The Relevance of Religious Commodification in Ecranization of Films to the Internalization of Islamic Education in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This research examines factual issues, religious values, and forms of religious commodification in religious films into films and its relevance to internalizing Islamic education in higher education. Issues related to this topic are essential because the influence of movies is significant on students’ character. Internalizing religious values in students requires effective media. One of them is film. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. This study analyzed the movie as a learning media. There are three results obtained in this study. First, factual issues of religious issues are used by film producers to gain economic benefits. Second, the religious values in the film can attract the public's attention to religious films. It is a form of commodification of religion in producing films. Third, there is a relevance between religious films and the internalization of Islamic education in higher education.

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INTRODUCTION

Literature is a medium that has a significant role in human life. Literary works not only present beautiful language but also carry messages for life. Literary works are also the author's thoughts to convey his ideology.

Novels in Indonesia have various themes with various authors and social backgrounds. One of the themes that Indonesian people are interested in is religion. The religious theme referred to in this study is related to Islamic propaganda. Most Indonesians are Muslims, so it is not surprising that religious themes are fascinating to them.¹

Many translate literary works into other forms for audiences to appreciate literary works more. This conversion is often referred to as ecranization. Besides translation, ecranization is also a form of interpretation or reception of the reader (in this case, the film screenwriter). So, it is very likely that there will be changes, either additions, subtractions, or alterations in the ecranization process.²

The conversion of novels into films is one of the steps to answer readers' curiosity about the visualization of what they have read. Ecranization is a form of intertextual and reception of a work. The changes in translation or ecranization are a form of the reader's expectation horizon.³ Ecranization is also the screenwriter's perception of a text by considering the culture that developed at that time.⁴

A form of ecranization that often occurs in the entertainment world is the ecranization of novels into films. Best-selling novels are often made into movies. In recent years, religious novels have become novels that often get the attention of film production houses to be converted into films. This phenomenon began to develop when the novel Ayat-Ayat Cinta by Habiburrahman El Shirazy became a movie. Movie production certainly carries many messages that can be discussed. Movies can be seen from a cultural, historical, political, social, and economic perspective.

In other words, issues that people are interested in will be made into movies. One of the most popular movie themes is religion. With so many religious-themed films, film production houses utilize this religious aspect as an economic value or “selling item.” In the economic aspect, religious films are pretty interesting to study. Azra (in Yustati) states that more than one billion people adhere to Islam. It means that they become “market symptoms” that have an excellent opportunity to experience the inevitable process of commodification. So commodifying religion (Islam) in a movie can be an advantage for movie production houses because the marketing target is vast.

Commodification transforms services, goods, ideas, and people into objects of trade or commodities.³ Religious movies are spelled by the public, especially teenagers in college. Various forms of religious symbols in the movie become a trend often imitated. Religious

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³ Istadiyantia and Wati.
values in films can significantly affect the internalization of Islamic education, such as belief, faith, and piety. Forms that can be imitated include education, fashion, food, and others.

This research examines the commodification of religion in religious (Islamic) genre films that have been popular or best sellers in the last 10 years, namely *Merindu Cahaya de Amstel, Negeri 5 Menara, Surga yang Tak Dirindukan*, and *99 Cabaya di Langit Eropa*. The study of this film is interesting because it discusses the attributes of religious attributes and issues of religious issues in films that are used as selling points and their relevance to the internalization of religious education in Islamic universities.

Similar research has been conducted by Haryanto and Kartika, who examined the commodification of religion in cinema media as a selling strategy for the film industry. The research shows that the economic aspect is more important than the religious ideology in the movie *Sang Pencerah*. The history of KH Ahmad Dahlan in the concept of religious struggle is commodified by the production house, both scriptwriters, directors, producers, and sponsors of the film.6

Another study conducted by Aryasatya7 discusses the commodification of religion through television advertisements spelling halal. The results showed a new phenomenon of labeling Islam individually in the technological era. Islam is taken for granted. A person must be under himself and his beliefs in determining his choice.8 Ultimately, these symbols have given rise to symbolic capitalization, namely, capitalizing religious identity into an asset that brings profit.

