

The Representation of Transcendental Communication in the Film Buya Hamka, Vol. 1: A Semiotic Analysis by Roland Barthes

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the representation of transcendental communication in the film Buya Hamka Vol. 1 through Roland Barthes' semiotic approach and interpret it from the perspective of the Qur'an. The study employs a descriptive qualitative method, with the primary data source being Buya Hamka Vol. 1, directed by Fajar Bustomi. Data were collected through documentation of dialogues, visuals, expressions, and religious symbols containing values of transcendental communication. The analysis was conducted using Roland Barthes' three levels of semiotics: denotation, connotation, and myth, and was subsequently interpreted based on Qur'anic verses. The findings reveal that the film represents transcendental communication in three main dimensions: (1) transcendental communication through patience and trust in God (tawakkul) in facing life's trials; (2) transcendental communication through da'wah and the pursuit of knowledge as forms of worship and spiritual transformation; and (3) transcendental communication through steadfast monotheism (tawhid) and moral integrity in confronting socio-political pressures. This study offers a semiotic-theological reading model that integrates Roland Barthes' semiotics with the Qur'an-based concept of transcendental communication, thereby broadening the scope of Islamic communication studies in religious films.

Keywords: Transcendental Communication, Semiotics, Roland Barthes, Buya Hamka, Qur'an.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis representasi komunikasi transendental dalam Film Buya Hamka Vol. 1 melalui pendekatan semiotika Roland Barthes dan menafsirkannya berdasarkan perspektif Al-Qur'an. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan sumber data utama berupa Film Buya Hamka Vol. 1 karya Fajar Bustomi. Data dikumpulkan melalui dokumentasi terhadap dialog, visual, ekspresi, dan simbol-simbol religius yang mengandung nilai komunikasi transendental. Analisis dilakukan melalui tiga tahap semiotika Roland Barthes, yaitu denotasi, konotasi, dan mitos, kemudian diinterpretasikan berdasarkan ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa film ini merepresentasikan komunikasi transendental dalam tiga dimensi utama, yaitu (1) komunikasi transendental melalui kesabaran dan tawakal dalam menghadapi ujian hidup; (2) komunikasi transendental melalui dakwah dan pencarian ilmu sebagai bentuk ibadah dan transformasi spiritual; serta (3) komunikasi transendental melalui keteguhan taubid dan integritas moral dalam menghadapi tekanan sosial-politik. Penelitian ini menawarkan model pembacaan semiotik-teologis yang mengintegrasikan semiotika Roland Barthes dengan konsep komunikasi transendental berbasis Al-Qur'an sehingga memperluas kajian komunikasi Islam pada media film religi.

Kata kunci: Komunikasi Transendental, semiotika, Roland Barthes, Buya Hamka, Al Qur'an.

INTRODUCTION

Film, as a form of mass media, serves not only as a means of entertainment but also as a medium for conveying moral, social, and religious messages (Mustofa, 2022). In the context of Indonesian society, the development of religious films demonstrates that visual media can serve as an effective instrument of da'wah in conveying Islamic values to the broader public. One film that exemplifies this is "Buya Hamka Vol. 1", which chronicles the life journey of Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah (Buya Hamka) as a religious scholar, intellectual, and national hero.

The film not only presents the biography of a great Indonesian figure but also depicts various events that illustrate a scholar's spiritual connection with Allah the Almighty—such as his diligence in seeking knowledge, his steadfastness in upholding

monotheism, his patience in the face of slander, his attitude of tawakal (trust in God) when facing life's trials, and his commitment to spreading the message of Islam to the public.

Statistical data from the Indonesian Creative Economy Agency (2024) shows that films with religious themes attracted more than 25 million viewers throughout 2023–2024, with "Buya Hamka Vol. 1" drawing more than 3.5 million viewers.² This phenomenon illustrates a growing public interest in content that conveys spiritual and transcendental values. Despite this popularity, there remains a scarcity of academic studies that deeply analyze, from a Qur'anic perspective, how transcendental communication values are represented in films using a semiotic approach.

Various scenes in the film "Buya Hamka Vol. 1" demonstrate that the visual symbols, characters' expressions, dialogue, and actions of Buya Hamka convey meanings that go beyond mere social representation; they also reflect the spiritual relationship between humans and their God. Therefore, this film is an interesting subject for study using Roland Barthes's semiotic approach, as this theory allows researchers to uncover the meanings of signs at multiple levels by analyzing denotation, connotation, and myth.

Research on Roland Barthes's semiotics in religious media has, in fact, been conducted extensively. Some studies indicate that Barthes's semiotics is effective in identifying representations of Islamic values, da'wah messages, and religious symbols in various visual media. However, most of these studies remain limited to interpreting representational meanings and have not yet developed an analysis that links the sign system to the transcendental dimension of communication from the perspective of the Qur'an (Bagas et al., 2025).

