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THE CONVENTIONAL SYMBOL BETWEEN LINGUISTIC CONCEPT AND VISUAL REPRESENTATION

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the role of the conventional sign in visual dramatic discourse, focusing specifically on how it functions within television series. It extends the concept of the linguistic sign beyond the spoken or written word, arguing that the relationship between the signifier and the signified in conventional signs is not based on logic or causality but on accumulated cultural and social conventions. These signs gain meaning through repeated use and shared understanding, acquiring a pragmatic function that exceeds their literal value. In visual media, the sign operates through image, sound, movement, and spatial composition, serving as a crucial tool in constructing meaning. The study builds on linguistic and semiotic research that initially addressed literary and rhetorical texts and later expanded into visual arts such as cinema, theater, painting, architecture, and television. It highlights how signs in these contexts never function in isolation but always in interaction with other visual and auditory elements. This interaction produces complex meanings that are interpreted through the viewer's socio-cultural lens. To illustrate this, the research analyzes selected scenes from the Egyptian television series Layali Al-Helmeya, which offers a dense narrative embedded with conventional signs. The study examines how tools such as lighting, costume, set design, dialogue, and camera movement are used to construct

characters and reflect their social identities. It emphasizes how the expressive methods used in the series align with its social content. Overall, the study bridges theoretical semiotics and applied media analysis, showing how conventional signs shape meaning in visual dramatic discourse.

Keywords: Conventional Sign, Film Discourse, Television Drama, Language

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1. Research Problem

This study provides a comprehensive examination of the operational mechanisms of conventional signs within the visual framework of dramatic discourse, with a focus on both television and cinema. Specifically, it seeks to explore the complex nature of the relationship that governs how these signs function semantically within the multifaceted and interactive expressive systems embedded in visual storytelling.

The significance of this research lies in its role as a continuation and expansion of previous scholarly efforts in the fields of linguistics and the arts. Previous studies have aimed to extend the application of linguistic theory to dramatic expression. Building on these foundations, the present research offers a valuable contribution by deepening our understanding of the semiotic dimensions involved in visual narrative construction.

In terms of scope, the study is deliberately limited to examining the concept of the conventional sign and the various ways it is actualized in performative expression. Accordingly, its temporal focus is restricted to the year 1987, which corresponds to the production year of the chosen sample. In addition, the spatial framework of the study is defined by the Arab Republic of Egypt, where the selected sample was both produced and culturally contextualized.

2. The Sign in the Linguistic Field

Human beings, in various aspects of their daily lives, consistently strive to express themselves using all available expressive tools in order to communicate effectively and fulfill their needs. Since the earliest stages of human existence, this expression has been intrinsically linked to symbolic instruments—whether gestural or written. Therefore, signs have existed

since the use of smoke as a signal indicating presence in a specific location, providing direction, or serving as a means of communication and alert—such as notifying others of a nearby fire.

This symbolic function continues to hold significance even in the present day. A striking example is found in the Vatican's papal election ceremonies, during which millions around the world wait in anticipation for either white or black smoke to emerge from the Sistine Chapel, signifying the outcome of the conclave. In such contexts, smoke becomes a medium deliberately used to convey targeted information to a specific audience. As Pierre Guiraud (1984, p. 31) states, “a sign is always an indicator of the intention to convey meaning.”

This notion of expression through signs underscores the dynamic relationship between the sender or producer and the receiver or consumer. The success of this relationship depends on a shared communicative intent, which facilitates mutual understanding or agreement on the origin and content of the message. It is important to note that the effectiveness of a sign varies depending on the medium through which it is expressed and the intended meaning behind it. Signs can be classified as either natural, such as clouds, smoke, or spontaneous sounds, or artificial, including traffic signals, directional arrows, product warnings, or safety signage in workplaces.

Nevertheless, it is also worth acknowledging that some signs do not fall neatly into either category, as they lack a clear causal origin. For example, sweating due to embarrassment, stuttering from nervousness, or crying from extreme happiness or sorrow all illustrate signs that resist definitive classification.

