



Power Relations in the Film Tangkal by Naza Manas

Friska Handayani¹; Irwan²

Program Studi Sastra Melayu, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Sumatera Utara
[*¹friskahandayani123@gmail.com](mailto:friskahandayani123@gmail.com), [²irwan@usu.ac.id](mailto:irwan@usu.ac.id)

Abstract

The film "Tangkal" by Naza Manas is a work that depicts power relations in the context of Malay culture, focusing on the figure of Pak Long Akbar as a healer who is respected in society. Through analysis using the theory of power relations by Michel Foucault, this film shows how power is not only centered in formal institutions, but is also spread in everyday social interactions. In this film, Pak Long Akbar has significant power in healing practices, where society believes in his ability to overcome spiritual problems that are considered unsolvable by conventional means. However, on the other hand, there is resistance from his son, Bullah, who tries to oppose his father's practices which are considered idolatrous and not in accordance with religious teachings. The conflict between Pak Long and Bullah reflects resistance to existing power, where Bullah struggles to change society's perspective on the healing practices carried out by his father. Bullah shows concern about the risks that Pak Long might face and tries to remind his father of the potential dangers of the practice. In this case, Bullah not only rejects his father's power, but also tries to direct society to a path that is more in accordance with religious teachings. This tension between tradition and modernity creates a complex dynamic, where Bullah tries to find his own identity in the context of different values. Overall, the film "Tangkal" depicts how power relations operate in society through the interactions between the existing characters. Through this analysis, we can see that power is not only oppressive, but also produces resistance and subjectivity. The film functions as a mirror that reflects the ongoing social and cultural dynamics, and shows how individuals can play an active role in existing power relations. Thus, "Tangkal" is not only a work of art, but also a tool for social reflection and education for its audience, inviting them to reflect on the values that exist in society and how they can contribute to positive social change.

Keywords: Film, Power Relations, Pak Long Akbar, Bullah, Michel Foucault, Healing Practices, Resistance, Subjectivity, Malay Culture, Tradition and Modernity.

Abstrak

Film "Tangkal" karya Naza Manas merupakan sebuah karya yang menggambarkan relasi kekuasaan dalam konteks budaya Melayu, dengan fokus pada tokoh Pak Long Akbar sebagai penyembuh yang dihormati dalam masyarakat. Melalui analisis menggunakan teori relasi kekuasaan oleh Michel Foucault, film ini menunjukkan bagaimana kekuasaan tidak hanya terpusat pada institusi formal, tetapi juga tersebar dalam interaksi sosial sehari-hari. Dalam film ini, Pak Long Akbar memiliki kekuasaan yang signifikan dalam praktik penyembuhan, di mana masyarakat mempercayai kemampuannya untuk mengatasi masalah spiritual yang dianggap tidak dapat diselesaikan dengan cara konvensional. Namun, di sisi lain, terdapat perlawanan dari anaknya, Bullah, yang berusaha menentang praktik ayahnya yang dianggap syirik dan tidak sesuai dengan ajaran agama. Konflik antara Pak Long dan Bullah mencerminkan resistensi terhadap kekuasaan yang ada, di mana Bullah

berjuang untuk mengubah cara pandang masyarakat terhadap praktik penyembuhan yang dilakukan oleh ayahnya. Bullah menunjukkan kekhawatiran akan risiko yang mungkin dihadapi oleh Pak Long dan berusaha mengingatkan ayahnya tentang potensi bahaya dari praktik tersebut. Dalam hal ini, Bullah tidak hanya menolak kekuasaan ayahnya, tetapi juga berusaha untuk mengarahkan masyarakat ke jalan yang lebih sesuai dengan ajaran agama. Ketegangan antara tradisi dan modernitas ini menciptakan dinamika yang kompleks, di mana Bullah berusaha menemukan identitasnya sendiri dalam konteks nilai-nilai yang berbeda. Secara keseluruhan, film "Tangkal" menggambarkan bagaimana relasi kekuasaan beroperasi dalam masyarakat melalui interaksi antara tokoh-tokoh yang ada. Melalui analisis ini, kita dapat melihat bahwa kekuasaan tidak hanya bersifat menindas, tetapi juga menghasilkan resistensi dan subjektivitas. Film ini berfungsi sebagai cermin yang mencerminkan dinamika sosial dan budaya yang sedang berlangsung, serta menunjukkan bagaimana individu dapat berperan aktif dalam relasi kekuasaan yang ada. Dengan demikian, "Tangkal" tidak hanya menjadi sebuah karya seni, tetapi juga alat untuk refleksi sosial dan pendidikan bagi penontonnya, mengajak mereka untuk merenungkan nilai-nilai yang ada dalam masyarakat dan bagaimana mereka dapat berkontribusi dalam perubahan sosial yang positif.