The novelty displayed in this research is to discuss the relationship between literature, economy, religion, and its influence on the internalization of Islamic education in higher education. Based on this research, discussions about commodification are interesting and relevant to research. Because every time, an interesting issue in society is accompanied by a form of economic activity. This research examines the relevance of religious commodification in the ecranization of films to the internalization of Islamic education in higher education.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed qualitative descriptive research. The films chosen resulted from an ecranization of a best-selling novel in the year. The data in this study are based on the best-selling religious novels that were ecranized into big-screen films, namely *Merindu Cahaya de Amstel, Negeri 5 Menara, Surga yang Tak Dirindukan*, and *99 Cabaya di Langit Eropa*. Data related to the internalization of Islamic education in higher education were taken from the responses of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education and Tadris Bahasa Indonesia students, considering that there are literature courses in the study program. The film was used as the learning media analyzed.

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RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Factual Religious Issues in Religious Films as Religious Commodity Objects

Film as a creative work of cultural art is a mass entertainment medium in the form of audio-visual. However, movies are not just entertainment products but also cultural products. Movies reflect the reality of life that occurs in society. According to Law of the Republic of Indonesia No.33 of 2009 on Film, one of the functions of film is as an economic function. That is, film is able to promote the welfare of the community by paying attention to the principles of fair business competition.

This study analyzes the factual issues raised in Merindu Cabaya de Amstel, Negeri 5 Menara, Surga yang Tak Dirindukan, and 99 Cabaya di Langit Eropa. The following are presented issues film producers work on in converting novels into films.

First, the movie Merindu Cabaya de Amstel was released in early 2022. The religious drama category film tells a story about everyday life wrapped in various Islamic values. Maxstream Original and Unlimited Production, with Hadrah Daeng Ratu as the director, produced the movie. Oswin Bonifanz and Yoen K produced the film. The following is the cover of Merindu Cabaya de Amstel, one of this film's icons to attract viewers.

The movie Merindu Cabaya de Amstel also carries the story of converts to Islam set in the Netherlands, Europe. Currently, Islam is studied massively in the West, including in Europe, especially in this discussion in the Netherlands. However, it is predicted that Islam has become the second-largest non-Christian religion in the Netherlands.

The movie also raises religious tolerance with people of different religions and those of the same religion. The government is actively promoting religious moderation through the Ministry of Religious Affairs. One of the indicators of religious moderation is tolerance.

Based on Vincent Mosco's political economy view, commodification is a study of social relationships that support each other to shape the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication itself. The background of the selection of the ecranization of the novel Merindu Cabaya de Amstel by Arumi Ekawati into a film is not only because this novel is interesting but the social background of this film is an opportunity that this film will be interesting to watch because it is based on the current trend of society, namely hijrah and religious tolerance.

Second, the movie Negeri 5 Menara. Movies are born from market demand related to trends at a particular time. It is a product of market interest in religious films that are being favored. The development of religious films in the early 2000s presented many

11 Muslih, Pendidikan Islam di Negeri Belanda (Sejarah, Tantangan, dan Prospek).
factual issues, such as Islamic education, religious moderation, Islamic gender perspective, fashion, halal food, and many more.\footnote{Rahman Asri, “Membaca Film sebagai Sebuah Teks: Analisis Isi Film ‘Nanti Kita Cerita Tentang Hari Ini (NKCTHI),’” Jurnal Al Azhar Indonesia Seri Ilmu Sosial 1, no. 2 (2020): 75–86.}

The factual issue raised by the movie \textit{Negeri 5 Menara} is education. It accurately portrays the atmosphere of the pesantren environment. Telling the atmosphere of life in a boarding school is very interesting because it provides the audience with knowledge about boarding schools and all the activities.\footnote{Sufirmansyah, “Manifestation of Integrated-Andragogic Islamic Education Based on Kitab Kuning in Indonesian Pesantren,” Cendekia: Jurnal Kependidikan dan Kemasyarakatan 21, no. 1 (2023): 135–147.} The film's location setting is mainly in Pondok Modern Gontor, Ponorogo, packaged under another name, Pondok Madani.\footnote{Muhammad Farqi Panani, ‘Representasi Kehidupan Pondok Pesantren Modern dalam Film Negeri 5 Menara’ (Thesis, Universitas Pasundan, 2017).} \textit{Negeri 5 Menara} can change the way people view boarding schools for Muslims. The perception that boarding schools only learn about Islam changes in this movie.

