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GEORGE HERBERT MEAD'S SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM IN A. FUADI'S NOVEL BUYA HAMKA

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Abstrak

Novel Buya Hamka karya A. Fuadi menggambarkan perjalanan spiritual dan sosial tokohnya melalui proses pembentukan kesadaran diri yang kompleks. Dengan menggunakan teori Interaksionisme Simbolik George Herbert Mead, kajian ini menelusuri bentuk-bentuk interaksi simbolik yang membentuk kesadaran diri (Self) tokoh Buya Hamka, yang terdiri atas dua unsur utama, yaitu I (diri spontan, kreatif, dan reflektif) serta Me (diri sosial yang dibentuk oleh norma dan nilai masyarakat). Pendekatan yang digunakan bersifat deskriptif kualitatif dengan kajian terhadap kutipan narasi, dialog, dan monolog yang menampilkan dinamika batin, relasi sosial, serta nilai-nilai religius dalam teks. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa tokoh Buya Hamka mencerminkan keseimbangan antara dorongan personal dan kesadaran sosial. Unsur I tampak melalui semangat intelektual, keberanian moral, serta daya cipta tokoh dalam menghadapi tantangan, sedangkan unsur Me tercermin melalui kepatuhan terhadap nilai agama, kepedulian sosial, dan tanggung jawab moralnya sebagai ulama dan pemimpin. Interaksi antara keduanya melahirkan Self yang matang secara spiritual dan etis, memperlihatkan bahwa pembentukan kepribadian religius merupakan hasil dialog antara individu dan lingkungan sosial. Kajian ini menegaskan relevansi teori Mead dalam memahami dimensi sosial dan spiritual tokoh sastra, serta menunjukkan bahwa Buya Hamka berfungsi sebagai refleksi filosofis tentang pembentukan identitas dan moralitas manusia dalam konteks sosial religius.

Kata Kunci: *interaksionisme simbolik, Buya Hamka, I dan Me, kesadaran diri*

Abstract

The novel Buya Hamka by A. Fuadi portrays the spiritual and social journey of its character through a complex process of self-awareness formation. Utilizing George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism theory, this study explores the forms of symbolic interactions that shape the self-awareness (Self) of the character Buya Hamka, which consists of two main elements: I (the spontaneous, creative, and reflective self) and Me (the social self shaped by societal norms and values). The approach used is descriptive qualitative, focusing on the analysis of narrative excerpts, dialogues, and monologues that display inner dynamics, social relations, and religious values within the text. The findings indicate that the character Buya Hamka reflects a balance between personal drives and social awareness. The element of I is evident through the character's intellectual zeal, moral courage, and creativity in facing challenges, while the element of Me is reflected in adherence to religious values, social concern, and moral responsibility as a scholar and leader. The interaction between the two gives rise to a self that is mature both spiritually and ethically, demonstrating that the formation of a religious personality is the result of dialogue between the individual and the social environment. This study emphasizes the relevance of Mead's theory in understanding the social and spiritual dimensions of literary characters and illustrates that Buya Hamka serves as a philosophical reflection on the formation of human identity and morality within a socio-religious context.

Keywords: symbolic interactionism, Buya Hamka, I and Me, self-awareness

1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is a form of human creativity that arises from observation of social reality and is expressed through aesthetic and meaningful language (Vardani, 2020). A good literary work can reflect the essence of life, both in terms of meaning and structure (Vardani, 2018) as well as express life experiences, thoughts, and emotions that shape cultural and social identities. In addition to being a source of entertainment, literature serves as a medium for moral and ethical reflection, conveying messages about life, values, and human characteristics (Slamet, 2018). Moreover, literature becomes a space for dialogue between humans and their realities, where values, experiences, and worldviews intersect to cultivate cultural understanding and deepen social awareness. Thus, literature plays a crucial role in shaping critical, empathetic, and cultured personalities while reinforcing moral, social, and humanitarian identities in the midst of changing times, in line with the essence of literary works as manifestations of human creativity in processing language and meaning.

Literary works are understood as the results of human creative effort that uses language as the medium of creation. Through language, writers convey their ideas, experiences, and perspectives on the realities they face, not only to deliver messages but also to emphasize aesthetic aspects that provide beauty and depth of meaning. Literary works reflect the author's worldview while serving as a means of expressing universal human values. The process of creating literary works is always tied to the social realities of the author, where events of life are processed into aesthetic forms rich in meaning through language and symbols. Imagination plays a vital role in building characters, situations, and dialogues that reflect social realities, so authors function not only as storytellers but also as observers and interpreters of life (Saragih et al., 2021). Through imagination and the ability to interpret reality, literary works are born that can deeply reflect human experiences and social interactions, including in the form of novels.

