses the word السماحة the equation is سعة الصدر the meaning is open-mindedness (Munawwir, 1997). In the explanation of tolerance above, it states that there are four things that must be owned by someone who wants to carry out a tolerance behavior, namely:

- (a) قلب كبير, It means a big heart, or a big chest, with a sincere heart that can forgive and accept the differences that are in front of us.
- (b) يعطف, When there is a difference, let's make sympathy a trait to love each other as fellow creatures of Allah SWT.
- (c) يسمح, This is making allowances for others to carry out actions that differ from our views.
- (d) قادر على الإساءة والرد, an ability that must be possessed by someone who will perform a tolerance.

Retrieved from الإساءة is the *maṣḍar* form of أَسَاء, It means to make bad, which is the opposite of the word أَحْسَن means to improve. While the word الرد comes from the word رَدَّ which means rejecting (Munawwir, 1997). That is meant by ability here is that the ability to blame and reject is not something that one simply does. This ability must be based on an understanding of something that really should not be violated by someone. As Sayyid Qutb explained at the beginning of the interpretation of Surah *Fuṣṣilat* verse 34, that one must really be able to distinguish between good deeds and bad deeds. Because both actions are very different from one another.

Data 3

The second word *al samāhah*:

وهذه القدرة ضرورية لتؤتي السماحة أثرها. حتى لا يصور الإحسان في نفس المسيء ضعفاً. ولئن أحس أنه ضعف لم يحترمه، ولم يكن للحسنة أثرها إطلاقاً.

Denotation: And this ability is essential for tolerance to have its effect. Until the kindness does not portray weakness in the one who does the wrong. And if the person feels that it is a weakness, then he will not respect it, and not make its influence definitively for his good.

Connotation: هذه القدرة ضرورية, the word ضرورية has the meaning اللازم means very important/unavoidable/imperative (Munawwir, 1997). Sayyid Qutb strongly emphasizes the importance of the power to blame and reject something that violates Islamic principles. The reason Sayyid Qutb emphasizes the importance of the ability to blame and reject, so that the act of tolerance that has been implemented or given by a Muslim, can have an influence on others. Because if someone who behaves tolerance does not have the power to blame and reject, then it will be a weakness for him, and the attitude of tolerance given will not be appreciated and does not even have any influence on the surrounding environment.

Table 1. The First Tolerance Boundaries of the Meaning of the Words *al tasāmuh* and *al samāhah*

Meaning/ Text	ولا تستوي الحسنة ولا السيئة (التسامح)	ادفع بالتي هي أحسن، فإذا الذي بينك وبينه عداوة كأنه ولي حميم (السماحة)
Denotation	التساهل (convenience)	سعة الصدر (roomy)
Connotation	In providing tolerance (ease) for others, one must really distinguish between good deeds and bad deeds. So that the tolerance given can have an effect on the person being tolerated.	sincerity can forgive and accept differences make sympathy a trait to love others make allowances the power to blame and reject.

From Table 1, it can be seen that the words *al tasāmuh* and *al samāhah* have different meanings, although both can mean tolerance. The word *al tasāmuh* means tolerance in the form of providing convenience, while the word *al samāhah* means tolerance in the form of spaciousness. From the two fragments of Surah *Fuṣṣilat* verse 34, it can be seen that there are two boundaries to tolerance in Islam, namely: First, someone who will tolerate must really be able to distinguish between good and bad deeds; second, someone who has the nature of tolerance must have the ability to blame and reject bad deeds that are not in accordance with religious teachings.

Data 4

The third word *al samāhah*:

وهذه السماحة كذلك قاصرة على حالات الإساءة الشخصية. لا العدوان على العقيدة وفتنة المؤمنين عنها. فأما في هذا فهو الدفع والمقاومة بكل صورة من صورها. أو الصبر حتى يقضي الله أمراً كان مفعولاً

Denotation: And this tolerance is also limited to matters of personal damage. There is no hostility to the believer's beliefs and slander from him. And if in this case, then he resists and fights back from every form of violence. Or be patient until Allah decides a case for what they have done.