Various studies indicate that religious films can serve as an effective medium for da'wah in conveying Islamic values to the public. These studies generally position films as a means of disseminating moral and religious messages through persuasive visual narratives (Musyafak, 2013). On the other hand, studies in Islamic communication explain that transcendental communication is a form of communication that depicts the relationship between humans and Allah through various spiritual practices and the internalization of divine values in daily life (Razzaq, 2022).

Nevertheless, research on transcendental communication and research on religious films continue to develop separately. Studies of transcendental communication are primarily discussed at the conceptual level and in the context of religious practices. In contrast, research on religious films generally focuses only on the representation of Islamic values and da'wah messages (Abidin, 2025). This situation indicates that the dimension of transcendental communication in film media has yet to be fully explored.

Regarding the film “Buya Hamka Vol. 1”, previous studies have tended to focus on the implementation of Islamic da'wah values, the representation of Muhammadiyah's organizational communication, the portrayal of Buya Hamka as a figure, and the moral messages in the film. These studies have employed Roland Barthes's semiotics to identify denotative, connotative, and mythological meanings; however, their analyses have remained limited to symbolic representation and have not developed an interpretation that links the sign system to the transcendental dimension of communication from the perspective of the Qur'an.

Based on this literature review, no study has yet been found that comprehensively examines the representation of transcendental communication in the film “Buya Hamka Vol. 1” through Roland Barthes's semiotic approach and interprets its symbolic meanings from the perspective of the Qur'an. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap while offering a semiotic-theological interpretive model for the study of Islamic communication.

This gap is significant to investigate, given that Roland Barthes—with his concepts of denotation, connotation, and myth in his semiotics—offers a profound perspective for unraveling the layers of meaning in visual texts, including films (Auliawati, 2024). The novelty of this study lies in the use of Barthes's semiotics, integrated with a Qur'anic perspective, to analyze transcendental communicative values, thereby yielding an interpretation that is not merely cultural but also enables the study to explore how the visual and narrative signs in the film “Buya Hamka Vol. 1” construct transcendental communicative values that align with the teachings of the Qur'an.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the development of Islamic communication studies, particularly in the field of transcendental communication within the context of audiovisual media. Amid the rapid flow of information and increasingly

diverse media content, this research can provide new insights into how transcendental communication values can be effectively conveyed through film. Furthermore, the results of this research can serve as a reference for filmmakers and other creative content creators seeking to integrate spiritual and transcendental values into their work.

The selection of the film "Buya Hamka Vol. 1" as the subject of this study was based on several considerations. First, the film tells the life story of a prominent Islamic scholar who significantly influenced the development of Islamic thought in Indonesia. Second, the narrative and visuals in this film are rich in symbols and metaphors that can be analyzed using a semiotic approach. Third, as a biographical film about a religious scholar that has received positive public reception, this film represents the resurgence of religious films in Indonesia, which warrants academic study. Thus, this study aims to analyze the values of transcendental communication in the film "Buya Hamka Vol. 1" using Roland Barthes's semiotic analysis integrated with a Qur'anic perspective. The analysis will focus on how the film's visual and narrative signs construct values of transcendental communication.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive-interpretive approach. The qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to understand and interpret the symbolic meanings contained in the film "Buya Hamka Vol. 1", particularly the representation of transcendental communication as depicted through dialogue, expressions, characters' actions, and visual symbols. Qualitative research allows researchers to examine phenomena in depth, grounded in the context and meaning constructed within a media text (Creswell, 2014).

The analytical approach used is Roland Barthes's semiotics. Barthes views signs as a multi-layered system of meaning consisting of denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings. This approach was chosen because it can uncover the symbolic meanings behind visual texts and explain how a medium constructs certain ideologies, values, and beliefs through a system of signs (Barthes, 1977). In this study, Barthes's semiotics is used

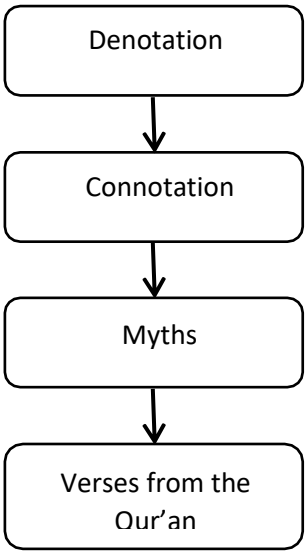
to interpret the representations of transcendental communication depicted in the film “Buya Hamka Vol. 1”.