The novel is one form of literary work that represents social reality through interactions between individuals in society (Vardani & Mijianti, 2021). As a literary work, the novel contains a series of life stories highlighting the characters' traits and the conflicts that arise in interactions with others (Widodo & Apriantoro, 2024). According to Kosasih (in Rahmawati et al., 2022), the novel depicts the problems faced by its characters in an imaginative way, from conflict to resolution, enabling readers to understand the human values contained within. Thus, the novel not only narrates events but also illustrates character development, social interactions, and humanitarian values, allowing readers to grasp various aspects of life through the experiences of its characters.

One contemporary literary work that is interesting to examine is the novel *Buya Hamka* by A. Fuadi. This work not only presents the biographical story of a great scholar but also contains moral, spiritual, and social values relevant to modern life. According to (Thamrin et al., 2024) this novel depicts the time when *Buya Hamka* was actively involved as a leader in Muhammadiyah in Makassar and significantly advanced the organization. During this period, Hamka also began writing literary works for newspapers, and his short stories received a warm reception from readers. Subsequently, he and his family moved to Medan, where he was appointed editor-in-chief of the magazine Pedoman Masyarakat. However, this position led to conflicts with the Japanese authorities, resulting in the magazine's closure due to perceived threats. Hamka's family life became even more challenging when one of his children passed away due to illness. His efforts to establish good relations with the Japanese were misinterpreted as collaboration, leading to his request to resign from his position in Muhammadiyah. This novel

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illustrates Buya Hamka's journey as a significant figure in Indonesian history while conveying moral messages such as religiosity, honesty, a spirit of learning, integrity, hard work, and tolerance (Arrazin & Husin, 2025).

Through its distinctive narrative style and strong character portrayals, A. Fuadi blends historical facts with literary imagination, resulting in a work rich in meaning and life reflection. In addition to presenting a story of struggle, this novel highlights the humanitarian aspects and spirituality of Buya Hamka. The values of sincerity, resilience, and the fight against life's trials are deeply portrayed through the character's inner conflicts and social interactions. This makes the novel *Buya Hamka* not merely a biography but a work that represents the worldview of an important figure through social and religious symbols. A. Fuadi elevates the relationship between religion, culture, and morality as essential elements in the formation of national character. Thus, this novel serves as a medium of representation for the values of exemplary conduct and Islamic spirituality packaged in an aesthetic and inspirational manner.

Symbolic interaction is a sociological theory emphasizing the importance of shared meanings and symbols in human interaction (Schwalbe, in Tunnikmah, 2025). According to (Andani, & Indarti, 2024) symbolic interaction is a dynamic interaction in society concerning human identity that results in the formation of symbols that produce meanings, both verbal and nonverbal. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, humans are viewed as individuals who act based on how they understand, interpret, and construct concepts about things through their personal experiences. Every element in social interactions, whether material culture or social actions, is seen as a symbol with meaning that can be interpreted. Through this interpretative process, humans then construct a shared meaning that becomes the foundation for interaction patterns among them.

In other words, symbolic interaction establishes the foundation for the social construction of individual and collective meaning. Through symbols, individuals communicate not only with others, but also shape their understanding of themselves and the society around them.

Symbolic interactionism is a micro-theoretical framework in sociology that focuses on individual interaction patterns (Bijaksana, 2025). This theory is one of the theoretical approaches used to understand the relationship between individuals and society. The main concept of this theory emphasizes that human behavior and interaction can only be understood through the process of symbolic exchange, a form of communication that carries specific meanings. The development of this theory began in the mid-20th century. Etymologically, the term symbolic interactionism is composed of two complementary words: "interaction" and "symbol." The symbolic element refers to meanings that arise in specific social contexts where individuals are involved, while the interaction element indicates that such meanings are formed through reciprocal relationships among social actors. Thus, the theory of symbolic interactionism assumes that society is the result of social construction by humans. This approach has its own methods because it sees meaning as a primary component in the process of social interaction (Mahestu, dalam Zanki, 2020). Therefore, this theory emphasizes that humans act based on meanings that emerge from social interactions, and these meanings continually evolve with communication and shared experiences within society.

George Herbert Mead, a key figure in symbolic interaction theory, explains that the study of humans must be viewed through three important concepts: Mind, Self, and Society. These three concepts are interrelated in shaping individual consciousness and social behavior. Mind refers to the ability to use socially meaningful symbols that develop through

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interaction. Self is the ability to reflect on oneself from the perspective of others, formed through social processes. Society is the social order created by individuals through interaction and role-taking. All three are interconnected and demonstrate that individuals and society are shaped through ongoing symbolic interactions (Siregar, 2016).