Kata Kunci : *Film, Relasi Kekuasaan, Pak Long Akbar, Bullah, Michel Foucault, Praktik Penyembuhan, Resistensi, Subjektivitas, Budaya Melayu, Tradisi dan Modernitas.*

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant and complex art forms in contemporary culture is film. Film is a visual medium that utilizes images, sound, narration, and performance to convey ideas, emotions, and stories. Broadly speaking, film serves not only as entertainment but also as a tool for education, propaganda, and social reflection. Many experts in the field have provided broad definitions and understandings of film, encompassing various technical, artistic, and social aspects.

According to Bordwell and Thompson (2010), film is defined as a series of moving images arranged in a specific sequence to create the illusion of movement. According to this definition, film focuses on its visual aspect as a medium that conveys stories using moving images. Furthermore, film can be considered a type of art that combines visual and auditory elements to provide an immersive experience for the audience. They also define film as "a narrative conveyed through moving images." In this sense, film serves as a tool for telling stories in which plot, theme, and characters interact to create meaning. Film narratives can come from various genres, such as drama, comedy, horror, and documentary. They can be linear or non-linear.

Film plays a crucial role in shaping societal values within the context of popular culture. Films are "cultural products that reflect and shape social identity," says Storey (2018). Films not only show what is actually happening in society, but they also have the

potential to change people's perspectives on certain issues. In situations like this, films function as a mirror depicting ongoing social and cultural dynamics.

Films can also serve as teaching materials for everyday life. Aufderheide (1997) states that film is "a powerful tool for conveying information and shaping understanding." Films can be used in education to teach a variety of concepts, including history and science, in an engaging and accessible way. For example, documentaries have the ability to provide in-depth insights into social and environmental issues.

Film production and consumption have been transformed by technological advances. "From silent films to digital films, film technology has evolved tremendously," say Bordwell and Thompson (2010). These technological developments have influenced film production technically as well as how audiences access and enjoy films. The emergence of streaming platforms has made access to films easier and faster.

The film to be analyzed is a Malay film from Malaysia entitled *Tangkal*. This film was released on December 22, 2023, and uploaded to the YouTube application under the channel Ulhaq. The film has a running time of 1.27.46. This film tells the daily activities of a character who plays a father committing acts of shirk which are forbidden by religion and aligning with Satan. And the role of the father's son in this film is to strongly oppose his father's actions. Until one day, what the father's actions cause him harm and can be said to backfire.

This film will be analyzed using Michael Foucault's theory of power relations. In social science, the theory of power relations is a concept often used to understand how power functions in social interactions. In the context of film, this theory can be used to analyze how characters in the story demonstrate, compete for, and maintain power. Films often depict various forms of power, including political, social, economic, and cultural power. The characters in the film can represent various positions in the power hierarchy, and the way they interact with each other reflects the power dynamics that exist in society.

For example, films that depict class conflict or struggle or the relationship between individuals and authority often show how power can be used to oppress or empower. Power conflicts are often the focus of film stories. For example, the main characters in drama or thriller films may struggle against the system that oppresses them. In such situations, power relations theory helps us understand how the story is shaped by the struggle between various forces. Power relations theory helps us understand how characters use certain tactics to maintain or seize power from other characters. Films can also be used as a tool to spread certain ideologies. Films can reinforce or challenge social norms through representations of

power. Power relations theory allows audiences to view films critically. By understanding how power functions in films, they can better understand the messages conveyed and how films can affect their real world.

RESEARCH METHODS

Film research is a broad and multidisciplinary field that encompasses a variety of methods for analyzing and understanding film as an art form and medium. Film research also often utilizes qualitative approaches, such as interviews and content analysis. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), these approaches allow researchers to explore individuals' subjective experiences and the meanings they attach to films. Interviews with filmmakers, actors, or audience members can provide a deeper understanding of the process of filmmaking and interpretation. Data collection in this study used observation and note-taking techniques.

