

A Deconstructive Approach to the Concept of Power in *Rise Ini Kalilah* (2018) and *Crossroads: One Two Jaga* (2018).

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the concept of power in two Malaysian films entitled *Rise Ini Kalilah* (2018) and *Crossroads: One Two Jaga* (2018) through a deconstructive postmodern approach. This concept of power is discussed through narrative elements and structures using Michel Foucault's (1970) deconstruction approach. According to Foucault (Power, 2011) "knowledge is power" which leads to the analysis of both films aspects of power and knowledge related to national interests and social classes as well as how power affects the lives of Malaysian society. The abuse of power resulting in social and political issues such as corruption, illegal immigrant issues and educational interests are analyzed through its narrative elements such as the films' point of view of characters. Via the analyses on particular scenes in both films, this paper aims to expose the different concept of power that is depicted in both films as the beginning of social and political unrest in Malaysia as conceived by the directors and script-writers of the movies.

Keywords: Deconstruction, Michel Foucault, Power and Knowledge, Film, Narrative Element

Introduction

The deconstruction theory is used to critique (Syieh, 2017) the films chosen for this paper. Fariska Pujiyanti (Pujiyanti, 2010) claims that deconstructing the text refers to unpacking the meaning of a text. In film studies, Michel Foucault's (Power, 2011) theory of power and knowledge deconstructively in this research. Dahlian Ayu Novanti (Novanti, 2016) defines the theory of power and knowledge as a relationship between various forces that occur in a system of mores and social norms of a community. The meaning of knowledge is that society is in one place but has different events, different teaching and holding different philosophies and opinions.

Theory of power and knowledge is found through the relationships between communication, objectives and power. Communication gives meaning while objectives provide

control over transformation such as science and economics in our lives and power is an action by a group against another aimed at controlling the actions and outcomes of each other. Thus, power is perceived as social structures determined by actions that no one dares or is brave enough to act against (Pujiyanti, 2010).

Rise Ini Kalilah and *Crossroads: One Two Jaga* are films that have been identified as featuring this concept of power and knowledge in its narrative elements. Movie narrative elements such as character and characterization, conflicts and viewpoints in both films are related to the abuse of power that has caused social and political issues to arise. Corruption, illegal immigrant issues and education policies have all been victimized by the widespread nature of power abuse of a government. Thus, the analysis of the narrative elements in the two films focus on the abuse of power through communication based on Foucault's theory of power and knowledge (Power, 2011).

Methodology

Deconstruction theory is introduced by Jacques Derrida (Rolfe, 2004) for linguistics and as Johan Setiawan and Ajat Sudrajat (Setiawan, 2018) construes can also be get new meaning. According to Marcelus Ungkang (Ungkang, 2013) and Abd. Ghofur (Ghofur, 2015), deconstruction can be applied on text to get different meaning by reading the text in detail through an understanding of writing and reading.

Based on Derrida's Deconstruction theory (Rolfe, 2004), it has created a new theory of power and knowledge (Power / knowledge) by Michel Foucault (Power, 2011). Based on the concept of Michel Foucault (Power, 2011), power and knowledge (power / knowledge) are the capabilities of individuals, groups or groups of people to master the society through knowledge that are spread in various ways according to their thinking (Antomo, 2013). The goal is to prioritize the perception of society as it is. In addition, this power is also derived from the experience gained by individuals who have dynamically and rationally distinctive characteristics (Kamahi, 2017).

According to Abdil Mughis Mudhoffir (Mudhoffir, 2013), power theory is also referred to as a mastery strategy in society. For example, the *Megamind* film (Hasan, 2015) features a protagonist figure Metro Man as a symbol of power domination by white-skinned groups in the United States and Megamind the antagonist represents people who are abandoned and denied (Hasan, 2015).

Synopsis

RIK is produced by Prodigee Film, Filmmaker Studio and WebTVAsia which was aired on September 13, 2018. According to Shazryn Mohd Faizal (Faizal, 2018), this movie was produced as a tribute to Malaysians who were brave enough to rise up against the power abuse of the government through the six different stories that ended in a united front against the powers that ruled on polling day. The duration of *RIK* film is 1:40:41 minutes directed by three different directors of different races namely Ik Amir Mustapha, Saw Teong Him and Prem Nath. This movie is inspired by the *Pilihan Raya Umum* (PRU14). The plot unites six stories that are interrelated about individuals who were faced with various challenges before they could cast their votes. Great emphasis was placed on the tense atmosphere that prevailed before the most important

general election in Malaysia's history. Perhaps the most interesting is about the Malaysian students in London who were looking for someone willing to transport the votes home to Malaysia. Another strand involves, a trader who is under great political pressure to vote for the present government while another story revolves around a truth seeking journalist angered by the felonious ways of the then government in promoting their candidates. The film begins with a policeman trapped in a dilemma to do the right thing and what is best for his family interspersed with the love story of between an inter-race and a Singaporean hawker who has no life goals and a polling agent in Malaysia. However, despite various the challenges faced by all the protagonists, at 4:58 pm on May 9, 2018, these six characters managed with great funfare to cast their votes. After that, ahead of the advent of the new age, the choices they made is reflected in the change it brings to their lives.