According to Mead, the essence of symbolic interactionism lies in the concept of the self, understood as a result of the social interaction process between individuals and others. Mead views humans as sensitive, active, creative beings with innovative capabilities in responding to their environments. A person's social life plays a critical role in shaping both themselves and the social environment they inhabit. Furthermore, Mead explains that the concept of self has two dimensions: as a subject and as an object. As an object, individuals are able to see themselves as they evaluate other beings, which leads to self-consciousness that serves as a basis for taking stances towards themselves and their surrounding social situations (Muhid & Wahyudi, 2020). In this study, the researcher focuses on the Self concept as explained by Mead, which consists of two components: *I* and *Me*. I represents the spontaneous, creative, and subjective part of the self that reflects an individual's freedom to act, while Me is the aspect of the self that reflects the values and social norms that have been internalized by the individual. These two elements interact with each other and create a balance within a person. I allows for personal freedom and uniqueness, while me functions to control individual actions to align with societal expectations.

Overall, this research provides a new perspective in understanding the process of self-awareness formation in characters through social interactions in Indonesian literature, particularly in the novel *Buya Hamka* by A. Fuadi. By integrating George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism theory, this study aims to contribute to the development of literary sociology that highlights the relationship between social structure, individual consciousness, and the spiritual values that shape character personalities. Through this approach, the research does not only focus on the relationships among characters but also on the inner dynamics that reflect symbolic interactions within the main character. This analysis reveals how social meanings are formed through symbols, actions, and communication, and how Buya Hamka's self-awareness emerges from the dialogue between personal values and social norms.

The urgency of this research lies in its effort to position literary works as reflective media that represent the reciprocal relationship between individuals and society. The novel *Buya Hamka* by A. Fuadi shows that the process of forming the character's self-awareness is not only determined by spiritual experiences but also by social interactions that affirm humanitarian and religious values. This study reinforces the view that literature has a transformative function, presenting portrayals of humans continuously striving to understand themselves and their environments. Through an interactionist reading, this novel displays the dynamic relationships between individuals, symbols, and society, which create social and spiritual self-meaning. Thus, this research plays a role in enriching discourse on how literary works can serve as a medium for reflection on moral, social, and religious values in modern Indonesian culture.

The uniqueness of this research lies in the integration between George Herbert Mead's symbolic sociology theory and the religious context in biographical literature. Most previous studies on the novel *Buya Hamka* have focused descriptively on its moral, spiritual, or sociological values. However, this research delves deeper into the structure of self-formation (Self) through the concepts of *I* and *Me*, which represent a balance between personal freedom and social awareness. This analysis highlights the

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psychosocial aspects of *Buya Hamka* as an individual who interprets social meaning through symbolic actions and inner reflection. The Symbolic Interactionism approach allows this study to explain that the character's personality is formed not only by external influences but also through an internal interpretative process that continually evolves alongside social and spiritual experiences. Consequently, this research addresses not only moral values but also elucidates the social-psychological mechanisms of self-awareness formation in literary works.

From a scientific contribution perspective, this research demonstrates how Mead's theory, originating from sociology and social psychology, can be applied in the study of Indonesian religious literature. The concept of Self, comprising *I* (the spontaneous and creative self) and *Me* (the social self reflecting societal norms), serves as a foundation for understanding *Buya Hamka* as a figure who embodies a balance between spirituality and social responsibility. This analysis also emphasizes that symbolic interaction occurs not only between individuals but also in the internal dialogue between personal impulses and social awareness. These findings enrich the understanding of literature's role as a medium for moral and spiritual representation while opening avenues for the development of symbolic interaction theory in the context of Indonesian religious and biographical literature.

The distinctiveness of this research also lies in its ability to present a cross-disciplinary reading between literary sociology, social psychology, and religious studies. The novel *Buya Hamka* is positioned not merely as a narrative text but also as a representation of culture and spirituality that reflects the character of the Indonesian nation. The Symbolic Interactionism approach employed opens analytical space to understand the layers of meaning behind actions, language, and social symbols in the novel. Thus, this research shows that literary works are not only aesthetic reflections but also mediums for understanding

the dynamics of values, identity, and morality in society.