The field of semiotics emerged in response to the diversity and complexity of expressive and semantic systems, as well as the expanding conceptual and functional scope of language in both the humanities and the sciences. The groundwork for this discipline was laid by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913), who conceptualized semiotics based on the functioning of linguistic signs within social and scientific systems. He proposed that “it is possible to imagine a science that studies the life of signs within society. Such a science would form part of general psychology, and I shall call it semiology. It would explain the nature of signs and the laws governing them” (Saussure, 1988, p. 34).

While Saussure's ideas developed within the context of French intellectual thought, a parallel approach was advanced in the United States by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). Peirce viewed signs as an expressive system rooted in their semantic and referential capacity. His theoretical framework conceptualized semiotics as an essential component of broader social dynamics, necessitating systematic mechanisms of communication among individuals. These mechanisms rely on mutual understanding and shared interpretations of expressive roles, which

can either unify or divide audiences depending on both the content and the mode of expression—be it within public discourse or specialized communication.

As Peirce succinctly articulated, “a sign is something that stands for something else to someone in some capacity; it is directed toward a person” (Mubarak, 1987, p. 45).

3. The Structuralism of the Sign According to Saussure

Saussure’s propositions regarding the elements of the sign, whether linguistic or nonlinguistic, and whether operating within a narrative framework or embedded in general culture as a text that reflects knowledge, customs, and history, emphasize that the sign functions through the binary relationship between the signifier and the signified. This dual structure, as he argued, offers the most effective conceptual model for analyzing how signs perform their semantic roles within specific contexts.

More specifically, according to this framework, the sign consists of two essential components:

- The **signified** refers to the mental concept or image associated with a real object. It is formed in the mind of the recipient when exposed to a specific stimulus—such as hearing a sequence of sounds that form a spoken word or reading its written equivalent. For example, when someone hears or reads the word *bird*, they mentally visualize a bird, even in the absence of the actual object.
- The **signifier**, by contrast, is the physical form of the sign—either spoken or written—that directs the recipient toward the signified concept. In the case of the word *bird*, it may be either the audible articulation of the word or the graphic form as it appears in text.

Taken together, this binary model forms the foundation of Saussure’s structuralist theory of meaning. In this regard, it provides a crucial tool for interpreting how signs operate across both linguistic and visual modes of communication. Turning to Peirce, his structuralist model expands on Saussure’s dyadic approach by introducing a triadic framework. As he defines it, “a sign is something that stands for something else to someone under a certain aspect. It is directed toward a person and creates in their mind an interpretant that substitutes for a specific object,” which he refers to as the *object* (Mubarak, 1987, p. 34).

- **The structure consists of: Representamen:**

According to Peirce's triadic model, the sign is composed of three interrelated elements, each contributing to the process of meaning-making in a distinctive way.

The Representamen refers to the physical or perceptible form of the sign. It is the medium through which the sign is presented and, in this respect, corresponds closely to what Saussure defines as the signifier.

The Interpretant is the mental concept or effect produced in the mind of the interpreter as a result of encountering the sign. It represents the meaning derived from the sign-object relationship and is roughly equivalent to Saussure's notion of the signified.

The Object is the actual referent or idea that the sign represents. Importantly, Peirce divides this element into two categories:

The Dynamic Object refers to that which the sign attempts to represent from the real world. However, it is essential to note that such representation is often incomplete, particularly when dealing with abstract concepts or emotional experiences—such as representations of heaven, hell, sorrow, or joy. These concepts resist full representation due to their inherent complexity or subjectivity.

The Immediate Object, by contrast, denotes the aspect of the object that is readily represented. It includes clearly identifiable and universally recognizable forms, such as a specific tree, a ship, or the moon. The effectiveness of the sign in this case relies on the relatively unambiguous and concrete nature of the object itself.

Together, these three elements—representamen, interpretant, and object—form the structural core of Peirce's theory of the sign. This model offers a more dynamic and context-sensitive understanding of how signs function and how meaning is constructed within various semiotic systems.