Third, the movie \textit{99 Cahaya di Langit Eropa}. This type of da'wah film was released in 2013 and became one of the best-selling films. This movie carries issues related to the development of Islam in Europe and the struggle of how a Muslim lives in a place with a Muslim minority. This movie presents many historical places in Islam.

Fourth, the movie \textit{Surga yang Tak Dirindukan}. This movie features a fascinating blend of culture and Islam. The factual issues covered in this movie relate to how Islam views social problems. The theme of the film is related to the issue of polygamy. However, if examined in depth, this film displays many elements of tolerance, moderation in diversity, and a blend of religion and culture that is displayed interestingly. Ahmad Zaini concluded that films with da'wah nuances became a means to spread Islamic religious values by explicitly conveying them through dialogue and the attributes worn by the cast.\footnote{Ahmad Zaini, ‘Komodifikasi Nilai Islam dalam Film Indonesia Bernuansa Dakwah (Telah terhadap Film Laskar Pelangi, Ketika Cinta Bertasbih 1 & 2, Dan Mencari Hilal)’ (Thesis, Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo Semarang, 2019).}

Based on the four movies above, factual issues related to Islam are presented following the period when the movie was first broadcast. The factual issue of Islam being elevated into a movie is said to be a form of commodification of religion. It can be interpreted as a topic that attracts the public and is raised as the theme of a movie, undoubtedly being an advantage in terms of economic value.

\textbf{Islamic Religious Values in Religious Films as Religious Commodity Objects}

The film in this study is a religious film that raises Islam-related issues. The issues worked on in the film are related to the hijrah of a person into Islam or converts, the search for Allah, polygamy, Islamic education, and so on.

\textbf{a. Islamic Religious Values of Belief in Religious Films as Religious Commodity Objects}

\textit{Aqidah} means faith, trust, and belief. The person who has the creed is the one who is bound by the covenant and must keep it.\footnote{Rustam Ependi, \textit{Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam (Integrasi Konsep Aqidah, Akhlak, Ibadah dan Sosial dalam Alquran)} (Yogyakarta: Deepublish, 2020), 24.} An example or scope of the creed is...
as stated in the pillars of faith, including faith in Allah, faith in angels, faith in the books of Allah, faith in Prophets and Messengers, faith in the last day, and faith in qada’ and qadar.19

The value of faith in the movie Merindu Cahaya de Amstel can be seen from faith in God, God’s book, and God’s destiny. The depiction of these values in the film Merindu Cahaya de Amstel is known.

b. Islamic Religious Values Worship in Religion as an Object of Religious Commodity

Worship is divided into two types: worship mahdhab (special) and worship ghairu mahdhab (general). Mahdhab worship, for example, is mentioned in the pillars of Islam, and ghairu mahdhab worship is other than those contained in the pillars of Islam, such as prayer, dhikr, helping, preaching, living in harmony, and others.20

The movies Merindu Cahaya de Amstel, Negeri 5 Menara, Surga yang Tak Dirindukan, and 99 Cahaya di Langit Eropa show how to worship following Islamic values. The form of worship is shown in practices such as prayer, recitation, and others. Then the value of worship is also imprinted through the attributes used.

c. Islamic Religious Values of Akhlak in the Movie Merindu Cahaya De Amstel as an Object of Religious Commodity

The commodification of moral values in Islam depicted in the film is in the scene of the depiction of the characters shown. The portrayal of the characters in the movie is shown well so that it becomes the audience’s attention. The moral values in the film shown in this study are related to the character’s attitude in practicing religious obedience.

Forms of Religious Commodification in the Ecramization of Religious Novels to Films

Commodification transforms services, goods, ideas, and people into objects of trade or commodities.21 The commodification of religion is defined as the utilization of attributes or issues related to religion as a commodity or “selling item.”22 In today’s technological era, everyone can find and receive various information quickly. It is an opportunity for producers to utilize current and popular issues to become merchandise. It cannot be denied that movie production is a form of economic activity whose primary goal is profit-making.23

Vincent Mosco divides commodification into three aspects, namely content

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commodification, audience commodification, and labor commodification.\textsuperscript{24} The three aspects can be interpreted in the context of film as 1) commodification of content, which is all that is part of the content of the film, such as culture, setting, fashion, tools, and so on; 2) commodification of audiences, which is how films influence society or the audience; 3) commodification of workers, which is the use of figures who influence social life. In movies, the use of artists and actors who are well-known to the public.