Connotation: acts of tolerance are limited to cases relating to personal violence. In the *al Munawwir* dictionary the word, and لا عدوان على means there is no way for.... While the word فتنة has various meanings in the dictionary *al Munawwir* namely misguidance, disbelief, beauty, temptation, disgrace, madness, torment, disease, wealth and children, and riot (Munawwir, 1997). When the word فتنة juxtaposed with the word المؤمنين and consider the word العقيدة which is before عطف و *wawu* which means and, so in this context, the word فتنة المؤمنين is interpreted as the disbelief of believers. Thus, the explanation of the boundaries of what

can be tolerated is only related to cases of personal violence that have nothing to do with injustice against the beliefs and disbelief of Muslims.

Connotation: فأمّا في هذا فهو الدفع والمقاومة بكل صورة من صورها . أو الصبر حتى يقضي الله أمراً كان مفعولاً: In the case of injustice against Muslim beliefs and kufr, there are three things that must be done, namely:

- (a) الدفع , meaningful الرد i.e. rejection. The meaning of rejection here is the rejection of all forms of acts of injustice related to the beliefs and kufr of Muslims. There are several ways to do rejection which will be explained in the fourth explanation of *al samāhah*.
- (b) المقاومة , which means resistance, is a form of *maṣḍar* from *fi'il* قاوم which means fight. The connotational meaning of resistance here does not mean fighting back with violence.
- (c) الصبر , which means patience, is the *maṣḍar* form of صبر. Patience is the main key to achieving tolerance. The explanation of patience has been explained in the Qur'an letter *al-Ma'ārij* verse 5 and letter Al-Baqarah verse 153 which reads:

فاصبر صبراً جميلاً [المعارج: 5].

The meaning: So be patient with good patience.

The beautiful patience is the reassuring patience that is not accompanied by dissatisfaction, restlessness, or doubt about the sincerity of the promise, the patience of one who is certain of the outcome and content with Allah's destiny.

Table 2. The Second Tolerance Boundary

Meaning/Text	وهذه السّماحة كذلك قاصرة على حالات الإساءة الشخصية. لا العدوان على العقيدة وفتنة المؤمنين عنها
Denotation	And this tolerance is also limited to matters of personal damage. There is no hostility towards the believer's beliefs and slander from him.
Connotation	The boundaries of what can be tolerated are actions related to cases of personal violence that have nothing to do with injustice against the beliefs and kufr of Muslims.

Table 2 shows that the second boundary of tolerance is that the actions that can be tolerated are actions related to personal violence that are not related to tyranny against the beliefs and kufr of Muslims. From table 2, we can know that not all actions that differ from our opinions can be tolerated. From Sayyid Qutb's explanation, it is confirmed that acts related to injustice against the beliefs and disbelief of the ummah must be rejected in a good way.

Data 5

The fourth word *al samāhah*:

وهذه الدرجة، درجة دفع السيئة بالحسنة، والسّماحة التي تستعلي على دفعات الغيظ والغضب، والتوازن الذي يعرف متى تكون السّماحة ومتى يكون الدفع بالحسنى. درجة عظيمة لا يلقاها كل إنسان. فهي في حاجة إلى الصبر. وهي كذلك حظ موهوب يتفضل به الله على عباده الذين يحاولون فيستحقون

Denotation: It is the degree of resisting evil with good, the tolerance that overcomes the impulses of anger and rage, and the balance that knows when to be tolerant and when to resist with kindness. This is a great degree that not every human being possesses. It requires patience. It is also a fortune that Allah bestows on His servants who strive and deserve it.

Connotation: والسماحة التي تستعلي على دفعات الغيظ والغضب ، والتوازن الذي يعرف متى تكون السماحة ومتى يكون الدفع بالحسنى the word استعلي - يستعلي is غلب which means defeat (Munawwir, 1997). Sayyid Qutb explains that rejecting ugliness with goodness is a degree, which includes two classes, namely:

- (a) الغيظ والغضب The first group is among the people who can defeat everything that can trigger the occurrence of الغيظ or الغضب which means the same thing, namely anger (Munawwir, 1997). However, in the explanation Sayyid Qutb uses two words that have the same meaning, namely anger. The difficulty in holding something that causes anger, so Sayyid Qutb repeats the word anger, in order to be the attention of someone who reads the explanation.
- (b) التوازن The second group is people who have a balanced nature to determine when someone is tolerant and when to refuse with good deeds.

درجة عظيمة لا يلقاها كل إنسان. فهي في حاجة إلى الصبر. وهي كذلك حظ موهوب يتفضل به الله على عباده الذين يحاولون فيستحقون

Connotation: This noble degree is intended for someone who can reject something with goodness. Sayyid Qutb explains that to be able to reject a matter with goodness, requires patience.