In *CR12J* produced by Pixel Play Sdn. Bhd also aired on September 6, 2018. The film directed by Sahili Abdan or known as Nam Ron won the best film in the 2018 Kuala Lumpur Film Critic Award (Hassan, 2018). According to Daniyal Kadir (Kadir, 2018), this film projects the new courage and directions of Malaysian cinema which dares to convey social and political criticism by exploring the issues of corruption related to the police in real life. This movie, which lasts for 1:21:06 minutes had a star studded cast namely Zahiril Adzim, Rosdeen Suboh, Ario Bayu, Timothy Castillo, Iedil Putra, Amerul Affendi, Chew Kin Wah, Asmara Abigail, Along Eyzendy, Azman Hassan, Izuan Fitri, Rahim Omar, Vanida Imran. *CR12J* film is about the corruption within the Malaysian Police force told based on the backdrop of the events that occurred to by gang-related members on the dark side of society. For example, the police who turn a blind eye after accepting bribes and being involved in criminal activities, as well as extorting the immigrant groups without permits working in Malaysia. The story revolves around an Indonesian immigrant, Sugiman (Iman) and his son Joko who work in a Malaysian construction company owned by Mr. Sarip and his son Adi.

Sugiman's sister, Sumiati who works as a maid had run away from her employer. This is because she is not able to withstand the work she receives and the pittance for the salary. Then, Sumiati wants to return to Indonesia with the help of Mr. Sarip and a certain amount of money paid by her brother. Meanwhile they have to hide Sumiati from the police in a cheap hotel. The subplot revolves around Rico, a Filipino mechanic who is constantly pressured to send money back to his mother. Rico and his friend Marzuki work for a Datuk and borrowed money from his employer's drawer to meet his needs. Hassan, a police crime prevention personnel always suffers from the lack of finances to cover the expenditure of his family. Hence, he starts receiving bribes from some shopkeepers and criminals to keep them from jail. Things become difficult when his comrade Hussein is unable to accept Hassan's ways.

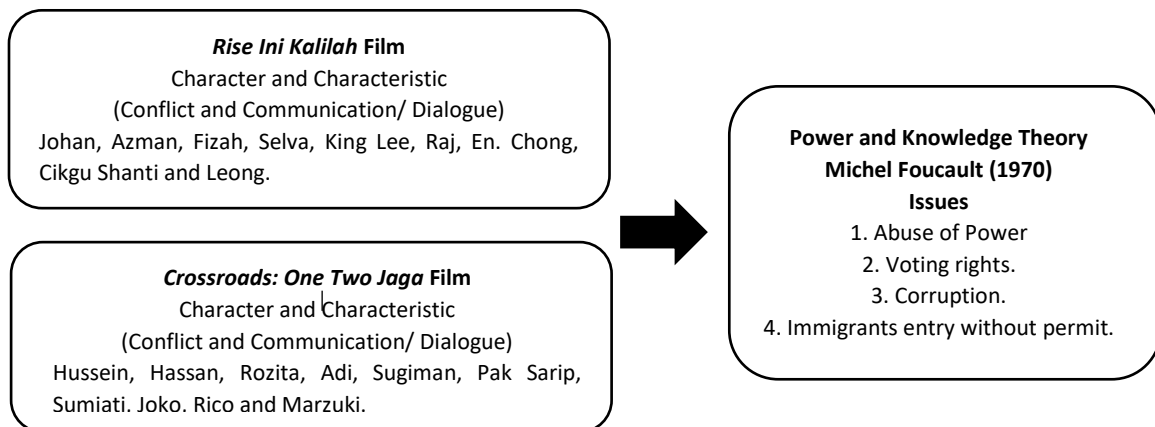


Figure 2: Scene police exposure received bribes and agreed to the activities of the superior in the *RIK* film.

Analysis

RIK and CR12J film has given meaning to the political power system and social problems found in Malaysia. Political and social issues are raised in the film as criticisms for public viewing. The narrative element of a character is used as a story maker to convey a message about abuse of power and corruption. For example, the character of Azman, a cop in the RIK needs to fund his mother's surgery. Through the concept of power, Azman's character as a policeman has been given a new meaning. The character of the policeman is no longer seen as a person who fights for legal justice but is seen as an abusive force trapped by the demands of life. Meanwhile, Selva is a trader who is confined by political power to become an illegal voter sent by Raj, a VIP special consultant. Hence, because of the conflicts experienced by each of these characters, issues like corruption or abuse of power arises.

By deconstructing issues of political power, voting rights, bribery, illegal immigrants narrative elements of character and characterization as a motive for the whole story. For instance, the issue of corruption is highlighted in *RIK* movie through the dialogue between Azman and Johan (00:44:00, 00:44:37 and 00:44:41) shown in the act of receiving bribes and acceptance of the superior by turning a blind-eye to the felonious acts.