Data analysis in this study used several methods, namely:

1. Narrative Analysis

According to Bordwell and Thompson (2010), narrative analysis includes an examination of plot, character, theme, and storytelling style. The focus of this analysis is the story structure and narrative elements within the film. Researchers are able to study how these elements work together to shape the film's overall meaning. Identifying the three-act structure, character development, and the use of motifs are common components of this method.

2. Social and Cultural Context Analysis

This method involves studying the social, cultural, and historical context in which the film was created and broadcast. Context analysis, according to Storey (2018), helps researchers understand how the film reflects or challenges current social and cultural standards. This method typically involves studying the social, political, and economic background that influenced the film's production process.

3. Gender and Representation Analysis

In gender analysis, the primary focus is how the film portrays gender, sexuality, and identity. This analysis, according to Mulvey (1975), can reveal how films often create a patriarchal perspective and how female characters are often

positioned within the narrative. Researchers can understand the power dynamics that exist in gender representation in films with the help of this technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of this study focuses on the character of Pak Long Akbar. This main character was chosen because he represents the power relations present in the film Tangkal. Other characters were also considered as considerations in examining the power relations within the film.

The analysis revealed four forms of power relations in Tangkal. The film identified four aspects: power as a relation, discourse and power, biopolitics and government, and finally, subjectivity and resistance. The following section will present the results of these four aspects within Tangkal.

1. Power as a Relationship

Power exists in every social relationship, not in a single subject or institution. Power is not acquired instantly but instead, it is built in relationships and continues to grow. In the character of Pak Long Akbar, there is power within him which results in relationships. The strength of the character Pak Long Akbar is that as a healer who is respected by the community, Pak Long has more ability to carry out alternative medicine. He has the ability to heal people who are possessed, such as the character Alif. So we can see this in the quote below

*"Be gentle, slave, hold a little tighter
(recite the mantra)'Auzubillahi minassyaitonirrojim, bismillahirrahmanirrahim
(recite the mantra)"*

So we can see from this incident that there is a relationship that shows that people visit Mr. Lung in emergency situations like the one above with the aim of healing because they believe in Mr. Long Akbar's healing abilities. As a parent, Pak Long Akbar had the power to influence Bullah's life as his son, even though Bullah began to forbid his father and told him to abandon his father's practices and approaches. This can be seen in the image excerpt below.

"You want to call me shirk? I cure people using verses from the Quran. The ward is just an intermediary. You want to say I'm astray?"

"Bullah, you have to remember, the money from the treatment that you considered haram is what helped get you to Egypt. It's your flesh and blood that you considered haram, remember that."

The quote above describes the argument between father and son. This relationship demonstrates the dynamic between father and son, where Bullah, as Pak Long Akbar's son, tries to advise Pak Long to abandon practices considered shirk. However, Pak Long consistently denies this.

Pak Long also holds power within the community, but he also faces challenges from his friend, Karim, who constantly tries to hinder his efforts. This can be seen in the quote below.

"I've been patient enough. Hey, it doesn't even interfere with your work. Why do you want to make my work difficult?"

"Oh, why did you come to this mosque and I was wrong? A person's faith doesn't just depend on Songkok. Karim, if you bother me one more time, watch out."

The quote above shows Mr. Long's anger towards Karim. This relationship demonstrates the conflict between Mr. Lung and Karim, where Karim seeks to protect the community and Mr. Long Akbar from medical practices deemed wrong and shirk (polytheism). His intentions are sound, but Mr. Long Akbar's methods are utterly flawed.

Mr. Long Akbar possesses dangerous powers, engaging in practices that invoke evil forces, such as demons. Mr. Long Akbar's actions involve supernatural beings, offerings, and the use of amulets as a means of healing. This is evident in the quote below:

*"Yes, I'll replace the lost item, but please forgive me. Please forgive me."
"He's mine. I'm his; I've been looking after him all this time. I'm the one who gave him the medicine, I gave him to be praised by all. I'm the one in control."*

The quote above explains this relationship, showing that Mr. Long Akbar is trapped within the power of the devil, who controls him and transforms him into a different person. This leads Mr. Long Akbar to become very close to demons, devils, and other supernatural beings, leading him to commit polytheism.