The explanation of how to gain patience is found in the Qur'an *Surah Al-Baqarah* verse 153.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ، إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ. (البقرة:153)

The meaning: O you who believe, seek help (from Allah) with patience and prayer. Verily, Allah is with those who are patient.

In the explanation of the verse about patience above, Sayyid Qutub explains that to prepare in the face of various problems of life, namely the death of the martyrs', with the lack of wealth, food, death, fear, hunger, and facing the provisions that occur between people in the world, it requires patience.

The Qur'an mentions a lot of patience, because the amount of effort that must be made requires every believer to always maintain patience in various situations between various tendencies and motives, between various conflicts and obstacles. The following are the various types of patience that every believer must exercise patience with Allah's obedience, patience with disobedience, patience with all types of evil, patience with the slowness of help, patience after going through difficulties, patience with the exposure of falsehood, patience with the lack of help, patience with the crooked soul, the perversion of the heart, the severity of stubbornness, and unfriendly symptoms.

From some of the above patience criteria, it shows that patience is not only holding back from an anger that occurs to someone but also someone must be patient in carrying out various obedience to Allah SWT and be patient in facing various trials of life in the world.

Table 3. Forms of tolerance (rejecting evil with good)

Meaning/ Text	وهذه الدرجة، درجة دفع السيئة بالحسنة، والسماحة التي تستعلي على دفعات الغيظ والغضب، والتوازن الذي يعرف متى تكون السماحة ومتى يكون الدفع بالحسنى. درجة عظيمة لا يلقاها كل إنسان. فهي في حاجة إلى الصبر
Denotation	It is the degree of resisting evil with good, the tolerance that overcomes the impulses of anger and rage, and the balance that knows when to be tolerant and when to resist with kindness. This is a great degree that not every human being possesses. It requires patience.
Connotation	Rejecting the ugliness associated with injustice against the beliefs and disbelief of Muslims, with good actions is a noble degree that not everyone can have, because in rejecting it with kindness requires patience, the act of rejecting it can be classified into two groups, namely: The first group is a form of tolerance that can withstand everything that can cause anger and the second group is included in the group of people who have balance, namely people who know when to be tolerant and when to reject injustice with better actions.

Table 3 shows that the third boundary of tolerance is to reject badness with better actions. This third boundary of tolerance, not everyone can do it, because this third boundary of tolerance, really requires an attitude of patience, spaciousness and resilience, to withstand everything that can cause anger.

From the three tables about the boundaries of tolerance, it can be a fortress for someone who will exercise tolerance. So that the tolerance that is implemented can have an influence on the person who is given tolerance.

2. The Impact of the Boundaries of Tolerance in Islam (Myth)

Then myth is a story used by a certain culture to explain about a natural reality. Barthes says that the way myth works is by naturalizing a history (Fiske, 2007). The existence of tolerance boundaries in Islam will have an impact on the social harmony of Muslims and adherents of other beliefs. Distinguishing carefully between actions that are recommended by religion and actions that are prohibited by religion, will be a confirmation for Muslims that a Muslim must obey and obey the commands of Allah and His Messenger. Rejecting the evil that is contrary to religion with a kindness, will be a strength for Muslims, so that the tolerance given is not seen as weakness by the enemy. Patient behavior towards a difference in belief that occurs in the community, will be a shield for a Muslim to be able to coexist with various beliefs as long as it does not interfere with the faith and behavior of Muslims.

One thing that is slightly different between Sayyid Qutb's view of tolerance and the views of Jamrah (2017) and Abu Bakar et al. (2022), namely about the boundaries of tolerance that can be done by a believer. Sayyid Qutb revealed that a matter that can be tolerated is a matter related to the badness of the individual. However, a matter related to the creed and misguidance of Muslims, is a matter that needs to be rejected, in a good way. By rejecting something that is contrary to Islam in a good way, it will eliminate stereotypes about Muslims. As in Udasmoro's research that one form of stereotyping of Muslims is that there are some groups that mix up Muslims and terrorists. She revealed that terrorists are false Muslims, because they do not follow the principles of Islam, which advocates living in harmony, peace, tolerance and opposition to violence (Udasmoro, 2020).

