

The Representation of Islamic Values in "Siksa Kubur" Movie Through Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Rio Febriannur Rachman

*Program Studi Komunikasi Penyiaran Islam, Fakultas Dakwah dan Penyiaran Islam,
Institut Agama Islam Syarifuddin Lumajang
Jln. Kiai Syarifuddin, Wonorejo, Kedungjajang, Lumajang
riofrachman21@gmail.com*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis nilai-nilai Islam yang terkandung dalam film Siksa Kubur karya Joko Anwar, yang berhasil meraih empat juta penonton di bioskop dan ditayangkan di platform OTT Netflix. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode analisis wacana Foucauldian untuk mengeksplorasi elemen naratif dan sinematik dalam film sebagaimana dijelaskan oleh Himawan Pratista. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa film ini menampilkan diskursus tentang nilai-nilai Islam melalui representasi visual dan naratif terkait moralitas, kehidupan setelah kematian, serta hubungan antara pengetahuan dan kekuasaan. Diskursus tersebut memperlihatkan bagaimana nilai-nilai religius, seperti konsep dosa, hukuman, dan pertobatan, diinternalisasi melalui elemen sinematik seperti pencahayaan redup, efek suara menyeramkan, dan simbolisasi budaya Islam. Studi ini memberikan kontribusi bagi khazanah kajian media Islam, khususnya dalam mengungkap dimensi spiritual dan pengaruh diskursus religius terhadap pembentukan subjek dan identitas moral dalam masyarakat.

Kata kunci— *Film, Islam, Media, Siksa Kubur*

Abstract

This study analyzes the Islamic values contained in the movie Siksa Kubur by Joko Anwar, which garnered four million viewers in theaters and was streamed on the OTT platform Netflix. The research adopts a qualitative approach using Foucauldian discourse analysis to explore the narrative and cinematic elements of the film as described by Himawan Pratista. The findings reveal that the film presents a discourse on Islamic values through visual and narrative representations of morality, the afterlife, and the relationship between knowledge and power. This discourse illustrates how religious values, such as the concepts of sin, punishment, and repentance, are internalized through cinematic elements such as dim lighting, eerie sound effects, and the symbolic depiction of Islamic culture. This study contributes to the body of Islamic media studies, particularly by uncovering the spiritual dimensions and the influence of religious discourse on the formation of subjectivity and moral identity in society.

Keywords— *Movie, Islam, Media, Siksa Kubur*

1. PENDAHULUAN

Siksa Kubur is one of the Indonesian movies that was very well-liked in theaters in 2024. The movie's theatrical run began on April 11, 2024, and ended on May 22, 2024. There were 4 million people who saw this movie in theaters. On September 16, 2024, this movie was subsequently aired on the Over The Top (OTT) