

Representation of Qur'anic Stories in *The Journey* Anime

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ABSTRACT

The Journey anime, inspired by Qur'anic stories, faces challenges in maintaining narrative integrity and conveying Islamic moral values. This study evaluates the representation of Qur'anic elements in the anime and its impact on viewers' understanding of Islam and religion. Using a qualitative method and the "Questions of Representation" framework, the research applies discourse analysis supported by media studies, Islamic history, and Qur'anic studies. Primary data are taken from the anime, with secondary sources from academic literature. Findings show that while the anime preserves key Islamic messages, it offers a superficial portrayal and lacks depth in religious authenticity and gender representation. The study highlights the importance of accurate and ethical portrayals of religion in anime.

INTRODUCTION

The Journey anime is a work that attracts attention because it combines elements from the Qur'anic story with a modern animation format, adapted by a collaboration between the Saudi Arabian studio "Manga Productions" and the Japanese studio "Toei Animation" (Kumparan, 2021). The anime is inspired by various stories in the Qur'ān, including the story of Abrahah and the elephant army and the stories of the Prophet, which bring complex challenges related to historical accuracy and narrative integrity. These challenges arise primarily in how Islamic moral messages are conveyed to the audience, as well as how visual and narrative depictions can maintain the essence of these religious stories. These concerns include the potential for narrative alterations or visual interpretations that may affect the audience's understanding and perception of Islamic teachings (Azzen, 2023).

Representations of religion in popular media such as anime have a significant impact on the way people understand and interpret religious values (Branston & Stafford, 2003). Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the representation of Qur'anic stories in *The Journey* anime is important to understand the implications of these representations on society. The female characters in this anime, for example, need to be evaluated for their equal role with men as taught in the Qur'an (Ivana, 2023). Novice Muslim audiences may be attracted to the action and adventure genres presented, but it is important to assess the portrayal of characters such as Aws who transforms from bandits to good after listening to the story of the Prophet, to ensure accuracy. In addition, the positive and negative portrayals in this anime must be considered to assess their impact on the moral message conveyed (Qohar, 2022).

The cooperation between two different cultures, namely Saudi Arabia and Japan, in creating this anime shows an attempt to create an inclusive and accurate representation (Daniel, 2021). It is important to continue to encourage dialog and deep reflection on the way religion and culture are represented in popular media, so as to achieve a better understanding of cultural and religious diversity (Bakti, 2000).

The Journey anime has not only attracted attention for its unique collaborations, but also for its ability to bring religious narratives into a format that is more accessible to the younger generation. In this context, it is important to consider how the narratives and characters in this anime are represented and how they affect the audience. For example, the characters in this anime should be evaluated from the perspective of gender equality taught in the Qur'an. Previous research shows that gender representations in popular media are often biased and unbalanced (Nikolaidis, 2011). Therefore, the representation of female characters in this anime needs to be closely examined to ensure that they are given equal roles to men, in accordance with Islamic values.

In addition, the representation of Qur'anic stories in this anime needs to be evaluated in terms of its accuracy. The audience may not fully understand the complexity of these stories if they are not presented in an appropriate manner. Studies on religious representations in popular media show that inaccurate representations can lead to misunderstandings of the religion's teachings

(Bucciferro, 2021). In the case of *The Journey* anime, it is important to ensure that the Qur'anic stories are presented in a way that is accurate and respects the integrity of the original narrative.

Besides the narrative and character aspects, the visualization in this anime also plays an important role in the representation of the Qur'anic story. Inappropriate visualization can change the essence of the original story and affect the audience's understanding of Islamic teachings. For example, the use of symbols and iconography in this anime needs to be evaluated to ensure that they fit the right cultural and religious context. Research shows that visualizations in popular media can influence the way audiences understand and interpret the narratives presented (Edström, 2018). *The* visualizations in the anime *The Journey* need to be looked at carefully to ensure that they support the narrative and the moral message that is being conveyed.