The ability to blame and respond to the evil that violates the creed is a strength for someone who is tolerant, to influence others. So that, the kindness that has been given in return for a bad thing, is not seen as a weakness by the enemy. Thus, the good done by someone can have an effect on others. The boundaries of tolerance mentioned by Sayyid Qutb can avoid groups that view tolerance as an inferior and paternalistic attitude, as mentioned in the book *Tolerantio in Conflic: Post and Present* by Rainer Forst.

Applying Roland Barthes' semiotic framework to uncover the boundaries of tolerance in *Fi Zilāl al-Qur'ān* shows that the denotative meaning in the text reflects the reality and situation at hand. While the connotative meaning provides an emotional dimension and deeper values, such

as hope and advice. Meanwhile, the mythical meaning colors the description of people's views on a phenomenon that develops in society.

Furthermore, the text describes the advice that must be possessed by someone who will carry out an attitude of tolerance, so that the act of tolerance given can have an effect on others and does not become a boomerang for the person who carries out tolerance. This shows that by using Roland Barthes' semiotic theory, it can not only reveal the explicit and implicit meanings of a text but can also be a confirmation of the myths that have taken place in society. As the myth of the limits of tolerance contained in the book *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* that not all things can be tolerated, someone who is tolerant must have the ability to reject, namely rejecting the evil related to *aqidah* and religion.

The contribution of Roland Barthes' semiotic theory in semiotic studies is the importance of understanding the cultural context and educational background of the author in interpreting signs. As illustrated from this study, in understanding the signs of tolerance conveyed in the interpretation of the Qur'an, it is necessary to understand the cultural context and background of Sayyid Qutb who has studied in America and interacted directly with Western culture. So that it can make a complex interpretation of tolerance sourced from Western experts.

3. Synthesizing Denotative, Connotative, and Mythological Meanings in Sayyid Qutb's Limits of Tolerance

The following is a table synthesizing the relationship between denotation, connotation, and myth for the three boundaries of tolerance according to Sayyid Qutb in *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, table 4 helps to show the layered and ideological construction of meaning in the tafsir text:

Table 4. Synthesis of Denotative, Connotative, and Mythological Meanings in Sayyid Qutb's Boundaries of Tolerance

No.	Tolerance Boundaries	Denotative Meaning	Connotative Meaning	Mythological (Ideological) Meaning
1.	Ability to distinguish between good and bad	The words <i>al-tasāmuḥ</i> and <i>al-samāḥah</i> mean spaciousness, kindness, and gentleness.	Tolerance is an active action that is only possible if one understands the clear moral boundaries between good and bad.	Tolerance symbolizes the moral strength of Islam; only Muslims who understand rights and boundaries can be tolerant, not compromising.
2.	Tolerance is limited to personal matters, not the creed	The phrase <i>qāṣīrah 'ala al-isā'ah al-shakṣiyyah</i> , means that it only applies in the context of personal interference.	Differences in personal views or treatment can be tolerated, but violations of the creed must be rejected.	Tolerance is positioned as a selective mechanism to maintain the integrity of faith; the myth of the ideal Muslim as the guardian of the purity of the faith is established
3.	Resisting evil with good in a patient and balanced manner	The verse <i>idfa' billatī hiya aḥsan</i> means to repay evil with something better.	Patience, spaciousness of spirit, and knowledge of the right time to tolerate or reject are high-level spiritual qualifications.	The act of patience and tolerance is an expression of moral jihad in the Muslim Brotherhood's discourse. — resistance is not always by violence, but through moral firmness

This study found that Sayyid Qutb in the interpretation of *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* compiled the boundaries of tolerance in Islam through the construction of language signs that are not only literal, but also contain cultural and ideological content. Using Roland Barthes' semiotic approach, the analysis is conducted in three layers of meaning: denotation, connotation, and myth. The three main boundaries of tolerance found are: (1) tolerance requires the ability to distinguish between good and evil, (2) tolerance is limited to the personal sphere and does not cover matters of faith, and (3) rejecting evil with good as the highest form of tolerance that requires spiritual patience.

At the denotation level, Qutb uses the terms *al-tasāmuḥ* and *al-samāḥah* to refer to the basic meaning of tolerance. For example, in his interpretation of Surah *Fuṣṣilat*:34, he associates al-

samāḥah with "leniency" and restraint. Literally, these terms mean to make room or ease, as found in classical dictionaries. However, when read at the connotational level, the meaning does not stop at the dictionary sense, but rather indicates an Arab social configuration that upholds honor (*murū'ah*) and moral strength as a condition for being tolerant. In modern Arab culture, tolerance without strength is considered a weakness that can invite humiliation. Therefore, Qutb designed the connotation of tolerance as a spiritual capacity that requires moral superiority, not emotional weakness.