This research area encompasses the study of literary sociology, social psychology, and religious values in modern Indonesian literature. Relevant previous studies have discussed the novel *Buya Hamka* from various approaches. For instance, (Nisa et al., 2025) examined the figures of speech in the novel, while (Fawwaz et al., 2025) discussed Hamka's communication model as represented in A. Fuadi's novel. Meanwhile (Ayyubi et al., 2021) investigated the main character's internal conflicts, focusing on psychological aspects, inner struggles, and moral dilemmas that influence character actions in the novel. However, there has been no study utilizing Symbolic Interactionism theory, particularly the Self elements of *I* and *Me*, to explore the dynamics of the main character's self-formation. Research using symbolic interaction theory in literature generally highlights social relations among characters rather than the internal dynamics of self-awareness. Therefore, this study presents novelty by examining symbolic interaction and the process of self-formation (Self) of *Buya Hamka* through the concepts of *I* and *Me* according to George Herbert Mead an approach rarely applied in studies of religious biographical literature. By focusing on A. Fuadi's novel Buya Hamka, this research positions Mead's Symbolic Interactionism theory as a primary framework for analyzing the character's self-awareness formation process. This study is expected to contribute to the development of interdisciplinary research that connects literary text analysis, social values, and religious reflections in the context of humanity.

Based on the descriptions provided, this research aims to uncover the forms of symbolic interaction that shape the self-awareness (Self) of *Buya Hamka* in A. Fuadi's novel *Buya Hamka* through George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism theory, particularly in the concepts of I and Me. This study is expected to contribute

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to the development of literary studies that blend sociological and psychological approaches, especially in analyzing the process of character self-awareness formation through social interactions and spiritual reflections. Furthermore, this research aims to broaden the understanding of the application of Symbolic Interactionism theory in Indonesian religious literature, particularly in revealing the moral, spiritual, and humanitarian values reflected in the actions and dialogues of the characters. Thus, this research is titled George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism In A. Fuadi's Novel Buya Hamka.

2. METHOD

This research employs a descriptive qualitative method. According to Siswantoro (2020:56), the descriptive qualitative method aims to systematically, factually, and meticulously describe a phenomenon based on the characteristics of the population or object being studied. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objective of explaining social phenomena and the forms of symbolic interaction reflected in literary works. The study focuses on the description of symbolic interactions that emerge in the novel *Buya Hamka* by A. Fuadi, using George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism theory, emphasizing the process of self-formation (The Self), which consists of two main elements: *I* (the impulsive self) and *Me* (the reflective self).

The data source for this research is the novel *Buya Hamka* by A. Fuadi. The research data includes excerpts of narratives, dialogues, and monologues that contain social meanings and illustrate forms of symbolic interaction among characters. This is consistent with the view of (Ultavia et al., 2023)) that qualitative data in literary research can comprise narratives or discourses representing social meanings. The choice of this novel is based on its relevance to Symbolic Interactionism theory, as it explicitly

and implicitly showcases the social relationships among characters and depicts the process of the main character's self-awareness within a social context.

Data collection techniques are implemented through several stages, as explained by Siswantoro (2020:70–74), which include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In this context, data collection is conducted in phases through the following steps: (a) reading the novel thoroughly to understand the plot, characters, and social background that shape the dynamics of interactions among characters, (b) nothing textual excepts that demonstrate forms of symbolic interaction between characters, whether through dialogue or narrative, relevant to Symbolic Interactionism theory, (c) selecting data related to the Self concept (*I* and *Me*) in accordance with George Herbert Mead's theory, specifically those portions of text that reveal spontaneous reactions (*I*) and social reflections (*Me*), and (d) roviding preliminary descriptions for each quote, explaining the social context, situational background, and symbolic forms contained within.

Through these techniques, the data collection process is structured and focused to support the validity of the research findings in revealing the symbolic interaction meanings of characters in the novel.

In qualitative literary research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument (Siswantoro, 2020:73). This means that the researcher's sensitivity, theoretical understanding, and analytical skills are crucial factors in interpreting the forms of symbolic interaction in literary works. As a supporting tool, the researcher also employs a data recording instrument table, which functions to classify data according to the analytical categories of Mead's theory, specifically the elements of I and Me.

The data analysis in this study is conducted descriptively with reference to George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism theory. The

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analysis stages refer to the steps outlined by Siswantoro (2020:81), which include: (a) categorizing data based on symbolic interaction aspects related to the Self, namely the elements of *I* (the impulsive self) and *Me* (the reflective self), (b) classifying forms of symbolic interaction, whether through actions, speech, or thoughts of characters that depict social dynamics, (c) interpreting the social meanings of each form of symbolic interaction to understand the process of the main character's self-awareness formation through social relationships, and (d) describing the results of interpretation narratively to illustrate how the main character forms the Self through social symbols within the context of community life as depicted in the novel.