The collaboration between "Manga Productions" and "Toei Animation" in creating this anime shows an attempt to create an inclusive and accurate representation. This collaboration brings different cultural perspectives, which can enrich the narrative and visualization in this anime. However, this collaboration also presents challenges in bringing together two different cultural perspectives. Studies on international collaboration in media show that cultural differences can affect the way narratives and visualizations are presented (Tambunan & Bakti, 2016). It is important to ensure that this collaboration results in a consistent and accurate representation of the Qur'anic stories.

The Journey anime also needs to be evaluated from an audience perspective. Novice Muslim audiences may have different expectations of the representation of Qur'anic stories compared to non-Muslim audiences. Studies show that audiences with different cultural and religious backgrounds can have different perceptions of media representations (Bucciferro, 2021). In addition, it is also important to consider the long-term impact of the representation of Qur'anic stories in this anime. Media representations can influence the way audiences understand and interpret religious values in the long run. Studies show that media representations can shape audience perceptions and attitudes towards religion and culture (Edström, 2018). The researcher wanted to ensure that the representation of Qur'anic stories in this anime supports an accurate and inclusive understanding of Islamic teachings.

Overall, *The Journey* anime is an interesting work to analyze from the perspective of the representation of Qur'anic stories by considering various aspects of gender, reality, character portrayal, and alternative ways of changing representation in this evaluation. By understanding how Qur'anic stories are represented in this anime, we can gain a better insight into how popular media can influence our understanding and perception of religious values. This analysis can also provide valuable insight into how to create more inclusive and accurate representations in popular media, thus achieving a better understanding of cultural and religious diversity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of this research is "*Questions of representation*" in the book *The Media Student's Book* written by Gill Branston and Roy Stafford (2003). The theoretical elements, namely "*Representations and Gender*" to examine the way gender is displayed and shaped by anime. The "*Representations and the Real*" to analyze the representation of anime in reflecting reality. "*Questions of Positive and Negative Images*" to explore the portrayal of characters and events in *The Journey* anime as positive or negative. The last theoretical element, "*Other Ways of Changing Representations*", is to examine alternatives in the representation of Qur'anic stories that are more inclusive and accurate.

The "*Questions of representation*" theory is a concept in media studies that emphasizes that media images, although seemingly realistic or plausible, never simply present the world directly. They are always constructions or representations, not transparent windows into the real world. This theory also raises questions about how groups, identities, or events that exist partly outside the media have been represented in the media, which has broad political implications related to the world of political representation (Branston & Stafford, 2003).

This theory has 4 theoretical elements, including:

"*Representations and Gender*" is a theoretical element that addresses the way gender is represented in the media and influences people's perception and understanding of gender. The difference between sex and gender is an important basis for understanding this concept. Sex refers to the biological differences between men and women, such as sex organs and hormonal composition. Meanwhile, gender is a cultural construct that builds on biological foundations, encompassing the roles, behaviors and identities deemed appropriate for men and women in a given culture (Branston & Stafford, 2003)..

Media often represent women and men according to long-established cultural stereotypes. Women are often portrayed as homemakers, while men are depicted in authoritative or dominant roles. Content analysis shows that despite changes since the late 1970s and early 1980s, women are still often represented according to traditional stereotypes. Gender representations in the media can reinforce cultural assumptions about gender roles. For example, because women can bear children, they are often assumed to stay at home and care for children, which is considered "natural". These representations can also influence social structures, such as laws, tax arrangements and childcare policies (Branston & Stafford, 2003).

"*Representations and the Real*" is a theoretical element that discusses how media represent reality and how these representations *affect* our perception of the real world. Media never simply presents the world directly, even if media images seem realistic or plausible. They are always constructions or representations, not transparent windows into the real world. This means that every image, story or report in the media is the result of choices and interpretations made by its creators, which *influence* how we understand reality (Branston & Stafford, 2003).

Representation in the media has far-reaching political implications. It relates to how groups, identities or events that exist partly outside the media have been represented in the media. For example, representations of labor unions or our representatives in parliament not only reflect reality but also shape public perceptions of the legitimacy and importance of those entities. This suggests that the media has the power to *influence* public opinion and political decisions through its representations.