At the mythological level, Qutb narrates tolerance as part of the structure of Islamic discourse on the strength of the ummah and the preservation of creedal identity. He builds a myth of the "ideal Muslim" who is able to repay evil with good, but still has firm boundaries when faith is at stake. Tolerance, in this interpretation, is not absolute, but tied to the grand narrative of the moral defense of Muslims. This is the construction of a myth that aligns gentleness with strength, patience with resistance, and opens up space for the rhetoric of "spiritual resistance" typical of Muslim Brotherhood ideology. Thus, the meaning of the myth in this text is not just an affirmation of values, but an effort to build a collective Muslim identity that is able to dialogue with differences without losing the firmness of principles.

Sayyid Qutb did not write this tafsir in a vacuum. His socio-political experience with the Muslim Brotherhood, the oppression he experienced, as well as his criticism of Western secularism, greatly colored the construction of his tafsir. The idea of the boundaries of tolerance that he offers is not only a moral reflection of Islam, but also an ideological response to the secular modernity project that he considers destructive to spiritual values. Thus, this semiotic approach shows that Qutb's tafsir is not just a religious text, but a symbolic field of resistance that produces authoritative discourses about who should be tolerated and who should be resisted. This is where the relationship between denotation, connotation, and myth come together to form an ideological structure that affirms Muslim identity in the context of value conflict.

Synthesized, this analysis shows that the boundaries of tolerance in Qutb's tafsir are built in layers and cannot be understood only with a literal approach. The three boundaries found - the moral distinction, the private space of faith, and active patience - represent the way interpretations form a contextualized and ideological value horizon. This research reinforces the importance of semiotic readings in contemporary tafsir studies, especially to reveal how religious texts are used not only for spiritual guidance, but also to build narratives of cultural resistance in the clash of civilizations. Therefore, the main contribution of this research lies in its ability to show that tafsir is not just an exposition of the meaning of verses, but also a field of construction of the socio-political identity of the people.

D. Conclusion

This research reveals that Sayyid Qutb's *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* does not only contain normative limits of tolerance, but also builds a layered structure of meaning through the use of language and symbols that reflect ideological construction. The three main boundaries of tolerance found are: first, tolerance requires the ability to distinguish between good and bad strictly; second, tolerance only applies to the personal sphere and does not cover matters of faith; and third, rejecting evil with good is the highest form of tolerance that demands patience and moral strength. These three boundaries, when read through Barthes' semiotic approach, show that Qutb used the tafsir text as a medium of symbolic resistance to the currents of secularism and moral relativism that he considered threatening the integrity of Islam. This interpretation is not just a religious interpretation, but also a cultural political articulation that frames tolerance within the framework of protecting people's identity.

Conceptually, this research contributes to reading tafsir not only as a religious text, but as a field of ideological meaning production formed through a system of signs. Roland Barthes' semiotic approach allows the identification of multiple signification processes (denotative, connotative, mythological) that show how values such as tolerance are articulated in power relations and

collective narratives. Methodologically, this study expands the scope of semiotic studies to the realm of Qur'anic interpretation, which has been predominantly analyzed in a normative or philological frame. With this approach, Qutb's tafsir is read as a rhetorical text that contains the Muslim Brotherhood's distinctive ideological strategy of negotiating between moral nobility, supremacy of faith, and response to foreign cultural hegemony. The contribution opens up opportunities to develop similar methodologies in the study of other modern Islamic texts that contain ideological intentions.

However, this research has limitations on the aspects of historical contextualization and receptivity: how Sayyid Qutb's socio-political experiences influenced his choice of narrative and how his tafsir was received among contemporary Muslims still needs further exploration. Further research can be directed at cross-interpreter comparisons to map the spectrum of construction of the meaning of tolerance in Islam, as well as reception studies in the global Muslim community against ideologically nuanced interpretations. In addition, the integration of the semiotic approach with critical discourse analysis or the sociology of knowledge can enrich the understanding of how religious texts shape and are shaped by the dynamics of power and culture. In an increasingly complex and plural global context, such a study is important to reformulate the boundaries of tolerance based on texts, values and history, while remaining open to dignified dialog.

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