To ensure data validity, this research employs researcher triangulation (Siswantoro, 2020:79). Triangulation is conducted by comparing the findings with assessments from those possessing academic expertise in the field of literary studies, specifically the supervising lecturer. The supervisor acts as a co-researcher who verifies the accuracy and objectivity of the interpretation results. This step aims to minimize the researcher's subjectivity and enhance the credibility and validity of the research findings. With the application of this method, the research is expected to deeply reveal how social and symbolic interactions among characters in A. Fuadi's novel *Buya Hamka* shape the self-awareness (Self) of the main character according to the perspective of George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism theory.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research outline an analysis of symbolic interaction in the novel *Buya Hamka* by A. Fuadi, utilizing George Herbert Mead's

Symbolic Interactionism theory. The primary focus is on the concept of Self, divided into two elements: *I*, the spontaneous and creative personal self, and *Me*, the social self shaped by societal norms and values. Both elements are analyzed to understand the process of self-awareness formation in the character of Buya Hamka. Through dialogue, narrative, and symbolic actions, the main character demonstrates a balance between personal impulses and social awareness, reflecting an integration of spirituality and morality. The researcher identified a total of 10 data points related to Self, composed of 5 data points for I and 5 for Me, which illustrate the dynamics of symbolic interaction in character development.

Symbolic Interaction of Self as *I* in the Novel *Buya Hamka*

The *I* element, according to George Herbert Mead, depicts the spontaneous, creative, and subjective side of an individual, arising from personal impulses free from social pressure. In the context of the character Buya Hamka, this element is manifested through actions and thoughts that stem from idealism, moral courage, and a strong intellectual spirit. The *I* aspect emphasizes that Hamka is an individual with high initiative, creativity, and reflective abilities in facing social and spiritual challenges. This element also illustrates the freedom of thought and the character's ability to make independent decisions, while affirming that a religious personality can be active and creative in constructing meaning through personal actions. Based on the analysis results, there are five data points that illustrate the manifestation of symbolic interaction of Self as *I* in A. Fuadi's novel Buya Hamka.

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Table 1. Symbolic Interaction of Self in the form of *I*

No	Code	Text Quotes	Information
1	ISSI. BH: 121	*Dia sekarang bisa dipanggil Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah. Dia eja nama itu, tapi terasa terlalu panjang. Kalau dia ambil hanya huruf pertama saja dan dipendekkan menjadi HAMKA. Cukup enak dibaca dan enak bunyinya di telinga.* (ISSI. BH: 121) **Translation:** *He can now be called Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah. He spelled the name, but it felt too long. If he took only the first letter and shortened it to HAMKA. It's quite easy to read and sounds pleasant to the ear.*	Data (1) includes element *I* because it shows creativity and self-reflection in identity.
2	ISSI. BH: 122	*Kalau ditanya hari ini maka yang paling menarik hatinya adalah menulis. Dia ingin menjadi seorang pujangga yang menulis cerita berjiwakan cinta dan Islam.* (ISSI. BH: 122) **Translation:** *If asked about his passion today, he would say that writing is what interests him most. He aspires to be a poet who writes stories inspired by love and Islam.*	Data (2) includes element *I* because it shows personal aspirations and creativity.
3	ISSI. BH: 125	*"Kalau kau punya tulisan bagus dan bisa cepat selesai tulisan kau bisa saya dahulukan terbit!"* *"Saya penulis cepat, tuan", jawab Malik dengan yakin.* (ISSI. BH: 125) **Translation:** *"If you have good writing and can finish it quickly, I can publish it first!"* *"I'm a fast writer, sir," Malik replied confidently.*	Data (3) includes element *I* because it shows self-confidence and spontaneity.
4	ISSI. BH: 191	*Hamka sendiri marah kepada Belanda karena ayahnya dibuang ke Sukabumi. Karena itu dia putuskan biarlah dia yang angkat suara mewakili orang-orang yang diam ini. Mungkin ini tindakan yang berani dan agak nekat, tapi kenapa tidak.* (ISSI. BH: 191) **Translation:** *Hamka himself was angry with the Dutch because his father had been exiled to Sukabumi. Therefore, he decided to let him speak up on behalf of these silent people. It might have been a bold and somewhat reckless move, but why not.*	Data (4) includes element *I* because it shows spontaneity and courage without social encouragement.
5	ISSI. BH: 311	*"Ayah, naskah ini berbahaya," simpul Rusydi dengan agak khawatir.* *"Tidak apa-apa. Kita terbitkan saja segera," katanya.* (ISSI. BH: 311) **Translation:** *"Father, this manuscript is dangerous," Rusydi concluded, somewhat worried.* *"It's okay. Let's just publish it right away," he said.*	Data (5) includes element *I* because it shows spontaneity and self-confidence.