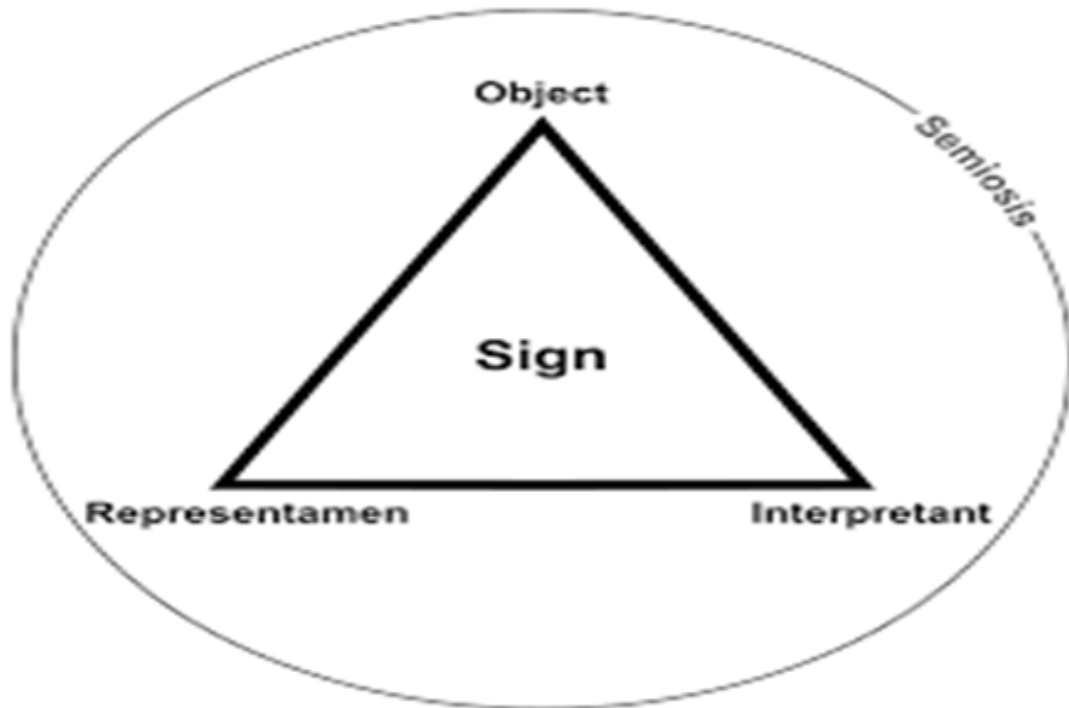


Figure 1 Peirce's triadic model

4. The Structural Nature of the Sign in Communication

There is no doubt regarding the inherently communicative nature of language in all its forms. Indeed, language—whether spoken, written, visual, or symbolic—has consistently responded to the psychological, intellectual, cognitive, and cultural needs of human beings. As part of this process, individuals continuously seek to affirm their identity and maintain communicative engagement, both with themselves and with their surrounding environment, whether in private or public contexts.

Given this essential role, the sign emerges as a fundamental component of all languages. It may be either purely linguistic or non-linguistic, with the latter often deriving its effectiveness from visual representation or symbolic imagery. Because of this, signs are not isolated elements; rather, they function within an integrated system governed by specific communicative objectives.

To fulfill its function effectively, the sign must operate within the framework of the general communication cycle. This cycle consists of six interdependent components: the sender, the message, the receiver, the medium, the meaning, and the feedback. Each component plays a vital role in ensuring the successful transmission of meaning, and this framework is well-documented in both linguistic and semiotic theories. Fundamentally, the primary aim of any

sign—regardless of form—is to transmit a message from one party to another using a chosen method or channel. In doing so, the sign not only conveys information but also attempts to influence the receiver’s interpretation, emotion, or behavior.

According to Zakaria (1983, p. 19), this communicative process constitutes one of the most critical functions of the sign, as it “enables the individual to complete the communication process between themselves and the members of their environment, facilitating the expression and transmission of their views to others in a way they can understand, based on the conventions of language used during communication, thereby realizing their identity within their environment.”

Among the scholars who most significantly addressed this communicative function was Roman Jakobson. His model demonstrated that each component of the communication act corresponds to a specific function, regardless of the nature of the sign—whether linguistic, visual, or multimodal. These six functions align systematically with the components of the communication model.