2. Discourse and Power

In the film "Tangkal," the discourse emerging from Pak Long Akbar's discourse reflects his power in a spiritual and religious context. This discourse can be

seen in the way Pak Long Akbar heals everyone who comes to him for treatment using his mantras. This is evident in the quote below:

"Kedekillah budak ni, tahan sikit (recite a mantra)"

"Auzubillahi minassyaitonirrojim, bismillahirrahmanirrahim (recite a mantra)"

In this context, Pak Long Akbar uses mantras to heal the character Alif, who is possessed by a demon. This discourse demonstrates Pak Long Akbar's power as a healer recognized by the community. He possesses the ability to resolve spiritual problems considered intractable by conventional means. This creates a discourse that spiritual power can overcome supernatural disturbances, and the community believes that Pak Long Akbar has authority in this regard.

The discourse of tradition and community beliefs is also present in the film "Tangkal." People believe that the use of a talisman or a talisman is a source of profit. We can see this in the quote below

"If you want, Mr. Lung, please come to my house. Mr. Lung will give you a talisman. God willing, your soulmate will come to your house within two days. Mr. Lung has done this before."

The excerpt above depicts a conversation between Mr. Long Akbar and a woman discussing soulmates. Mr. Long Akbar gives talismans to people who come for treatment, demonstrating his reliance on local traditions and beliefs in his practice. This discourse creates the idea that certain objects can bring good luck or overcome problems, demonstrating the power of tradition in the community. People believe that the talismans given by Mr. Long Akbar have the power to influence their fate.

Discourse on religious conflict between Bullah, the child, and Mr. Long Akbar, the parent, also occurs. The medium is the conversation between Mr. Long Akbar and Bullah. This can be seen in the excerpt below.

"Hmm, Sir, Syarif wants Bullah to become a Muallim at Tahfidz (Islamic memorization)."

The quote above explains that Bullah is actually trying to persuade Pak Long Akbar to switch to practices more in line with religious teachings, namely teaching the Quran. This discourse creates a conflict between Pak Long Akbar's traditional practices and purer religious teachings. This demonstrates that power in a religious context lies not only in rituals, but also in education and teaching, and how the younger generation strives to change the way their parents view them.

3. Biopolitics and Government

In the context of biopolitics as proposed by Michel Foucault, we can see how power and social control operate in the film Tangkal through the character of Pak Long Akbar. Pak Long Akbar's actions regarding health, treatment, and healing in the film utilize alternative or spiritual methods. We can see this in the quote below.

"Takpe, your work is a gift and a mandate. Some diseases cannot be treated with modern methods."

In this context, Pak Long Akbar acts as a healer who regulates public health through traditional practices. He claims that his healing is a mandate, indicating that he has the authority to determine legitimate healing methods. This creates a biopolitics in which individual and community health is regulated through belief in spiritual and traditional practices, ignoring modern medical methods.

In another context, Pak Long also demonstrates his moral and ethical stance when addressing his son, Bullah, who accused him of polytheism. This can be seen in the quote below.

"You want to say I'm polytheistic? I treat people using verses from the Quran. Antidotes are just intermediaries. You want to say I'm astray?"

In the dialogue above Mr. Long Akbar defends his practice even though Bullah accuses him of shirk. It shows how moral and ethical forces operate in society, where individuals must be accountable for their actions based on existing norms. Biopolitics here is seen in how society regulates individual behavior based on prevailing religious and moral values.

Pak Long Akbar also emphasized that only certain people can carry out treatment like this. Not everyone can do it. This is proven by the quote below.

"It's not permissible to die, urang not kire ma die. Karim mane has knowledge. It's a strong lie, not everyone can take this medicine. If you have offspring, you also need to give it. You can't give it."

In the context above, Pak Long Akbar emphasizes that not everyone can perform healing, and there is a belief that only those with certain ancestry can do so. This kind of biopolitics creates the rule that modern practices, such as medical treatment, are not always reliable. This reflects a culture where belief in traditional practices is stronger than belief in science and technology.

4. Subjectivity and Resistance

The subjectivity in the film Tangkal is evident in those who agree with or accept Pak Long Akbar's activities and those who rebel. The following table lists the characters who agree with Pak Long Akbar's actions and those who disagree.

Character Name	Quote Sentence	Description
Alif Father's	"Slipping money into Mr. Lung's hand) as a token of my gratitude."	Alif's father showed his support for Pak Lung's work by giving him money as a token of gratitude after his son was healed. This reflects the community's trust in Pak Lung's abilities as a healer and demonstrates their appreciation for his services.
Lilah	"Ni Pak Lung, Lilah wants to do her SPM tomorrow. So I want to ask for medicine. So that her SPM will run smoothly."	Lilah came to Mr. Long to ask for a talisman to succeed in the SPM exam. This shows that she believes in the power of the talisman given by Mr. Long and supports his healing practices.