Based on the **data (1)** ISSI. BH: 191 above, the main character (Hamka) demonstrates a dominance of the *I* element, which is the aspect of the self that is spontaneous, creative, and driven by internal impulses. This is reflected when he bravely expresses his opinion in front of the Dutch Resident, while the other attendees choose to remain silent. This courage arises from his moral awareness and personal idealism, rather than from social pressure or the environment. This action emphasizes the *I* aspect in Hamka's self, namely the self-actualization that emerges

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from independence, personal principles, and authentic expression, in accordance with George Herbert Mead's concept.

Based on the **data (2)** ISSI. BH: 311 above, Hamka shows a dominance of the *I* element, which reflects spontaneity, creativity, and is driven by internal motivation. This is evident when he decides to publish a manuscript despite considering it risky. This decision arises from his personal idealism and moral awareness, not from encouragement or pressure from others. This action reaffirms the *I* aspect in Hamka's self, representing courage, independence, and authentic expression of personal principles, demonstrating spontaneous and principled self-actualization according to George Herbert Mead's concept.

Based on the **data (3)** ISSI. BH: 122 above, Hamka reflects dominance of the *I* element, the aspect of the self that is spontaneous, creative, and motivated by internal drives. This is seen in his desire to write works imbued with love and Islam, which originates from inner impulses and personal awareness, not from social demands. This action reflects creativity, self-reflection, and independence in expressing spiritual values through literature. Thus, writing becomes an authentic means of self-actualization for Hamka, emphasizing the *I* aspect of his self in accordance with George Herbert Mead's concept.

Based on the **data (4)** ISSI. BH: 125 above, Hamka demonstrates a dominance of the *I* element, which is spontaneous, creative, and driven by internal motivation. This is evident when he confidently declares himself a fast writer in front of a publisher. This statement arises from inner drives and self-belief, rather than from seeking social recognition. This action emphasizes Hamka's courage, creativity, and independence in expressing his personal abilities, showcasing authentic self-actualization in line with George Herbert Mead's concept of self.

Based on the **data (5)** ISSI. BH: 121 above, Hamka shows dominance of the *I* element, characterized by spontaneity, creativity, and internal motivation. This is reflected when he creates the name "HAMKA" as his new identity after performing the hajj pilgrimage. This action arises from reflective impulses and personal awareness to assert his existence, not due to social pressure. The choice of this name demonstrates Hamka's creativity, freedom of thought, and independence in expressing his identity and personal values, reinforcing the *I* aspect in his self in accordance with George Herbert Mead's concept.

Symbolic Interaction of Self as *Me* in the Novel *Buya Hamka*

The *Me* element in George Herbert Mead's theory depicts the social self formed through the internalization of values, norms, and societal expectations, reflecting moral awareness and social responsibility. In the character of Buya Hamka, this element is apparent through his religious attitude, dedication to the community, and adherence to Islamic moral values. The *Me* aspect shows that the character's actions are not only influenced by personal impulses but also by social and spiritual considerations. Hamka places the values of public good and social concern as the foundation for his behavior in his roles as a scholar, writer, and father. Thus, the *Me* element emphasizes that social and religious consciousness serves as the primary foundation for every action of the character, making him a representation of an ideal human capable of balancing spiritual and social aspects. From the analysis, the researcher found 5 data points that illustrate the manifestation of symbolic interaction of Self as *Me* in A. Fuadi's novel Buya Hamka.

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Table 2. Symbolic Interaction of Self in the form of *Me*