The primary data source is the film “Buya Hamka Volume 1” (2023), directed by Fajar Bustomi. Secondary data consists of literature on Roland Barthes's theory of semiotics and transcendental communication, as well as verses from the Qur'an, which serve as analytical tools for interpreting the spiritual values that emerge in the film. Data collection was conducted through documentary analysis and non-participant observation. The researcher watched the film repeatedly, transcribing dialogues, identifying characters' expressions, documenting visual elements, and cataloging symbols related to transcendental communication. Each identified scene was then transcribed and categorized based on the themes of transcendental communication that emerged in the film.

Data analysis was conducted using Roland Barthes's semiotic model, namely: the denotation stage, which identifies the literal meaning of signs (images, dialogue, sound); the connotation stage, which analyzes the cultural and emotional meanings of signs; The mythical stage, which interprets how these signs form ideological narratives or transcendental values consistent with the teachings of the Qur'an. The interpretations resulting from the analysis were then contextualized with verses from the Qur'an to examine their consistency and the meaning of transcendental communication from an Islamic perspective.

Table 1.

Research Methods



Stages of Roland Barthes’s Semiotic Analysis in the Film “Buya Hamka”.

Note: The analytical framework begins with denotation, connotation, and myth in the context of Qur'anic verses.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Discussion

An analysis of the film “Buya Hamka, Vol. 1” reveals that the representation of transcendental communication is constructed through visual symbols, dialogue, and the main character's actions, reflecting the relationship between humans and Allah SWT. From the fifteen main scenes analyzed, three major themes of transcendental communication were identified, namely: (1) transcendental communication through patience and tawakal; (2) transcendental communication through da’wah and the pursuit of knowledge; and (3) transcendental communication through steadfastness in tawhid and moral integrity.

Transcendental Communication Through Patience and Trust in God

Picture.1



01:24:35 detik

Scenes from the Buya Hamka Movie, Vol. 1

Source: <https://youtu.be/ejUVS4XimH8?si=PsvUiy04i9Df3YYPG>

The denotative meaning of this scene depicts Buya Hamka being held in a detention center. As one would expect of a detention center, the scene clearly shows a quiet, heavily guarded environment that represents the physical conditions of his detention. Meanwhile, the scene's connotative meaning is evident in Buya Hamka's patience, which symbolizes spiritual transcendence. He shows no hatred but accepts this trial with an open heart. Detention in this context is not merely physical but also a test of the spirit. Communication with God becomes the primary form of transcendental communication. This depiction implies that silence and patience are stronger than verbal self-defense, reflecting spiritual wisdom.

Meanwhile, the scene's mythical meaning is evident in Buya Hamka's portrayal as a prophetic or apostolic figure tested by suffering, yet remaining patient and steadfast. He becomes a symbol of exemplary conduct in the face of injustice without losing the nobility of his heart. This narrative shapes a modern myth of piety and spiritual struggle within Muslim society.

The meaning of transcendental communication in the scene above is marked by Buya Hamka's patience and resignation, as a form of inner communication with God. He did not offer outward resistance but rather strengthened his vertical relationship with Allah, which signifies a form of *dhikr* and contemplation. This finding indicates that transcendental communication is not always expressed in verbal forms such as prayer and *dhikr*, but is also evident in an attitude of accepting God's will and entrusting all matters to Him. From the perspective of Islamic communication, transcendental communication is inseparable from the life of a Muslim, as it manifests in various forms of servitude and the internalization of divine values in daily life (Razzaq, 2022). Thus, the patience and *tawakal* depicted in the film can be understood as a medium of vertical communication that connects humans with Allah.

This interpretation is in accordance with the words of Allah SWA:

"And whoever places their trust in Allah, Allah will surely provide for their needs." (QS. At-Talaq [65]: 3).

This verse indicates that *tawakal* is not merely a psychological attitude, but rather a manifestation of faith that places Allah at the center of one's life. In the film, the portrayal of *tawakal* in Buya Hamka's character demonstrates that a spiritual relationship with Allah is a source of peace amid life's trials. Theoretically, this finding expands the concept of transcendental communication, which has traditionally been understood primarily in the context of ritual worship. This indicates that patience and *tawakal* are also forms of transcendental communication, as they involve self-surrender and an inner dialogue between humans and Allah.

Furthermore, the meaning of transcendental communication through patience and *tawakal* in the context of struggle is also illustrated by the following scene:

Picture. 2



01:27:35 second

Scenes from the Buya Hamka Movie, Vol. 1

Source: <https://youtu.be/eJUVS4XimH8?si=PsvUiy04i9Df3YYPG>

Denotatively, the scene depicts Buya Hamka prostrating in gratitude upon hearing the news of Indonesia's independence. At this level, the sign that emerges is a physical act—prostration—in response to a historic event. Its literal meaning reflects a religious expression performed after receiving a blessing and experiencing joy.