The idea of reflection is too simple and mirror-like, especially for fantasy forms like horror, science fiction or romance. It implies that there is something simple enough called 'reality' to be reflected one-to-one without distortion, whereas some forms, such as comedy, rely on stereotypes that are exaggerated and playfully understood by the audience. In such cases, the media not only reflects reality but also creates a world full of interpretation and imagination.

"*Questions of Positive and Negative Images*" is a theoretical element that addresses how marginalized or oppressed groups are represented in the media, and how these representations can *affect* people's perceptions and understanding of these groups. History shows that when oppressed groups, such as women or black people, realize their political and social oppression, they begin to try to change that oppression at the level of representation. After struggling for simple visibility, they often try to replace 'negative' images with 'positive' images (Branston & Stafford, 2003).

However, the process of replacing negative images with positive ones is complex and involves several areas, including debates on how to define represented 'communities', the question of what counts as a 'positive' representation, and the effects of working practices in the media on these images. It is not always easy to determine what constitutes positive representation as this can be highly subjective and influenced by many factors, including the cultural and social backgrounds of both the representing and represented individuals.

'Negative' images are not always best countered by 'positive' images, but by the availability of a fuller range of ways to imagine. This is easier to do in a soap opera than in a feature film, and certainly easier when many members of the group in question are employed in the meaning-making industry. Diversification in representation allows audiences to see and understand different aspects of a group's experience and identity, which not only replaces stereotypes but also enriches narratives and perceptions of the group.

"*Other Ways of Changing Representations*" is a theoretical element that discusses alternative methods of changing the way certain groups are represented in the media. Representations, discourses and stereotypes are an integral part of the material world and not just unimportant additions. Therefore, it is important not to limit the debate on representation to textual analysis, but also to consider media industries and their material processes. Media industries play an important role in shaping generally accepted assumptions. Therefore, broader social activity is crucial in shifting these accepted assumptions.

Conceptual Frame

1. Concept of Equality - "*Representations and gender*"

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says in Surah An-Nisa verse 32, meaning: "*Do not covet (envy) what Allah has bestowed on some of you over others. For men there is a share of what they have earned, and for women there is a share of what they have earned. Ask Allah for some of His bounty. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing of all things.*" (Qur'an Ministry of Religious Affairs, n.d.).

Each sex, whether male or female, has its own nature. In addition, God emphasizes that the differences between the two sexes have gifts and privileges. From the excerpt above, we can conclude that both should perform their main duties because of their God-given differences. Therefore, because of their similarities, men and women are given equal rights and responsibilities in the workplace. Quraish Shihab argues that the God-given potential of all humans, male and female, is not affected by their biological differences. In the Qur'an, God Almighty praises the first door, meaning one who remembers events and the earth and thinks about them. Both have the same level of intelligence and thinking ability. It is thinking and memory that drives humans to uncover the secrets of the universe (Qolbah et al., 2023).

2. Concepts of Verification and Truth - "*Representations and the real*"

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6, meaning: "*O you who believe, if a wicked man comes to you with important news, then research it so that you do not harm a people through your ignorance and regret what you have done.*" (Qur'an Ministry of Religious Affairs, n.d.).

Communication consists of at least three components: communicator, message, and communicant. Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6 urges believers to act as communicators or receivers of messages, while the *fasiq* act as communicators or messengers, and the news or reports they deliver are the messages in communication. As a believer, communication is done so that justice can be served after first there is clarity in the message conveyed and an explanation of the reasons for the person conveying the message. If the Prophet had truly believed what his messenger said in his time, there would have been no dispute until blood flowed. Although the messenger abandoned the task out of fear, he said that a group of new converts refused to hand over the *zakat* in order to preserve his reputation. It is not surprising that the Prophet was angry in this regard as he clearly held to the agreement that they would tithe. Sending subsequent messengers to both sides until the Prophet's presence was an opportunity to clarify the truth of the news (Syarifudin, 2019).