No	Code	Text Quotes	Information
6	ISSM. BH: 5	*Kesalahan apa yang harus aku akui kalau semua tuduhan mereka aku tidak tahu-menahu. Membunuh bung Karno? yang benar saja. Walau aku tidak sejalan dengan politiknya sekarang tak terpikir aku menyakitinya. Dia bukan orang biasa dia kawan lama yang bagai saudara angkatku.* (ISSM. BH: 5) **Translation:** *What mistake should I admit if I don't know anything about their accusations? Killing Bung Karno? Seriously. Even though I don't agree with his politics, it never occurs to me to hurt him. He's no ordinary person; he's an old friend who's like a sworn brother to me.*	Data (6) includes the *Me* element because it shows how to uphold moral and social values, as well as maintain honor.
7	ISSM. BH: 133	*Apa gunanya anak rantau jauh ini pulang. Orang kampung tentu tak akan menerima saya karena saya "tidak alim", tidak pernah tamat sekolah di manapun karena itu tidak punya diplomat dan kertas.* (ISSM. BH: 133) **Tranlation:** *What's the point of this child from far away coming home? The villagers certainly won't accept me because I'm "not pious," I never graduated from school anywhere, and therefore I don't have a diploma or paper.*	Data (7) includes the *Me* element because it shows awareness of social norms regarding societal acceptance.
8	ISSM. BH: 199	*Walau hidupnya sendiri sedang susah, Hamka tetap membagi waktunya untuk Muhammadiyah. Sebagai konsul Muhammadiyah adalah Timur, kewajibannya memberi penerangan kepada para warga Muhammadiyah di berbagai tempat* (ISSM. BH: 199) **Tranlation:** *Despite his own difficult life, Hamka still devoted his time to Muhammadiyah. As Muhammadiyah's consul in the East, his duty was to provide information to Muhammadiyah members in various locations.*	Data (8) includes the Me element because it shows social awareness and moral responsibility.
9	ISSM. BH: 276	*Beberapa orang mencoba mencegahnya pergi karena berbahaya. Tapi, wajah anak istri muncul di pelupuk mata. Dia bersikeras harus pergi. Setelah mengintip suasana di luar dan tentara Belanda sudah menjauh tanpa berpikir panjang lagi dia memberhentikan diri membuka pintu pelan-pelan dan menyusup keluar.* (ISSM. BH: 276) **Translation:** *Several people tried to stop him from leaving, saying it was dangerous. But the faces of his wife and children appeared before his eyes. He insisted he had to go. After peeking outside, and seeing that the Dutch soldiers had already left, he stopped himself, slowly opened the door, and slipped out.*	Data (9) includes the Me element because it takes into account the social and moral responsibilities of the family.
10	ISSM. BH: 310	*Pagi-pagi sebelum anak-anak dan istri bangun, Hamka sudah berwudu dan salat tahajud. Selepas salat subuh di Masjid Al-Azhar, dia duduk di depan meja di hadapan para jemaah untuk membahas ayat demi ayat Al-Qur'an. Kajian subuhnya ini memang semakin populer, membuat orang semakin banyak hadir.* (ISSM. BH: 310) **Translation:** *Description Early in the morning before the children and wife wake up, Hamka has already performed*	Data (10) includes the Me element because it shows social awareness as a cleric and role model for the congregation.

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ablution and prayed tahajud. After the dawn prayer at the Al-Azhar Mosque, he sits at a table in front of the congregation to discuss verse by verse the Quran. His dawn study is indeed becoming more and more popular, making more and more people attend.

Based on the **data (6)** ISSM. BH: 310 above, Hamka demonstrates a dominance of the *Me* element, which reflects social awareness and the internalization of societal norms. This is evident from his habit of performing tahajud prayers before his family wakes up and leading the dawn study session at Al-Azhar Mosque. This action illustrates Hamka's awareness of his role and social responsibility as a religious figure and a role model in worship. The rising popularity of the study session affirms that he aligns his behavior with society's expectations of a scholar. The I element is also present as a reflective personal impulse, as this activity is conducted with genuine spiritual motivation and commitment. Thus, this quote emphasizes the dominance of Me in Hamka's character, where social actions are guided by norms and roles, while I reinforces his internal motivation.

Based on the **data (7)** ISSM. BH: 133 above, Hamka shows dominance of the *Me* element, reflecting social awareness and the internalization of societal norms. This is seen in his anxiety about returning to his hometown, feeling that he would not be accepted by the community. The expression "What use is it for this distant child to return... I will not be accepted because I am 'not pious'" reveals Hamka's awareness of social expectations and norms that value education and religious adherence. The I element is reflectively present as Hamka becomes aware of this social pressure and contemplates his position. Thus, this quote emphasizes the dominance of Me in Hamka, where self-assessment and adjustment to prevailing social norms occur, while I strengthens his personal reflection on societal expectations.

Based on the d**ata (8)** ISSM. BH: 5 above, Hamka reflects a dominance of the *Me* element, which mirrors social awareness and the

internalization of moral and social norms. This is evident when he asserts that he is not guilty of accusations of murder against Bung Karno. This statement reflects Hamka's awareness of moral and social norms, where making unfounded accusations contradicts the values of justice and humanity. The I element is present through personal reflection that reinforces his commitment to remain honest and uphold integrity. Thus, this quote emphasizes the dominance of Me, where actions are directed by moral and social norms, while I strengthens Hamka's personal stance.

Based on the **data (9)** ISSM. BH: 199 above, Hamka shows dominance of the *Me* element, reflecting social awareness and the internalization of religious values. This is evident in his actions as he continues to fulfill his duties as the Eastern Andalas Muhammadiyah Consul amidst the war and Japanese occupation. He travels to provide enlightenment and strengthen the faith of Muhammadiyah members as a moral responsibility and adherence to the social and religious values he carries. The I element also presents itself through Hamka's personal awareness and inner determination to continue fighting under pressure, making his actions stem not only from social demands but also from ideals and personal sincerity. Thus, this quote emphasizes the dominance of Me in Hamka, as his actions are directed by social norms and obligations but still reinforced by I as an expression of sincerity and moral awareness according to George Herbert Mead's concept.

Based on the **data (10)** ISSM. BH: 276 above, Hamka demonstrates dominance of the *Me* element, reflecting social awareness and the internalization of societal norms. This is visible when Hamka decides to leave despite being

warned by several people, considering his social responsibilities as a husband and father to protect his family in a dangerous situation. This action shows that his behavior is guided by family norms and the values of love that have been internalized. The I element emerges as a spontaneous impulse that drives Hamka's courage and initiative but is still directed by Me. Thus, this quote emphasizes the dominance of Me in Hamka, while I reinforces his actions through personal awareness and reflective courage in accordance with George Herbert Mead's concept of self.

The results of this study show that A. Fuadi's novel *Buya Hamka* successfully represents the formation of self-awareness (Self) through the symbolic interaction between the elements of *I* and *Me* according to George Herbert Mead. The I element is evident through the spontaneity, creativity, and idealism of the character, emphasizing the courage to think independently and consistency in upholding truth. Meanwhile, the Me element reflects moral awareness and social responsibility that arise from the internalization of religious and cultural values. Through the actions, dialogues, and reflections of the character, the interaction of these two elements shapes Hamka's personality, which is mature both spiritually and socially, affirming that a religious figure does not merely comply with norms but also actively interprets the meaning of life through reflection and symbolic actions.

Unlike previous studies that focused more descriptively on moral and religious values, this research offers a new perspective by emphasizing how the character understands himself and his environment through a process of social interaction rich in symbols. These findings show that spiritual values are internalized in social actions, resulting in a deeply portrayed religious character and not just superficial representations. This representation has important implications for the development of studies in religious literature and character education, as the symbols and actions of the character can serve as reflective media to instill values of sincerity, responsibility, integrity, and compassion, as well as to understand the balance between personal freedom and social responsibility.

Moreover, this study affirms the relevance of Symbolic Interactionism theory in the study of religious literature to understand the dynamics of character personality and identity formation. This approach enriches literary sociology studies by demonstrating that social and spiritual meanings exist not only in interactions among individuals but also through the character's self-reflection on societal norms and values. Thus, A. Fuadi's novel *Buya Hamka* functions not only as a biography of a great figure but also as a philosophical reflection on the balance between I (the personal self) and Me (the social self) in the formation of a complete and religious self-awareness.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the novel *Buya Hamka* by A. Fuadi through George Herbert Mead's Symbolic Interactionism theory, it can be concluded that the formation of self-awareness (Self) in the character of *Buya Hamka* occurs through a dialectical process between the elements of *I* (the personal self) and *Me* (the social self). The *I* element is seen in the courage, creativity, and personal idealism of *Buya Hamka* as an intellectual and writer who steadfastly adheres to moral principles and truth. Meanwhile, the *Me* element is reflected in obedience to social and religious values, the responsibility of a scholar, and concern for the community and family. The interaction between these two elements shapes a personality that is mature both spiritually and socially, demonstrating a balance between freedom of thought and moral awareness. Through Mead's theoretical approach, the novel *Buya Hamka* not only presents social and religious dynamics but also depicts the inner journey of the main character in understanding

himself within society. *Buya Hamka's* self-awareness is formed from meaningful symbolic interactions, both through inner reflection and social relationships, resulting in a character that is wise, has integrity, and possesses a humanitarian spirit. This indicates that Symbolic Interactionism theory is relevant for analyzing religious literature, as it can reveal the process of moral and spiritual value formation within a character. Moreover, this study shows that literary works can serve as a medium for social and spiritual reflection, emphasizing the relationship between individuals and society. The novel *Buya Hamka* becomes a concrete representation that true self-awareness arises from the balance between personal idealism, religious values, and social responsibility. Thus, this research is expected to enrich the field of literary sociology and open avenues for the development of interactionist analyses in other Indonesian religious literary works.

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