On a connotative level, the prostration of gratitude is not merely understood as an expression of joy. However, it represents a theological awareness that the nation's independence is a gift and an act of assistance from Allah SWT. Buya Hamka's response demonstrates that success is not centered solely on human ability, but is viewed as part of Allah's will and assistance.

From the perspective of transcendental communication, such actions constitute a form of vertical communication (*hablun minallah*) that places God at the center of meaning. Transcendental communication is not always expressed verbally but also through symbols of worship and spiritual expressions that acknowledge God's greatness. In this context,

transcendental communication is a process of human interaction with God that arises from the deepest spiritual needs and is manifested through various religious acts (Kholiq, 2023). Buya Hamka's prostration of gratitude can be interpreted as a process of spiritual communication that encompasses three elements simultaneously: the acknowledgment that independence comes from Allah; gratitude for the blessings bestowed; and surrender (tawakal) to Allah as the orchestrator of history and human life.

On a mythical level, the film constructs a narrative in which a religious scholar and national leader does not view victory as an individual achievement or mere political success. Rather, success is seen as a trust and a blessing that must be returned to Allah through gratitude and worship. This myth shapes the image of Islamic leadership as theocentric (God-centered leadership)—that is, leadership that makes Allah the primary orientation in decision-making and in interpreting life's events. In this context, tawhid is not merely a theological doctrine but also a communicative paradigm that places God at the center of human behavior and actions (Ansori, 2026). Therefore, the prostration of gratitude depicted in the film serves not only as a symbol of personal worship but also represents a model of spiritual leadership that integrates national and divine dimensions.

In the Qur'an, the sense of gratitude as expressed by Buya Hamka is evident in Surah Ibrahim, verse 7:

"Indeed, if you are grateful, We will surely increase (Our blessings) for you."

This verse explains that gratitude is an acknowledgment of God's blessings, expressed through words, faith, and deeds. In that scene, Indonesia's independence can be understood as a collective blessing that prompted Buya Hamka to prostrate in gratitude as a form of transcendental communication with God.

Through a Roland Barthes-inspired semiotic reading, the act of prostrating in gratitude during the independence proclamation reveals three layers of meaning. Denominatively, the prostration is a religious response to the news of independence. Connotatively, it symbolizes gratitude, trust in God, and acknowledgment of God's

assistance. On the mythical level, the film constructs the image of an ideal leader who makes piety and an awareness of the divine the foundation for interpreting success.

From a transcendental communication perspective, this scene demonstrates that the relationship between humans and God is not limited to formal religious rituals but is also manifested through spiritual responses to historical events. National independence is understood as a religious experience that encourages people to engage in a symbolic dialogue with God through prostration in gratitude. Thus, the film **Buya Hamka Vol. 1** represents Islamic leadership grounded in the paradigm of tawhid—that is, making God the center of meaning, action, and response to every success in life (Ansori, 2026).

Transcendental Communication through Da'wah and the Pursuit of Knowledge

Picture: 3



09:53 detik

Scenes from the Movie “Buya Hamka,” Vol. 1

Source:

<https://youtu.be/eJUVS4XimH8?si=PsvUiy04i9Df3YPG>

Denotatively, the scene conveys the message that seeking knowledge is an obligation for every Muslim man and woman from birth until death. This message is delivered by the character Buya Hamka, who is dressed in formal attire and a

black *peci*—attire synonymous with Islamic scholars and educational figures. On a literal level, this scene depicts da'wah activities by delivering a religious message about the importance of education and the pursuit of knowledge throughout one's life.

On a connotative level, the phrase "seeking knowledge is a religious obligation for every Muslim man and woman, from the cradle to the grave" not only invites learning but also reflects the Islamic view that regards knowledge as a spiritual need and a religious duty. The phrase "from the cradle to the grave" indicates that the pursuit of knowledge is a continuous process and an integral part of a Muslim's journey toward spiritual maturity.

The formal attire and black cap worn by Buya Hamka also evoke connotations of scholarly authority, wisdom, and the moral legitimacy of a religious scholar. Through these symbols, the film portrays Buya Hamka as an educator who not only masters knowledge but also uses it to guide people toward divine values.

On a mythical level, the film constructs a narrative in which knowledge is a "light" that guides people toward truth and salvation in this world and the hereafter. This myth also reinforces the belief that the progress of Islamic civilization is built on a strong scholarly tradition and that it provides equal opportunities for both men and women to receive an education. Thus, the film presents knowledge not only as an instrument of social progress but also as a spiritual path that brings people closer to Allah SWT.