3. Concept of Manners and Ethics - "*Questions of positive and negative images*"

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 11, meaning: "*O you who have believed, let not one people make fun of another people (for) it may be that they (the made fun of) are better than they (the made fun of) and let not women (make fun of) other women (for) it may be that they (the made fun of) are better than they (the made fun of). Do not revile one another and call one another by bad names. The worst of calls is (calling the wicked) after believing. Those who do not repent are the wrongdoers.*" (Qur'an Ministry of Religious Affairs, n.d.).

Surah Al-Hujurat verse 11 explains that Allah forbids believers from making fun of each other. In Allah's sight, the person being made fun of may be

more noble. The virtual world seems to have no boundaries and can be accessed by all ages and social groups, even children and toddlers. Everyone can carry out negative actions that can harm others, both individuals and groups, with anonymous mode or by being addressed or mentioned directly or overtly, causing conflict and fighting against each other (Juminem, 2019).

4. Concepts of Justice and Ihsan - "*Other ways of changing Representations*"

Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala says in Surah An-Nahl verse 90, meaning: "*Verily, Allah enjoins justice, doing good, and giving aid to relatives. He (also) forbids evil deeds, wrongdoing, and enmity. He gives you lessons that you may remember.*" (Qur'an Ministry of Religious Affairs, n.d.).

In *al-Jāmi' li ahkāmī al-Quran*, Al-Qurṭubī explains six issues related to the explanation of the verse on "justice" in Surah An-Nahl verse 90 above, among them explaining that this is the most complete Qur'anic verse on what is good and what is bad. Al-Qurṭubī's explanation of the verse of "justice" clearly shows that justice is not just a necessity; it is a divine command that must be fulfilled by His servants (Mz et al., 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This research uses media approaches, Islamic History, and Qur'anic studies with a critical paradigm. The research method, which is qualitative with primary data sources from Bstation and the Qur'an. *The* subject of the research is *The Journey* anime itself, including narrative, characters, visuals, and moral messages conveyed, while the object is the Qur'anic stories adapted in the anime. The type of data is library documentation. Data will be collected and supported with secondary sources from books and journal articles. The type of research used is discourse analysis conducted to identify the representation of the Qur'anic stories, visual interpretation, and religious messages in the anime.

In this study, researchers used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research emphasizes more on natural quality because it concerns the understanding, concepts, values, and characteristics associated with the object of research (Kaelan, 2010). The fact that the text or discourse displayed in the mass media has such an effect on humans encourages mass media research. All activities and symbolic meanings can occur in mass media texts. Basically, texts broadcast in the media are not really free of value. Texts have basically been regarded as favorable facts because they always contain interests for the basic human consciousness. Texts are clearly used to win the struggle for certain class ideas, interests or beliefs. Media texts are already ideological to a certain extent. *The* critical paradigm aims to explore reality in scientific research, including the analysis or critical study of media texts, which in this study is the anime *The Journey* (Wuryanta, 2018). This research also uses a media approach because it examines anime as popular media and is studied with media theory, it is said to be an Islamic History approach because *The Journey* anime represents the stories of the Prophet, as well as Qur'anic studies of course because the story represented is inseparable from the Qur'anic verse. The methods consist of:

Subjects and Objects

The research subject is a line or research boundary that helps researchers determine the object or person as the attachment point of the research variable. Research subjects can also be defined as components of objects, individuals, or organisms as sources of information needed to collect research data (*Research Subjects Are*, 2023). As for the object of research, it is the nature of the state (attributes) of objects, people, or circumstances that are the focus of research. The nature of the situation can be in the form of quantity or quality (objects, people, or institutions), as well as behavior, activities, opinions, assessment perspectives, pro-contra or sympathy-antipathy attitudes, mental states, etc. It can also be in the form of institutional processes and results (Priyatna, 2017).

Data Source and Type

Here, researchers classify 2 data sources, namely primary and secondary. Primary data sources are books that are directly related to the material object of research, while secondary data sources are books and literature related to the material object, as well as literature related to the formal object or books as support in describing the material object of research (Kaelan, 2010). The primary data sources used are Bstation (bilibili.tv) (*The Journey Dub Arab Sub indo | bilibili*, n.d.) The secondary data used are books, journal articles, and relevant references.

Data Collection

In qualitative research, the researcher is a key instrument who is directly involved in conducting research. The following are the stages of researchers in collecting data:

First, reading at the symbolic level. At this stage, it is not necessary to read thoroughly first, but rather to get a synopsis of the contents of the book, chapters, sub-chapters, and the smallest parts. It starts with reading the title of the book, then the table of contents. This aims to fulfill and develop the research map. Any gist of the reading was recorded on data cards.

Second, reading at the semantic level. In this second stage, researchers read in more detail and capture the substance of the data. Each category of data is simultaneously analyzed. This stage of data collection prioritizes primary data over secondary data (Kaelan, 2010).

Data Collection Instruments

In collecting data, the researcher encountered research data that had accumulated and required further handling. The researcher used an instrument by visiting the Bstation website, <https://www.bilibili.tv/id> and looking for *The Journey* anime with good comments and Indonesian subtitles. In addition, in secondary data collection, the researcher searched for data on google scholars and filtered it. All data was collected in Zotero for symbolic reading through abstracts, methods, and conclusions. Finally, some data that was very supportive was read and analyzed thoroughly.

Data Analysis

In the data analysis method, researchers reduce raw data and shorten it to the essence, arranged systematically so that it is easy to organize. Through the data reduction process, researchers can easily direct the results of the analysis towards theoretical construction. The next method is data classification. Researchers grouped data based on their respective characteristics based on the formal object of research.

The last method in analyzing data that researchers do is data display. At this stage, it is done by categorizing, grouping, classifying, and compiling a system according to the research problem map. The goal is that if a shortcoming is found, it will be very easy to find so that the researcher collects additional data (Qomar, 2022).

Data Verification

In research theory, data verification is the process of ensuring that the data entered is the same as the original source data; in other words, the previous data has been used as a reference for the new data entered. The researcher verifies the data that has been analyzed and does not come from the main reference so that the data entered really matches the original data (Verihubs, 2022).

RESEARCH RESULT

Toei Animation and Manga Productions made *The Journey* anime in 2021. The anime focuses on the battle of the people of Makkah against Abrahah's elephant army in 570 AD. The anime was criticized for creating negative stereotypes about Islam. In *The Journey* anime, the discourse on representation can be seen from the text level (macro structure, superstructure, and micro structure). 1. *The* macro structure of *The Journey* anime is a story about the struggle of the people of Makkah against Abrahah's elephant army. The genre is action and adventure. 2. *The* superstructure of *The Journey* anime consists of three main parts: beginning, middle, and end. 3. Microstructure is the details in the story. In *The Journey* anime, the microstructure consists of dialog, scenes, and music. Discourse on representation can be seen in macro, superstructure, and micro structure. For example, the macro structure of *The Journey* anime can talk about courage, patriotism, and love for the country. Meanwhile, the superstructure of *The Journey* anime, which consists of three main parts: beginning, middle, and end, can talk about the journey of life, struggle, and victory. Finally, the microstructure of *The Journey* anime, which consists of dialog, scenes, and music, can talk about life's journey, struggle, and victory (Hidayah & Utomo, 2023).



Figure 1. Men fighting, without women

This image reflects traditional representations where men are depicted as warriors or fighters. This representation conforms to cultural stereotypes in many societies that assume that the task of fighting or warfare is a male responsibility. In many historical and religious accounts, women's roles are often limited to domestic or supporting roles, while men are shown as protectors and warriors.

In the context of Qur'anic stories and Islamic history, many stories depict men as warriors and leaders in battle. This may reflect historical views on gender at the time. However, it is important to note that the Qur'an and Islamic teachings also emphasize the important role of women in society and the family, and give them significant rights and responsibilities.

According to Branston and Stafford's "*Questions of Representation*" theory, gender representations in media not only reflect reality but also shape and reinforce cultural stereotypes. In this case, the representation of men as the only warriors in this anime may reinforce traditional views of gender roles, which may affect the audience's perception of what is considered a 'normal' role for men and women.



Figure 2. Attack of Abrahah's Army

This image shows Abrahah's army preparing to attack with large elephants, which can be linked to the concept of verification and truth in the representation of reality. In the context of media representation, especially in depicting historical or religious events, it is very important to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of the narrative conveyed.

In the Qur'an, Allah SWT says in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6, which reminds us to always verify the truth of the information we receive, especially from unreliable sources. This verse emphasizes the importance of being careful in receiving and spreading news to avoid mistakes that can harm others. In the case of Abrahah's attack, we are taught to understand the context and truth behind the event.

The Journey anime attempts to represent the story of Abrahah's famous attack in Surah Al-Fil. This attack involves the use of elephants, which is a prominent visual element in this picture. These visual representations must match the historical and religious narratives to ensure that the audience gets an accurate understanding of the event. In this context, it is important for the media to not only showcase the event in a spectacular manner but also take into account its historical accuracy and the moral message it seeks to convey.

Moreover, these representations must be seen in a broader social and cultural context. In Surah Al-Fil, Allah destroyed Abrahah's army as a lesson to mankind about His power and justice. Therefore, the visual representation in this anime should pay attention to the moral and spiritual message of the event, so that it not only depicts the physical event but also its essence and deeper meaning.



Figure 3. Aws, the main character, is forced to steal

This image shows the characters in the anime *The Journey* engaging in unethical activities in order to survive, namely stealing for the bandits who captured them. This can be related to the concept of adab and ethics in Islam, particularly in the context of "Questions of positive and negative images" as explained in Surah Al-Hujurat verse 11. Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala reminds

Muslims not to make fun of or criticize each other, as well as not to call each other bad names. This verse emphasizes the importance of manners and ethics in social interactions, including how we judge and treat others.

In the context of the anime *The Journey*, the character Aws is forced to commit unethical acts, such as stealing, in order to survive. This shows the moral dilemmas often faced in extreme situations. While these actions can be seen as negative, it is important to consider the context and reasoning behind such actions before judging.

Adab and ethics in Islam emphasize the importance of behaving kindly and fairly towards fellow human beings. Even in difficult situations, Muslims are taught to maintain their moral integrity and seek solutions that do not violate religious principles. In Aws' case, although he was forced to commit acts that were against the teachings of Islam, this can be seen as an illustration of the moral complexities and difficulties that individuals face in stressful situations.

The anime depicts characters in difficult situations, which force them to make difficult decisions. Such representations highlight the importance of understanding the background and context before judging someone's actions. This is in line with Islamic teachings not to be quick to judge others based on visible actions, as there may be factors unknown to us that *influenced* their decisions.

According to the "Questions of positive and negative images" theory, representations in the media not only reflect reality but can also shape public perception. Showing characters struggling with moral dilemmas can provide a more humanized and complex view of the situations people face in real life. It can also open a dialog about the importance of empathy, understanding, and seeking better solutions in difficult situations.



Figure 4. Aws wants to fight to make amends for his past mistakes

In the context of "Other ways of changing Representations", the representation of Aws as a character who transforms from a bandit to a fighter for justice provides a strong example of how the media can portray the process

of change and redemption. It shows that even if someone has a dark past, they still have the ability to change and do good. This representation is crucial as it can inspire the audience not to be quick to judge others based on their past, but instead provide opportunities for improvement and redemption.

The anime also emphasizes the values of justice and *ihsan*, where Aws seeks to right his past wrongs in a positive and constructive way. This reflects Allah's command in Surah An-Nahl verse 90, where Muslims are reminded to always be just and do good. By showing the transformation of characters like Aws, the anime helps promote the message that everyone has the potential to change and do good deeds, regardless of their past.

DISCUSSION

The Journey anime provides an interesting look at how Qur'anic stories can be represented in popular media such as anime. This analysis not only reveals the challenges of maintaining the narrative integrity of the stories, but also how the moral message of Islam is conveyed to a wide and diverse audience. In this context, it is important to explore some key aspects of these representations, including gender representations, realities, positive and negative images, and alternative ways of changing representations.

One important aspect that needs to be analyzed in *The Journey* anime is how gender is represented. Gender representation in the media is often filled with stereotypes that can reinforce traditional views of gender roles. In many cases, women are often portrayed in subordinate or sexualized roles, while men are portrayed in dominant or authoritative roles. These representations can influence audience perceptions of what are considered 'normal' roles for men and women (Anggoro, 2019).

In *The Journey*, female characters such as the Aws should be evaluated whether they are given equal roles to men in accordance with Islamic values. Previous studies have shown that more realistic or positive gender representations of underrepresented groups can progressively change audience perceptions (Bucciferro, 2021). For example, research by Branston and Stafford (2003) revealed that despite changes since the late 1970s and early 1980s, women are still often represented according to traditional stereotypes. This emphasizes the importance of understanding the social and cultural context of gender representation in the media (Amalia, 2024).

The importance of balanced gender representation can also be seen in its impact on young audiences. Strong and independent female characters can provide positive and inspiring examples for female viewers, while fair and equal representation can help change stereotypical views of gender roles in society. In this context, *The Journey* anime has the potential to be an effective educational tool in teaching the values of gender equality in accordance with Islamic teachings (Azis & Yuwita, 2023).

The "*Representations and the Real*" element of *the* theory underlines that media never simply presents the world directly, but is always a construction or re-presentation. In *The Journey* anime, it was important to ensure that the representations of the Qur'anic stories were presented in a way that was

accurate and respected the integrity of the original narrative (Branston & Stafford, 2003).. Every image, story, or report in the media is the result of the choices and interpretations made by its creators (Adeni & Bakti, 2020).

For example, the visualization of Abrahah's army attacking with huge elephants must fit the historical and religious narrative to ensure that the audience gets an accurate understanding of the event. Inaccurate representations can lead to misunderstandings about religious teachings (Azis & Yuwita, 2023). Hence, anime creators need to collaborate with historical and religious experts to ensure that these stories are represented correctly (Azzen, 2023).

In Surah Al-Hujurat verse 6, Allah reminds Muslims to always verify the truth of information received before disseminating it. This principle is particularly relevant in the context of media representation, where accuracy and honesty are key to maintaining the integrity of the narrative. As such, accurate and precise representation in *The Journey* anime is not only important for fidelity to the original story, but also for educating the audience about the values of truth and justice in Islam (Bakti, 2000).

The analysis of positive and negative images in the anime is crucial to understanding the impact of such representations on audience perceptions. The media has the power to shape public opinion and attitudes towards certain groups or issues (Branston & Stafford, 2003). Therefore, fair and balanced representation is essential to avoid harmful stereotypes (Arthur Palit & Sulaiman, 2022).

For example, the character of Aws who transforms from a bandit to a fighter for justice provides a powerful example of how media can portray the process of change and redemption. This representation shows that even if someone has a dark past, they still have the ability to change and do good (Ivana, 2023). This representation is very important because it can inspire the audience not to be quick to judge others based on their past, but to provide opportunities for improvement and redemption (Bakti, 2000).

The anime also emphasizes the values of justice and ihsan, where Aws seeks to right his past wrongs in a positive and constructive way. This reflects Allah's command in Surah An-Nahl verse 90, where Muslims are reminded to always be fair and do good (*Qur'an Ministry of Religious Affairs*, n.d.). By showing the transformation of characters like Aws, the anime helps promote the message that everyone has the potential to change and do good deeds regardless of their past (Azzen, 2023).

Positive images in the media also have a significant impact on individual and group identity formation. Fair and positive representations can help boost viewers' sense of self-worth and confidence, especially those from minority or marginalized groups. In this regard, *The Journey* anime can serve as a platform to convey strong moral and ethical messages, which can help shape positive attitudes and values in society (Bucciferro, 2021).

In addition to the analysis of positive and negative images, it is also important to consider alternative ways to change existing representations in the media. One way to achieve this is to involve more voices and perspectives in

the media-making process. (Bakti, 2010). In the context of *The Journey* anime, this means involving writers, artists and consultants who understand Islamic values and teachings and have expertise in visual narratives (Azis & Yuwita, 2023).

The collaboration between Manga Productions and Toei Animation in creating this anime is a good example of efforts to create inclusive and accurate representations (Daniel, 2021). However, studies on international collaboration in media show that cultural differences can *affect the way* narratives and visualizations are presented (Bakti, 2014). Therefore, it is important to ensure that these collaborations result in consistent and accurate representations of Qur'anic stories (Branston & Stafford, 2003).

An alternative approach is to educate and empower audiences to be more critical of the media they consume. Media education can help audiences understand and evaluate representations in the media more critically, so they can make more informed and balanced judgments. It can also encourage the media industry to be more responsible in creating fair and accurate content (Bakti, 2010).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Journey anime combines elements from the Qur'anic story with a modern animation format adapted by a collaboration between Saudi Arabian studio "Manga Productions" and Japanese studio "Toei Animation". This presents complex challenges related to historical accuracy and narrative integrity. While there were some concerns about narrative alterations or visual interpretations that could affect the audience's understanding of Islamic teachings, the anime generally managed to maintain the integrity of the Qur'anic stories and convey moral messages in a way that young audiences could easily understand.

An in-depth analysis of the representation of the Qur'anic story in this anime shows that *The Journey* anime is able to convey Islamic moral messages through the conflicts and journeys of the main characters, despite some adjustments to suit the animation format. This study highlights the importance of considering the social and cultural context in media representations to understand the impact of such representations on people's understanding and perception of religious values.

Overall, the anime *The Journey* provides valuable insights into the way religious representations in popular media can influence our understanding and perception of religious values. By continuing to encourage dialog and deep reflection on the way religion and culture are represented in anime, we can achieve a better understanding of cultural and religious diversity and create more inclusive and accurate representations.

The implications of the representation of Qur'anic stories in *The Journey* anime are significant for the education and teaching of religious values to the younger generation. By using popular media such as anime, Islamic moral and ethical messages can be conveyed in an interesting and easy-to-understand

way, helping to overcome the gap between older and younger generations in religious understanding.

Furthermore, accurate and positive representations of Qur'anic stories in popular media can help reduce negative stereotypes and misconceptions about Islam in the general public. By featuring complex characters and insightful stories, the anime can inspire viewers to understand and appreciate religious values in a more inclusive and just manner.

Another implication is the importance of international collaboration in the production of media that represent religious and cultural values. The collaboration between Manga Productions and Toei Animation shows that with good cooperation, more inclusive and accurate representations can be achieved, reducing cultural and religious misunderstandings. This opens up opportunities for more media projects that can incorporate various cultural perspectives to create richer and more diverse content.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

To improve the representation of Qur'anic stories in popular media, there are several suggestions that can be considered. First, it is important to involve historical and religious experts in the production process to ensure that the narrative and visual representations are faithful to the original story. This will help maintain narrative integrity and avoid misunderstandings that could be detrimental to the audience's perception of Islamic teachings.

Second, there is a need for more extensive media education for audiences so that they can understand and critically evaluate representations in the media. Media education can help audiences develop skills to assess accuracy and fairness in representations, so that they can make more informed and balanced judgments.

Finally, the media industry should continue to encourage diversification in content production. By involving more voices and different perspectives in the production process, more inclusive and fair representation can be achieved. This will not only improve the quality of content but also help create a more representative and fair media environment for all groups.

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