Table 1. The Structural Nature of the Sign in Communication

Context	Referential Function
Sender	Emotive Function
Message	Poetic Function
Receiver	Conative Function
Contact (Channel)	Phatic Function
Language (Code)	Metalinguistic Function

Function Descriptions:

- **Emotive (Expressive) Function:** This emerges when the message is centered on the sender as a subject, and the message reflects their personal viewpoint and ideas about a specific topic.
- **Conative Function:** Targets the receiver and often appears in directive, instructional, or alerting forms.
- **Referential Function:** Highlights the context, aiming to refer to a topic, idea, or content to convey and understand perspectives around it.
- **Phatic Function:** Manifests in messages focused on maintaining, repeating, or altering communication patterns.

- **Metalinguistic Function:** Centers on the language itself, discussing its elements, meanings, and applications, especially in relation to adjacent expressive tools.
- **Poetic Function:** Focuses on the message as an end in itself. This function is not exclusive to poetry but includes all messages reliant on either linguistic or non,linguistic language.

5. Mechanisms of the Sign in Conveying Meaning

The effectiveness of a sign in conveying its intended meaning largely depends on the mechanism through which it operates. This mechanism encompasses both the nature of the sign's representative components and the strategy by which its expressive power is activated within a specific communicative context. In this regard, Charles Sanders Peirce provides a comprehensive classification of signs, which is grounded in the manner by which they fulfill their expressive functions. Specifically, he identifies three distinct types of signs, each characterized by a particular kind of relationship between the signifier and the signified—or, more precisely, between the material aspect of the sign and the concept or object it represents. This categorization serves as a critical framework for understanding the functional diversity of signs across various semiotic systems.

5.1 Iconic Sign:

An iconic sign is defined by a relationship of resemblance between the sign and what it denotes—that is, between the signifier and the signified—where this relationship is governed by visual or formal similarity. For instance, a personal photograph used in official documentation directly corresponds to the individual's actual appearance, just as a picture of a car visually parallels a real vehicle observed in daily life. In both cases, the connection reflects a high degree of similarity between the sign and its referent.

According to Umberto Eco, this type of sign is governed by the principle of similarity, which he identifies as its natural basis. However, he also emphasizes that the recognition of such similarity is often shaped by prevailing cultural and cognitive conditions. In a similar vein, Yuri Lotman argues that even iconic signs possess a degree of conventionality. Additionally, theorists of the Moscow–Tartu School maintain that semiotic systems encompass both conventional signs (such as words) and iconic ones (such as images) (Sebeok, 1986, p. 32).

Hence, the relationship between the sign and what it represents—or between the signifier and the signified—can be understood as one of embodied resemblance. This is evident

in examples such as an identity photo or a car illustration, both of which demonstrate that iconic signs rely fundamentally on similarity. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this resemblance is not always straightforward or direct, as it is heavily influenced by the dominant cultural and cognitive frameworks within which interpretation occurs (Nöth, 2013).

Iconic signs are widely and effectively used in visual discourse, where expressive language elements serve not only symbolic and semantic purposes but also aesthetic ones. For example, wide or panoramic shots are often employed to accentuate the visual appeal of the depicted scene—be it a forest, a cityscape, or a group of people. In such instances, the image functions as an iconic sign precisely because of its direct visual similarity to its real-world counterpart.

Furthermore, these visuals frequently serve a revelatory function by disclosing information about the environment and the relationships within it—whether between a location and its potential, between a place and its inhabitants, or among the individuals themselves. Importantly, this process of revelation depends on the principle of resemblance.

It is also important to highlight that the cognitive engagement required from the viewer in such cases tends to be minimal. Because the similarity is explicit, it does not prompt the viewer to exert much interpretive effort. Instead, the viewer passively accepts the meaning as presented. For example, an aerial shot of a stadium presents the stadium as it truly is, while a busy street scene reflects the actual rhythm of urban life. Although primarily descriptive, such visuals also contribute to the aesthetic texture of the discourse, thereby enhancing its appeal and resonance with the audience.

5.2 Indexical Sign

The nature of the relationship between the signifier and the signified in indexical signs is fundamentally governed by causality. In other words, the presence of the sign inherently suggests the existence of a nearby cause or stimulus that plays a key role in producing meaning. Therefore, the indexical sign performs its semantic function by revealing or pointing to this underlying cause, which typically operates within the cognitive awareness of the recipient. It is the recipient who actively constructs meaning by mentally linking the observed effect to a presumed cause. For example, observing a column of smoke in the distance immediately prompts the viewer to infer the likely presence of a fire. Moreover, if the observer is familiar with the geographical context, they may be able to deduce with greater accuracy that the fire is occurring in a known factory. Similarly, an elevated body temperature may indicate an underlying medical condition, just as footprints in sand or mud may suggest the recent presence of a person, animal, or vehicle (Sebeok, 1986, p. 3).

In cinematic or dramatic contexts, the principle of contiguity—either spatial or temporal—frequently underpins the deployment of indexical signs. Notably, the use of such signs is closely aligned with the overall structure of the narrative. Accordingly, the effectiveness of an indexical sign is contingent upon the viewer's capacity for cognitive engagement and interpretive analysis. The viewer must be able to recognize and decode the causal relationships that are subtly embedded within the visual and auditory cues of the scene. This active interpretive process not only keeps the audience intellectually engaged but also enhances their responsiveness throughout the unfolding narrative. Because these signs are often conveyed through cinematic shots, sound effects, or montage sequences that imply causation and proximity, comprehension requires rapid and critical thinking to connect the sign with its implied source or meaning.

To illustrate this, consider a sequence in which the protagonist is shown placing a pistol in his belt. This is followed by an aerial shot of his car, accompanied by the sound of a gunshot. Although the act of shooting is not explicitly shown, the viewer—through an interpretive synthesis of these visual and auditory cues—is able to conclude that the protagonist has taken his own life. This conclusion is drawn from the logical sequencing of cause and effect, which is skillfully embedded in the cinematic structure of the scene.

5.3 Symbolic Sign

While resemblance underpins iconic signs and contiguity defines indexical signs, the relationship between the signifier and the signified in symbolic signs is both arbitrary and conventional. That is to say, this relationship is not based on any natural logic or causal link. Rather, it emerges from collective cultural consciousness and shared cognitive conventions. Therefore, there is no inherent reason why a particular symbol should convey a specific meaning. For instance, the symbol of a cup with a coiled snake is widely recognized as representing a pharmacy, while certain colors—such as white, red, or green—are conventionally linked to particular environments, geographical regions, or thematic meanings. The association between such symbols and their meanings is not determined by logic, but is instead culturally constructed and socially agreed upon.

To give a further example, consider the peace sign formed by the fingers or the raised hand used for greeting or parting. These gestures do not possess inherent meaning; rather, they are interpreted through cultural norms and collective understanding. As Sebeok (1986, p. 34) notes, “the symbolic sign refers to what it signifies by virtue of a law, often grounded in the association of general ideas.”

Symbolic signs are frequently and effectively employed in cinematic systems, which are inherently rich in expressive potential. In this regard, cinema, as a sophisticated medium of communication, targets viewers who typically bring with them a reservoir of cultural, social, and intellectual awareness, as well as philosophical and historical understanding. These cognitive resources enable the audience to decode symbolic signs and attribute meaning to them, even though the signs themselves may lack a direct or logical connection to what they represent.

For instance, the use of colors in cinematic narratives has become a widely accepted means of conveying specific emotions or themes. The color red, for example, is often associated with scenes involving violence, sexual tension, or criminal activity. Similarly, the sound of a raven may be used to suggest death, emptiness, or an impending loss. Furthermore, symbolic meaning can be constructed through visual editing techniques. A common example is parallel editing that contrasts a character delivering an ethics lecture during the day with a night scene in which the same character is engaged in morally questionable behavior. This juxtaposition serves as a symbolic sign of hypocrisy, thereby exposing the contradiction between the character's spoken values and actual conduct.

6. Conventionality in the Sign

According to Saussure—who defined the sign as composed of a signifier and a signified—and Peirce—who conceptualized it through the triad of representamen (the sign), interpretant (the meaning), and object (the referent)—the relationship that governs signs, whether dyadic or triadic, is always rooted in causality. However, this causality may be explicit and logical, or it may be implicit and shaped by cultural norms. When the principle of resemblance (iconicity) is not applicable, the principle of contiguity (indexicality) often takes its place. In cases where neither of these principles is relevant, conventionality and cultural consensus become the dominant factors guiding the interpretation of the sign.

This phenomenon is particularly evident in cinematic and television-based dramatic expression, which rely on an expansive range of sign types—including visual, auditory, and montage-based signs. Each sign within this semiotic system possesses a unique structure and set of characteristics. Consequently, it becomes the responsibility of the recipient to decode each sign, convert it into a semantic unit, and relate it to the broader intended meaning. To do

so, recipients must interpret signs individually and then synthesize them within the narrative context to derive meanings that evolve over time.

This interpretive process results in semantic plurality, as meanings are not fixed but vary depending on the recipient's cultural background and intellectual framework. What is particularly significant here is that this interpretative flexibility is made possible by the audience's prior familiarity with conventionalized meanings. As a result, audiences are able to decode signs across different modes—visual, audio, or montage-based. These associative links, cultural cues, and symbolic references embedded within conventional signs contribute to a rich aesthetic layer. Moreover, they provide a lens for critically evaluating the expressive potential of artistic works in relation to those from other cultural, historical, or ideological contexts (Punto, 1996, p. 130).

Given its artistic and narrative characteristics, film language tends to be largely symbolic and, therefore, conventional. Often, the connection between the signifier and the signified in cinematic language lacks logical clarity. However, this lack of direct causality enhances the intellectual dimension of film, as it invites the viewer to engage at deeper cognitive levels. Through this engagement, the recipient actively participates in the narrative process, interpreting both the general themes and the specific meanings of individual signs.

Furthermore, it is important to note that dramatic storytelling has evolved significantly due to interdisciplinary influences—particularly from literature and drama—and through the integration of new digital technologies. These developments have given rise to narrative forms that were previously non-existent, thereby expanding the expressive capacity of cinematic language.

The greater the presence of conventional signs in a dramatic context, the more critical the role of the recipient becomes. Recipients must activate their cognitive awareness in order to decode and reconstruct the layered meanings embedded in the sign system. As Yuri Lotman describes, this cognitive engagement gives rise to what he terms the “self-generated semantics” of film language. Here, the symbolic value of signs emerges through the shared interpretive efforts of both creators and viewers. Simultaneously, the conventional meanings of these signs are reinforced by shared cultural experience, which anchors them to real-world references and predefined social functions.

Ultimately, the dynamic interaction between sender and receiver fosters an elevated awareness of cultural codes and conventions. This, in turn, renders the semiotic system inherently open-ended. As Henri (1980, pp. 130–135) observes, such a system is marked by intuition, coherence, significance, and fluidity.

7. Research Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive, analytical approach, relying on the analysis of the "single event" as the main tool to reveal the positioning of the conventional sign within the dramatic context. The sample was purposefully selected due to its close connection to the research objectives, where the effectiveness of conventional signs becomes evident within social structures that stimulate the process of signification within visual discourse. The selected sample is the first part of the Egyptian drama series *Layali Al-Helmiya* (The Nights of Al-Helmiya), consisting of eighteen episodes that form the introduction to the series and introduce the three main characters: Selim Al-Badri, Suleiman Ghanem, and Nazek Al-Salhdar.

The central conflict begins between Selim Al-Badri and Suleiman Ghanem, the latter returning from the countryside to avenge his father, Abd Al-Tawab Ghanem, who died of grief in prison due to Ismail Al-Badri. The confrontation begins when Suleiman buys shares in Al-Badri's textile factory, and the plot escalates when Selim's secret marriage to Alya Badawi Al-Qamash is revealed, with Nazek Al-Salhdar manipulating the situation to serve her own interests.

The series, written by Osama Anwar Okasha, directed by Ismail Abdel Hafiz, and produced by the Egyptian TV Production Sector, documents modern Egyptian history from the era of King Farouk to the early 1990s. The last part aired in 1995. The cast includes Yehia El-Fakharany, Salah El-Saadany, Safia El-Omari, Hassan Youssef, Hoda Sultan, Sayed Abdel Karim, Ferdous Abdel Hamid, Abla Kamel, Soheir El-Morshedy, Inaam Salousa, Dalal Abdel Aziz, among others.

Episode One

The conventional sign is clearly represented in a single event:

- Nafisa, her daughter, in-law Nazek Al-Salhdar, and Nazek's brother Assem gather for breakfast. Lavish food fills the table; they wear elegant clothes and discuss banks, stocks, and trade. A servant brings a tray of newspapers to Nazek. This scene uses visual cues to signify the family's social standing and their internal dynamics. It also introduces the narrative tone, personalities, and their social, psychological, and intellectual dimensions, laying the foundation for the drama.

Episode Two

The conventional sign is clearly represented in a single event:

- Assem Al-Salhdar, an urban elite, receives a visit from Suleiman Ghanem, a rural farmer. When Suleiman extends his hand in greeting, the close-up reveals Assem

refusing to reciprocate. This illustrates a social code: Assem forsakes traditional etiquette in favor of bourgeois customs, implying the farmer is socially and intellectually inferior.

Episode Three

The conventional sign is clearly represented in a single event:

- Suleiman Ghanem, in sleepwear and panting, sits on one end of the bed, while Nazek, in revealing clothing and under dim red lighting, sits on the other. She refuses intimacy, seeing him as beneath her due to his rural background. The red light and physical distance across the bed symbolize the broader social divide between classes.

Episode Four

The conventional sign is clearly represented in a single event:

- Following Alya's death, female family members wear black. The color black becomes a conventional sign of mourning, sorrow, and social conformity to Arab traditions regarding grief.

Episode Five

The conventional sign is clearly represented in a single event:

- After an argument between Suleiman and his guest Zainhum, the latter attempts to leave. Suleiman's guards try to block him, but Suleiman orders them to stop. This reflects a social code: despite anger, one must not mistreat a guest, regardless of fault—a key value in Arab traditions.

Episode Six

Two events reflect conventional signs:

1. Anisa, dressed in black, stands between portraits of her recently deceased mother and sister. In the foreground of the frame, she discusses marriage with her father. Her placement and posture symbolize her emotional entrapment in familial memories.
2. Nafisa visits her relative Tawfiq Al-Badri to convince him to return to the family textile factory and forgive Selim. Offered coffee, she refuses to drink until he agrees. This act invokes the Arab custom that a guest does not eat or drink until their request is accepted, turning this gesture into a culturally loaded symbol.

Episode Seven

The conventional sign is clearly represented in a single event:

- The sound of intermittent sirens signals an impending air raid. Globally understood, the siren serves as a non-verbal auditory warning, prompting characters to seek shelter—demonstrating how a sound alone can drive dramatic action.

Episode Eight

The conventional sign is clearly represented in a single event:

- Najat visits Zainhum AlSamahi in prison and identifies herself as the wife of his missing brother, Taha. Wearing a niqab, only her eyes are visible. Once he accepts her identity, she unveils. The close, up and medium shots symbolize her familial inclusion, adhering to regional and religious norms that only family may see a woman's face.

Episode Nine

Two events reflect conventional signs:

1. Nazek visits Tawfiq's home to reconcile with his mother, Nafisa. When Nafisa extends her hand, Nazek refuses to shake it, signaling her perceived superiority and class consciousness.
2. The cane carried by Wahdan, a relative of Suleiman, symbolizes power. Following a series of social and commercial victories over Selim's side, the cane becomes a visible sign of status and dominance—repeating across episodes to underscore class struggle and symbolic authority.

Episode Ten

As the narrative progresses, character roles and plotlines become clearer. No new conventional signs with unknown meanings are introduced. Instead, the visual and auditory narrative maintains consistency. The dramatic discourse continues to use conventional signs to reinforce character identity, emotional tone, and social context without deviation.

8. Results

Social identity functions as the central context that governs any dramatic work. It not only frames the development of characters and events, but also exerts a strong influence on the overall structure of the narrative. In other words, artistic production does not occur in isolation. Rather, it emerges from a social environment in which values, behaviors, and class dynamics interact and are reflected with precision in the dramatic fabric. This surrounding context—composed of cultural, economic, and historical factors—shapes the narrative's structure and determines the roles, dialogue, relationships, and tensions between characters.

In this regard, the camera plays a pivotal role. It serves not merely to convey visual information, but also to generate new conventional signs through technical features such as angle, framing, distance, and proximity. These visual strategies often reveal implicit meanings

that are not directly stated in dialogue or explicitly depicted in action. For instance, a close-up of an extended hand that receives no response functions as a complete semiotic expression, signaling social hierarchy or symbolizing conflict between characters from different classes.

Additionally, elements such as decor and costume represent some of the most apparent conventional signs. They communicate cultural values and individual identities through visual codes. The clothing a character wears, along with the design and arrangement of their environment, carries symbolic weight that can only be interpreted within a broader social and cultural framework. Colors, materials, object placement, and interaction patterns all contribute to the construction of social meaning in visual terms.

Sound also plays a fundamental role in dramatic storytelling. It operates as a powerful semiotic tool, even though it remains non-visible. Not all sounds are directly explained by the plot; however, they often carry significant meaning through cultural repetition. Examples include the wailing of an air-raid siren, the heavy thud of footsteps, or moments of complete silence. These auditory elements contribute to emotional intensity and narrative depth, often without the need for verbal clarification.

Taken together, these visual and auditory elements interact to form a rich semiotic network. The conventional signs they generate do not exist in abstraction; instead, they are closely tied to their social origins. Moreover, these signs actively feed back into the social context, thereby reinforcing the cultural and ideological dimensions of the narrative.

9. Conclusions

The conventional sign in drama functions as a direct extension of the broader social code. Its meaning is not invented in isolation; rather, it is derived from a shared cultural system that is mutually understood by both the creator and the audience. Drama reactivates these signs within a renewed narrative framework, drawing on their pre-established connotations to convey ideas and to give life to characters situated within familiar and socially coded contexts.

Importantly, the key distinction between linguistic and visual systems lies not in the nature of the sign itself, but in the medium through which the sign is conveyed. Whereas language operates through speech or writing, visual media function through optical and auditory channels. Nonetheless, both systems serve an equivalent semiotic role within an integrated expressive structure.

Moreover, the conventional sign does not operate in isolation. It interacts with grammatical signs, which serve to organize the structure of discourse. This interaction contributes to meaning-making on two levels: firstly, at the macro level, it helps to articulate the overarching thematic message of the work; and secondly, at the micro level, it clarifies the specific function of an individual sign or semiotic unit within a given scene. This dual-level operation enhances the interpretive richness of the discourse.

What adds to the power of the conventional sign is not only its inherent symbolic value, but also the way it interacts dynamically with other signs. In some instances, the meaning of a sign is intrinsic—for example, wearing black to denote mourning. However, in other instances, its meaning emerges from the interplay with surrounding elements such as lighting, camera movement, or emotional tone. This interaction amplifies the dramatic force of the sign and introduces interpretive dimensions that would not exist in isolation.

Therefore, the role of the conventional sign expands from being merely declarative to becoming a flexible and interactive device—one that actively contributes to constructing meaning and shaping audience perception.

10. Recommendations and Suggestions

This study recommends the development of specialized training workshops aimed at analyzing the interaction between linguistic signs and visual or auditory signs. These workshops should incorporate practical case studies drawn from influential cinematic and television works. The goal is to raise awareness among media and drama researchers and practitioners regarding the complex semiotic structures that underpin visual discourse. In addition, such training initiatives would support the creation of advanced analytical frameworks that transcend the conventional boundaries between language, image, and sound.

In terms of future research, two main directions are proposed:

A. Examine the role of linguistic signification in shaping meaning within cinematic and television discourse, with particular emphasis on the interplay between dialogue, monologue, visual composition, and sound editing.

B. Explore how conventional and grammatical signs interact in filmic drama, and assess the extent to which these interactions contribute to scene construction and influence expressive effectiveness at both the semantic and narrative levels.

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