From the perspective of transcendental communication, this scene illustrates that the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge through da'wah constitute both vertical communication (*hablun minallah*) and horizontal communication (*hablun minannas*). The pursuit of knowledge is a form of transcendental communication because it involves the awareness that knowledge originates from Allah and is used to understand the signs of His greatness. Meanwhile, da'wah is a form of service aimed at conveying divine values to fellow human beings.

The primary goal of Islamic education is not merely the transfer of knowledge, but the formation of individuals who recognize and acknowledge Allah's position, so that knowledge leads humanity to the recognition of God (*ma'rifatullah*) (Al-Attas (Syed.) & al-Attas, 1980). Al-Attas emphasizes that knowledge in Islam is sacred because it leads humans to an understanding of the essence of the self, the universe, and God. Thus, the pursuit of knowledge is a spiritual process that contains a dimension of transcendental communication. The Qur'an consistently encourages humans to think, read, and seek knowledge as a form of human responsibility in fulfilling the trust of khilafah on earth (Rahman, 2009).

From this perspective, Buya Hamka's call to pursue knowledge demonstrates that it is a means for humans to build a spiritual relationship with Allah through learning, understanding revelation, and internalizing divine values in life. This is in line with the first revelation revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Surah Al-'Alaq, verses 1–5:

“Read in the name of your Lord who created.”

This command highlights the importance of intellectual activity in Islam and affirms that the entire process of seeking knowledge must be oriented toward Allah. Therefore, Buya Hamka's call for the obligation to seek knowledge reflects the Qur'anic command to make learning a form of worship of Allah.

In addition, the scene below illustrates the values of etiquette in the pursuit of knowledge:

Picture. 4



-Jun 2026

50:32 second

Scenes from the Movie “Buya Hamka,” Vol. 1

Source: <https://youtu.be/eJUVS4XimH8?si=PsvUiY04i9Df3YYPG>

In this scene, the denotative meaning is evident from the two characters sitting side by side in a room filled with books, holding and reading a text. The father is wearing traditional clothing with a checkered scarf draped over his shoulders. Both are focused on reading and discussing. The text they are reading is “*Al-Mustashfā*”, a classical work on the principles of Islamic jurisprudence. Denotative meaning: This is a learning activity between father and son regarding Islamic studies.

Meanwhile, on a denotative level, the scene reflects the value of adab in the pursuit of knowledge—that is, learning directly from one's parents. The use of a classical text demonstrates the depth and seriousness of the pursuit of religious knowledge. The warm setting, filled with books, conveys an atmosphere of scholarly and spiritual depth within the home. Connotative meaning: There is a sense of respect, a love of knowledge, and a bond between generations (father and son) within the Islamic scholarly tradition.

From the perspective of transcendental communication, this learning process is a form of communication that not only takes place horizontally between teacher and student but also involves a vertical dimension between human beings and God. The activities of reading, understanding, and delving into religious knowledge are viewed as acts of worship and a form of devotion to God, since their ultimate goal is to seek guidance and draw closer to Him. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas explains that the goal of Islamic education is the formation of a civilized human being (*insan adabi*)—that is, a person who recognizes God's position, understands the order of knowledge, and can place things in their proper context (Al-Attas (Syed.) & al-Attas, 1980). From this perspective, the scene of learning with the father not only illustrates a process of knowledge transfer but also one

of cultivating adab, connecting the pursuit of knowledge with the recognition of Allah (*ma'rifatullah*).

On a mythical level, the film constructs a narrative in which scholarly and spiritual authority is acquired through parental guidance, familiarity with the classical Islamic texts, and respect for Islamic scholars and classical Islamic scholarly traditions. The film constructs the belief that true knowledge is passed down through an authentic chain of education grounded in adab. The ideal religious leader is portrayed not as an individual who merely possesses information, but as a figure shaped through a long process of seeking knowledge, respect for teachers, and closeness to the Islamic scholarly tradition.

This myth aligns with the ideas of Burhanuddin al-Zarnuji in his book "*Ta'lim al-Muta'allim*", which emphasizes that the blessings of knowledge are determined not only by intellectual ability but also by proper conduct toward teachers, diligence in learning, and respect for the sources of knowledge (Zakaria, 2020). Thus, the film constructs the myth that the Islamic scholarly tradition, grounded in proper conduct, serves as the foundation for the emergence of scholars, intellectuals, and community leaders who possess spiritual depth and moral integrity.

This scene represents transcendental communication through the pursuit of knowledge, as the learning process is understood as a path to drawing closer to Allah. In Islam, knowledge is not viewed as a purely worldly goal, but as a means of understanding the signs of Allah's greatness and leading humanity to the recognition of Him. The father-son relationship in the learning process also demonstrates that transcendental communication occurs through education and the father's example. The father not only transmits knowledge but also passes down spiritual values, etiquette, and a divine orientation in the pursuit of knowledge. Thus, the learning process in this scene simultaneously forms three communicative relationships: the relationship between humans and Allah (*hablun minallah*) through the intention to seek knowledge as an act of worship; the relationship between teacher and student (*hablun minannas*) through the process of guidance and respect for the teacher; and the intergenerational relationship through the continuous transmission of Islamic scholarly traditions.

Transcendental Communication Through the Steadfastness of Tawhid and Moral Integrity

Picture.5



1:07:40 second

Scenes from the Buya Hamka, Vol. 1

Source: <https://youtu.be/eJUVS4XimH8?si=PsvUiy04i9Df3YYPG>

Denotatively, the scene depicts a conversation between Buya Hamka and Nakashima in a formal room. Nakashima, wearing a Japanese military uniform, states that many people have noticed Buya Hamka's refusal to bow. Literally, this statement refers to Buya Hamka's refusal to perform *seikerei*—a ritual bow of respect toward the Japanese Emperor mandated by the Japanese occupation government.

On a connotative level, the refusal to bow carries symbolic and religious meanings of resistance to Japanese hegemony. Buya Hamka's stance of standing tall symbolizes steadfast faith, moral courage, and consistency in upholding the principles of *tawhid*. In a social context, this act also conveyed the message that religious identity and beliefs must

not be compromised, even under political pressure. Buya Hamka's stance represented the moral integrity of a religious scholar who made faith in Allah the primary foundation for determining his attitudes and actions.

On a mythic level, the film deconstructs the Japanese ideological construct, portraying the Emperor as a sacred figure with spiritual legitimacy that all colonized peoples must respect. In Japanese political mythology during the occupation, *seikerei* was understood not only as an ethic of respect for the state, but also as a symbol of spiritual loyalty to the Emperor—a figure believed to possess a divine dimension. Through Buya Hamka's refusal, the film constructs a counter-myth: that no worldly power can replace God's position as the sole supreme authority in human life. Thus, the film portrays the ideal religious scholar as the guardian of the purity of *tawhid* and as one who does not submit to any form of human worship.

From the perspective of transcendental communication, this scene represents the vertical relationship between humans and God, manifested in a commitment to preserving the purity of *tawhid*. Transcendental communication does not always take the form of ritual worship, such as prayer and supplication. However, it can also be realized through ethical actions that arise from an awareness of God's oneness and sovereignty. The concept of *tawhid* is the foundation that unifies all dimensions of a Muslim's life (Al-Attas, 2023). *Tawhid* functions not only as a theological belief but also as a principle that determines one's orientation in thinking, acting, and perceiving reality.

From this perspective, Buya Hamka's refusal to perform *seikerei* constitutes a form of transcendental communication, conveying a spiritual message that the highest obedience is owed solely to Allah. This stance reflects an inner dialogue that positions *tauḥid* as the guiding principle for ethical and political decision-making. From this perspective, Buya Hamka's refusal to perform *seikerei* constitutes a form of transcendental communication, as it conveys a spiritual message that the highest obedience is owed solely to Allah (As & Rustandi, 2022). This stance reflects an inner dialogue that positions *tauḥid* as a guiding principle for ethical and political decision-making.

Meanwhile, the Quran also clearly states that associating partners with Allah is a grave injustice, as in Surah Luqman, verse 13:

“O my child, do not associate partners with Allah. Indeed, shirk is a great injustice.”

This verse indicates that upholding tawhid is the cornerstone of education and morality in Islam. Buya Hamka's refusal to perform seikerei can be understood as an effort to avoid symbolic practices that could potentially obscure the principle of tawhid and open the door to excessive veneration of human beings.

Through a Roland Barthes-inspired semiotic reading, Buya Hamka's refusal to perform seikerei yields three layers of meaning. Denotatively, the scene depicts refusing to bow to the Japanese Emperor. Connotatively, this act represents moral courage, steadfastness of faith, and consistency in upholding Islamic identity amid political pressure. On the mythical level, the film constructs a narrative that no worldly power can replace Allah's position as the supreme authority in human life.

From a transcendental communication perspective, this scene demonstrates that tawhid is manifested not only in ritual worship but also in ethical and political actions oriented toward Allah. Buya Hamka's moral integrity stems from the transcendental awareness that a Muslim's highest loyalty is directed solely toward Allah. Therefore, the film **Buya Hamka Vol. 1** portrays tauhid as a spiritual force that gives rise to courage, principled consistency, and moral steadfastness in the face of the hegemony of power.