Islamic religious films in this study can be seen from the perspective of the commodification of religion in them. It shows how Islam as a “commodity” is exploited for profit.\textsuperscript{25} It refers to the Indonesian Muslim population reaching 87%\textsuperscript{26} Film producers utilize forms of content commodification, audience commodification, and worker commodification to make Islam a commodity.

\textbf{a. Forms of Commodityfication of Religious Content in the Ecranization of Religious Novels to Films}

Content commodification is the media’s effort to change the message through existing technology towards a meaningful interpretation system to become a marketable message.\textsuperscript{27} Content commodification is found in all scenes that show the commodification of Islamic religious values. In addition, the commodification of content is mainly found in religious films resulting from the ecranization of novels. \textit{Negeri 5 Menara} shows an Islamic boarding school as the setting. The location selection in this movie is quite interesting because it is located in the Gontor Islamic Boarding School, which is renamed Pondok Madani in this movie. Relating this location selection to economic practices can be interpreted as a form of commodification of religion. Selecting a location that is well-known to the public will generate public interest in watching the movie.

The producers of \textit{Merindu Cahaya de Amstel} and \textit{99 Cahaya di Langit Eropa} have also chosen to utilize an interesting place for the audience. Moreover, the movie \textit{99 Cahaya di Langit Eropa} portrays the history and development of Islam in Europe. So, it features many famous places in Europe connected with the history and development of Islam.

\begin{itemize}
\item Syah, “Da’wah in Islamic Films in Indonesia (Between Da’wah Idealism and Religious Commodification),”
\end{itemize}
In one of the scenes, Hanum, Ayse, and Fatma visit Kahlenberg Hill. This hill is the historical place of The Battle of Vienna. In the past, an invasion from Europe led by the Polish king forced Kara Mustafa, the Turkish Ottoman Empire commander, to withdraw his troops. This defeat prompted the Ottoman Turks to end the expedition to spread Islam in European lands.

As shown in the picture above, the movie *Surga yang Tak Dirindukan* features quite a lot of Indonesian culture. In this scene, shadow puppets are displayed neatly in a shadow puppet box. The previous scene shows a leather puppet craftsman making a typical Yogyakarta *gagrag* leather puppet. In addition, shadow puppets are used to propagate religions, including Islam and Hinduism.

Wayang is an Indonesian folk performing art that uses puppets or human-shaped characters or characters played by puppeteers. Wayang often depicts epic stories, including stories from Islam and Hinduism. When religious themes in wayang

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30 Sumarno and Swastika, “The Function of Wayang Kulit in the Spreading of Islamic Relig in
stories or performances are altered or manipulated for commercial or entertainment purposes, wayang can be used as a form of religious commodification.

Therefore, wayang stories can lose their religious overtones and become mere entertainment.\textsuperscript{31} Although wayang has significant cultural and artistic value in Indonesia's heritage, it is merely used as an aesthetic value in this scene. The audience can gain moral, ethical, and spiritual teachings through puppets as media.\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image.png}
\caption{Snapshot of the Fusion of Cultures and the Wearing of Muslim Clothing}
\end{figure}

The movie \textit{Surga Yang Tak Dirindukan} displays many Indonesian cultural customs and Islamic nuances. A dancer wearing traditional Javanese clothing appears at the front, and several people at the back of the screen.

\textbf{b. Forms of Commodification of Religious Audiences in the Ecranization of Religious Novels to Films}

This view sees that the audience performs the function of commodification because the rating of the program or division is the will of the audience itself. Seeing this, the community as an audience must take part in controlling the content of the media, especially if it turns out that the media is no longer under the norms in society.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{31} Al Fida Hidayati and Yuanita Aprilandini Siregar, “Commodification of Local Culture in the Development of Wayang Villages Tourism,” \textit{Baileo: Jurnal Sosial Humaniora} 1, no. 2 (2024): 176–191.
The commodification of religion in this section is because, in this scene, Hanum is wearing a product from the *Wardah* brand. This brand is a brand that is very synonymous with Muslim women because it makes Muslim women icons in marketing these products. Movie producers have carried out the commodification of audiences by displaying sponsors’ merchandise. Indirectly, the movie advertises the sponsor's merchandise through brands with Islamic nuances, such as *Wardah*, *Rabbani*, *Zalora*, and Islamic magazine.

c. **Forms of Commodification of Religious Workers in the Ecranization of Religious Novels to Films**

In Vincent Moscow's political economy theory, figures or workers have a central role in buying and selling practices or can be said to be commodity goods. The selection of characters in the movie *Surga yang Tak Dirindukan*, the actors and artists who are well-known for starring in religious films, especially Islam, so that the characters in this movie can represent Islam.

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Figure 4. *Wardah* Products

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This picture shows that characters or workers have significant value in economic activities. The selection of characters is able to provide high value to a product, in this case, a movie. The movie *Surga yang Tak Dirindukan* features characters known and loved by the Indonesian people, such as Fedi Nuril and Laudya Cynthia Bella. The selection of characters, or, in Vincent Moscow's theory, workers in this film, is motivated by the frequent presence of these characters in Islamic religious films. Therefore, the stereotype of the character can represent Islam itself.

The selection of characters that have gone through the casting process has also considered the actor's suitability for the role. In addition, actors who can attract people to watch the films produced are also sought. It is the commercialization of characters or workers to reap enormous profits.

**Religious Values in Religious Films and Their Relevance to the Internalization of Islamic Education in Higher Education**

Religious movies feature interesting story elements. People, especially teenagers, imitate what is shown in movies. For example, the movie *Negeri 5 Menara* shows the life of a boarding school that is so interesting. The boarding school used as a background is the Gontor boarding school. It is one of the most widely known boarding schools in Indonesia. The motivational value displayed in this movie is that despite studying in a boarding school, the characters in *Negeri 5 Menara* can succeed.

Critical discussions conducted with respondents, namely PGMI and Tadris Bahasa Indonesia students, as many as 78 respondents, show that they agree that in religious films, religion can be said to be a commodity. In addition, there is indeed an influence caused by seeing religious films related to the internalization of Islamic education. Referring to the movie *Negeri 5 Menara*, the motivation to study Islamic education increases.

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The pie chart above shows that 89% of respondents stated that there is an element of utilization of religion as a commodity in religious films. It can be drawn that the birth of religious films in the films in this study came from best-selling novels that were previously known to the public. The ecranization of religious novels into films is inseparable from its economic elements. However, respondents stated that religious films can be influential in internalizing Islamic religious education for adolescents, especially students of the age, according to the film's target market. It can be seen in the pie chart above, which shows that 30.1% stated that it was very influential, and 68.5% stated that it was influential. Only 1.4% stated that there was no effect.

Movies and teenagers, especially college students, are two inseparable things. There is an inner experience gained after seeing a movie. Concerning lifestyle, many teenagers imitate what is in the movie and is considered interesting. Religious films have a setting that depicts Islam and Islamic identity, both at home and abroad, such as Egypt, Turkey, and other places. Teenagers certainly feel interested and see the fame of Islam as a great religion and increase faith. A lifestyle with Islamic nuances and keeping up with the times is shown; of course, there are consequences. The data from the respondents shows that many teenagers follow the trends brought in the movie, and they think the presence of religious films is essential to watch.

The pie charts show that respondents tend to follow many lifestyles considered interesting from religious films, as much as 71.28%. For example, fashion is most imitated, such as clothing and hijab styles. Respondents consider religious movies essential to see because they can easily give them a view of how Islam is presented beautifully and become a guide for teenagers about modern Islam. However, a few respondents gave a negative assessment of the presence of religious films. It can certainly be understood due to
respondents' tendencies, such as lack of access to watching movies and the image of movies that are considered to have a destructive impact on their experiences.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis that has been carried out, it is concluded that film producers utilize Islamic religious issues that develop in society, good Islamic values, and forms of commodification such as commodification through film content, the labor involved in filmmaking, and audiences to obtain maximum profit. The value of Islam commodified in the ecranization of novels into films is the value of faith, which is also the value of worship and moral values. This research focuses on Islam as good, loving, and tolerant, so the Islamic values displayed are good. Religious films considerably influence the internalization of Islamic religious education, especially for teenagers in higher education. It can be understood because students and their age are inseparable from films. Religious films portray a beautiful, educated, and modern Islamic life. It can be a good means of media in internalizing Islamic education to adolescents and their age.

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