JOHAN

Semua ini di luar bidang kuasa kita. Kita macam nyamuk saja, berbanding orang yang pegang mamat tu. Kau dengar cakap aku. Kita layan saja. Fikir tentang anak dan bini kau. Ingat Azman, kita tak boleh selamatkan dunia. Tapi kita boleh selamatkan orang yang kita sayang.

RED-SHIRT MAN

Ehem, ark...Nanti roger-roger lah ar. Boleh lepak-lepak minum... dengan Tan Sri.

Based on Foucault (Power, 2011), the study of language or discourse consisting of verses and dialogues is regarded as one of the tools or media for the dissemination of power (Antomo, 2013). Hence, the use of the above dialogue is used to convey that the power system is capable of influencing the society.

The issue of corruption was also featured in the CR12J movie. According to Tuty Haryanti Ahmad Rodzi (Rodzi, 2019), a survey by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) found that 82 percent of respondents felt that issues has been serious in this country. As Stated by Abdil Mughis Mudhoffir (Mudhoffir, 2013), that the powers possessed by individuals are capable of controlling others, and neglecting the real function of power in modern society. For example, with the powers possessed as the Crime Prevention Unit, Hassan's character did not carry out any real responsibility. It is even able to protect those involved in serious crime cases by accepting bribes. The bribes are displayed in minutes 00:36:49, 00:45:23 and 01:00:24 from some employers such as retailer owners, construction employers and foreign workers.



Figure 3: Scene corruption acceptance bribes shots based on *Crossroads: One Two Jaga* movie

According to Andre Arisandy (Arisandy, 2018), deconstruction studies are disclose and discovering other meanings. Based on the *RIK* movie, the other meaning is the abuses of law as a result of corrupt acts. For example, Teacher Shanti father as the School Principal and the head of the Voting Station (KTM) is very trustworthy, obedient and well-served in the *RIK* movie. However, the good attitude as the principal in the film has been given a new meaning. A principal who should be firm with honest values such as honesty and trust has changed. Due to political influence (power), the character of Teacher Shanti father is shown to be willing to cut the school allowance for corruption. This is shown through the scene of the clash between Shanti's teacher character and a red-shirted man who has been given a cover of money by Teacher Shanti father at his home in 00:29:12 minutes (Figure 4).



Figure 4: Scene a man receives the envelope from Shanti Father in the *RIK* movie.

In addition, the power of the political system has also resulted in scams. Nirwan Dewanto (Dewanto, 1994) stipulated that power is a complex strategy in society. Hence, every struggle to win requires deception in politics. This is clearly featured in the scene of the *RIK* movie when the character Teacher Shanti served as the Voting Agent and Vote Counting Agent (PACA). Teacher Shanti called out an illegal Bangladesh standing in-line to vote when he did not understand the Malay language (Figure 5) but the voting process continues regardless. In minutes 01:14:28 (Figure 5) scams like Selva disguised as a volunteer to bring voting papers away as directed by a particular party is also shown.



Figure 5: Scene scams during polling day of political parties in the *RIK* movie.

These are inspired by individuals who reported to Net and Fair Election Combination (Bersih 2.0) collection on May 14, 2018 that some individuals were not able to vote because of a “ghost picker” had used their name and bogus voting officers. Kamaruddin M. Said (Said, 2016) states that the deconstruction of modernization has given rise to many social issues and certain living values without much opposition. Clearly this is reflected not only during the PRU 14 but national issues in Malaysia. Issues such as illegal immigrants and corrupt police officers as shown in (00:22:30 and 00:22:59) *RIK* where factories and police cooperate to bring in undocumented workers.



Figure 6: Scene immigrant entry without permit to the factory in the *RIK* movie

The immigrant issue is also featured in the CR12J film. It is shown through the scene where Hussein enters Pak Sarip’s factory to request his employee's passport (00:29:29) (Figure 7). There is also a scene (00:47:59) (Figure 7) showing Sarip who works for Dato balaci to prevent legal

action. At 00:49:29 (Figure 7) the discovery scene between Balaci and the Hassan and Hussein who are in collaboration.



Figure 7: Scene about symptoms of immigrant entry without permits at (CR12J)

Based on the scenes in both films, this issue also highlight the irresponsibility and greed of the employers and local communities themselves who are not willing to venture into the field of work. As such, the influx of immigrants without a permit in Malaysia has created social and economic problems (Hee, 2015). Among other economic problems faced is the depreciation of the local currency due to the flow of money abroad. Meanwhile, social problems are reflected in the rising crime rates as a result of these groups, locals find it difficult to get a job.

Conclusion

Overall, the characters and characteristic in *RIK* (2018) and *Crossroad: One Two Jaga* (2018) film formed based on the concept of power deconstruction in Malaysia. In both films, his character and characteristic give a various meanings in the concept of power closely related to the life of the Malaysian society, especially against the abuse of power which resulted in social and political issues such as responsibility, abuse of power as scams and corruption, and immigration issues without permits. While the show in both films is more about the social and political issues that are also featured through its dialogue, it gives a variety of meanings that make this movie a memorable one to be seen and viewed positively.

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