In addition to moral integrity and transcendental awareness, the film “Buya Hamka, Vol. 1” also highlights steadfastness in one's principles, as seen in the scene below.

Picture. 6



1:15:40 detik

Scenes from the Movie "Buya Hamka," Vol. 1

Source <https://youtu.be/eJUVS4XimH8?si=PsvUiy04i9Df3YYPG>

Denotatively, the scene depicts Buya Hamka wearing traditional attire and a peci while speaking with great conviction. The line "What I have been doing all this time..." indicates that Buya Hamka is explaining the stance and decisions he has made based on his beliefs and principles. On a literal level, the scene depicts a figure taking responsibility for his life choices and convictions in front of others.

On a connotative level, this scene represents the moral and spiritual integrity of a religious scholar in the face of pressure from those in power. His firm expression and choice of words indicate that positions of authority, status, or worldly gain hold no value if they must be obtained at the expense of the principles of truth and faith. The traditional attire and peci worn by Buya Hamka also carry symbolic meaning regarding Islamic identity, wisdom, and a close connection to the cultural and religious values that underpin his decision-making.

On a mythical level, the film constructs a narrative about a Muslim intellectual who uses Islamic values as the foundation for his political and social decisions. Buya Hamka is portrayed as a representative of the ulama, serving not only as a religious leader but also as the guardian of the nation's conscience. The film presents the myth that the ideal ulama is someone who maintains moral integrity and remains steadfast in the values of tawhid, even when facing the risk of losing status, power, or worldly gains.

From a transcendental communication perspective, this scene demonstrates that steadfastly upholding principles constitutes a form of vertical communication between humans and Allah. Buya Hamka's decision to remain true to the truth shows that pragmatic considerations do not determine his life's orientation, but by the awareness that every decision must be accounted for before Allah. Moral concepts in the Qur'an, such as *haqq* (truth), *taqwa* (piety), and *amanah* (moral responsibility), are relational concepts that

always connect humans with Allah as the center of ethical orientation (Izutsu, 2002). Thus, the moral actions of a believer are, in essence, a spiritual response to the awareness of God's presence and oversight.

From this perspective, Buya Hamka's stance demonstrates that moral integrity stems from transcendental communication that places Allah as the supreme authority in determining right and wrong. This steadfastness is not merely an ethical stance before fellow human beings, but also a form of devotion to Allah through a commitment to upholding the truth. Piety in the Qur'an does not stop at the ritual dimension but must give rise to moral consistency (*istiqamah*) in all aspects of life, including in the face of social and political pressure (Shihab, 1996). Buya Hamka's decision to remain steadfast in the principle of truth is a manifestation of transcendental communication that integrates faith, moral responsibility, and the courage to defend the values of tawhid.

In the Qur'an, Buya Hamka's stance demonstrates unwavering commitment to tawhid. This is in line with Qur'anic Surah Fussilat, verse 30:

"Indeed, those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' and then remain steadfast—the angels will descend upon them..."

This verse emphasizes the importance of *istiqamah* after professing faith in Allah. Faith is not enough to be merely verbal; it must be manifested through moral consistency in the face of life's various trials. Buya Hamka's steadfastness in upholding his principles embodies the meaning of *istiqamah* as taught in the Qur'an.

Buya Hamka's moral integrity stems from a consciousness of tawhid, which places Allah as the supreme guiding principle in thought and action. Loyalty to the truth is not merely an ethical act in the presence of others. However, a form of spiritual communication with Allah manifested through steadfastness, trustworthiness, and the courage to uphold the principles of truth. Therefore, the film *Buya Hamka Vol. 1* illustrates that steadfastness in tawhid gives rise to moral integrity, which enables a scholar to stand firm in the face of pressure from those in power and the temptations of worldly interests.

Academic Development

This study contributes to research on transcendental communication by demonstrating that it is not limited to ritualistic acts of worship, such as prayer, supplication, and remembrance of God, but is also manifested in social, educational, and moral actions grounded in the awareness of tawhid. Through the portrayal of the character Buya Hamka in the film “Buya Hamka Vol. 1”, transcendental communication is understood as a process that connects humans with God while simultaneously shaping human orientation toward interacting with others and social reality.

The research findings indicate that the film's transcendental dimension does not appear abstractly but is represented through symbols, dialogue, actions, and characters' decisions that embody Islamic values. When Buya Hamka performs a prostration of gratitude for Indonesia's independence, this act not only represents a form of individual worship but also demonstrates that social and historical experiences can be interpreted as spiritual experiences that encourage humans to establish communication with God. In this context, transcendental communication is understood as the awareness of placing God as the source of meaning in interpreting various life events.