Table 4.1 Characters Who Agree with Pak Long

Character Name	Quote Sentence	Description
Bullah	"Sir, Bullah is worried, but there's a risk."	Bullah demonstrated rebellion against his father's practices by expressing concern about the potential risks Pak Long faced. He attempted to warn his father of the potential dangers of healing practices deemed

		unconstitutional.
Karim		Karim attempted to oppose Pak Long's practices by erecting a fence around Pak Long's house and uncovering the talismans at Duloh's stall. This demonstrated his rejection of practices he considered wrong and his efforts to restore people to the right path according to religious teachings.
Kyai	"I just want to help you, I don't want you to get lost."	The Kyai attempted to advise Bullah not to directly oppose his father but nonetheless pointed out that there were better ways to change Pak Long's practices. This reflected his resistance to practices deemed unconstitutional.

Table 4.2 figures who disagree with Mr. Long

CONCLUSION

In Naza Manas's analysis of the film "Tangkal," the power relations depicted through the character of Pak Long reflect the complex dynamics between tradition and modernity, as well as between older and younger generations. Pak Long, the main character, plays the role of a respected healer in the community, using traditional practices and mantras to heal those who come to him. This demonstrates the power he wields in a spiritual and religious context, where the community trusts his ability to address problems deemed unsolvable by conventional means. However, on the other hand, there is resistance from his son, Bullah, who tries to oppose his father's practices, which are considered idolatrous and contrary to religious teachings.

The conflict between Mr. Long and Bullah reflects resistance to existing power. Bullah, representing the younger generation, seeks to change society's perception of his father's healing practices. He expresses concern about the risks Mr. Long might face and attempts to warn his father of the potential dangers of these practices. In this regard, Bullah not only rejects his father's authority but also seeks to guide society on a path more in line

with religious teachings. This creates a tension between tradition and modernity, as Bullah struggles to find his own identity within the context of differing values.

Overall, the film "Tangkal" depicts how power relations operate in society through the interactions between the characters. Through this analysis, we can see how power is not only oppressive but also generates resistance and subjectivity. The film serves as a mirror reflecting ongoing social and cultural dynamics and demonstrating how individuals can play an active role in existing power relations. Thus, "Tangkal" is not only a work of art but also a tool for social reflection and education for its audience.

REFERENCES

Article in a Journal:

Kurniawan, A. 2018. Kekuasaan dan pengetahuan dalam film: Analisis Foucault terhadap sinema Indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 6 (2), 123-135.

Article or Chapter in A Published Book:

Aufderheide, P. 1997. *Literasi media: Laporan dari National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy*. Dewan Pendidikan Amerika.

Dyer, R. 1998. *Bintang* . London: British Film Institute.

Foucault, M. 1982. Subjek dan kekuasaan. *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (4), 777-795.

Foucault, M. 1991. Governmentality (Kepemerintahan). Dalam G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *Efek Foucault: Studi dalam pemerintahan* (hlm. 87-104). University of Chicago Press.

Junaidi, A. 2015. *Film dan identitas: Representasi budaya dalam sinema Indonesia* . Penerbit Universitas Indonesia.

Kaplan, EA 1983. *Perempuan dan film: Kedua sisi kamera* . Routledge.

Book:

Bordwell, D., & Thompson, K. 2010. *Seni film: Sebuah pengantar* (edisi ke-10). McGraw-Hill.

Denzin, NK, & Lincoln, YS 2011. *Buku pegangan penelitian kualitatif SAGE* (edisi ke-4). Publikasi SAGE

Eagleton, T. 2007. *Teori sastra: Sebuah pengantar* . Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Foucault, M. 1972. *Arkeologi pengetahuan* . Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. 1976. *Sejarah seksualitas, volume 1: Sebuah pengantar* . Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. 1978. *Disiplin dan hukuman: Kelahiran penjara* . Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. 1980. *Kekuasaan/pengetahuan: Wawancara terpilih dan tulisan-tulisan lainnya, 1972-1977* . New York: Pantheon Books.

Mulvey, L. 1975. Kenikmatan visual dan sinema naratif. *Layar*, 16 (3), 6-18.

Storey, J. 2018. *Teori budaya dan budaya populer: Sebuah pengantar* (edisi ke-7). Routledge.

TJS 2010. *Sinema Indonesia pasca-kemerdekaan: Mencari jati diri* . Penerbit Erlangga.