Furthermore, this study expands our understanding that the pursuit of knowledge and the educational process also serve as spaces for transcendental communication. The film depicts activities such as reading religious texts, learning from one's parents, and striving to deepen one's understanding of religious knowledge as a form of devotion to Allah. Thus, the educational process is understood not merely as the transfer of knowledge but also as the cultivation of good manners, the instilling of a divine orientation, and the passing down of spiritual values across generations. This perspective reveals that intellectual and academic activities in Islam are, in essence, part of humanity's spiritual journey toward the knowledge of Allah (*ma'rifatullah*).

This study also demonstrates that transcendental communication possesses a strong ethical dimension. Buya Hamka's steadfastness in upholding the principle of tawhid, his rejection of *seikerei*, and his courage to speak the truth amid political pressure demonstrate that transcendental consciousness fosters moral integrity. In other words, a

spiritual relationship with Allah does not stop at belief and ritual. However, it entails the courage to uphold the truth, reject injustice, and maintain moral consistency in social and political life.

Based on these findings, this study proposes that, from an Islamic communication perspective, transcendental communication can be understood through three main dimensions. First, the spiritual-ritual dimension, namely, human communication with Allah through worship and expressions of gratitude. Second, the educational-transformative dimension, namely communication that takes place through the pursuit of knowledge, the cultivation of good manners, and the process of da'wah that guides people toward divine values. Third, the ethical-social dimension, namely transcendental communication that fosters moral integrity, the courage to uphold principles, and social responsibility oriented toward the values of tawhid.

Methodologically, this study also demonstrates that Roland Barthes's semiotic approach can be enriched through the perspective of transcendental communication. Until now, semiotic analysis has been widely used to uncover the ideological and cultural meanings behind media texts. However, this study shows that semiotics can also be used to identify the spiritual and religious dimensions hidden behind the signs, symbols, and narratives of films. The integration of Barthes's semiotics and transcendental communication produces an analytical framework that not only explains denotative, connotative, and mythical meanings but also reveals the divine orientation and spiritual messages represented through film.

Another contribution is the strengthening of the Islamic communication perspective, which has traditionally viewed da'wah as the verbal conveyance of messages. The findings of this study indicate that da'wah can also take place through visual and narrative representations in films. Characters' dialogue, expressions, actions, and moral choices can serve as a medium for conveying messages of tawhid, education, and ethics to the public. Thus, films are understood not only as cultural and entertainment products but also as a medium for da'wah capable of fostering their audience's spiritual and moral awareness.

Furthermore, this study proposes that transcendental communication is integrative because it connects the three primary human relationships: the relationship between humans and God (*hablun minallah*), the relationship between humans and their fellow humans (*hablun minannas*), and the relationship between humans and themselves through reflection and moral self-control. These three relationships are fully depicted in the film **Buya Hamka Vol. 1** through representations of gratitude, the pursuit of knowledge, *da'wah*, respect for teachers, steadfastness in *tawhid*, and the courage to uphold the principles of truth.

Thus, this study offers a conceptual framework in which transcendental communication in Islamic communication studies is understood not merely as a private spiritual activity but as a communication paradigm that shapes how humans understand reality, develop knowledge, build social relationships, and make moral decisions grounded in divine values. This paradigm also demonstrates that spirituality and social life are two interconnected and inseparable dimensions in a Muslim's communication practices.

CONCLUSION

The film **Buya Hamka Vol. 1** demonstrates that spirituality in Islam cannot be separated from social and human realities. Buya Hamka's awareness of God is evident in how he interprets events, builds scholarly traditions, carries out *da'wah*, and upholds the principles of truth in the face of pressure from those in power. Thus, transcendental communication in this film emerges as an awareness that simultaneously connects a person's relationship with God and their responsibilities as a social being.

This study affirms that transcendental communication is not merely a ritualistic, individual act of worship but also an ethical and spiritual foundation that shapes a person's worldview, attitudes, and actions in social life. In this context, film serves as a medium that represents Islamic values more concretely through symbols, dialogue, and characters' actions, thereby allowing transcendental messages to be understood in everyday life.

From an academic development perspective, this study offers the understanding that transcendental communication, as viewed through the lens of Islamic communication, has a broader scope, encompassing the internalization of the value of *tawhid*, the

cultivation of adab and scholarly traditions, and the strengthening of moral integrity within the social sphere. This perspective opens opportunities for the development of Islamic communication studies that focus not only on verbal da'wah but also on the representation of spiritual values in media and popular culture. Therefore, research on transcendental communication still has vast potential for development through diverse subjects, approaches, and social contexts, thereby enriching the body of knowledge in Islamic communication studies in Indonesia.

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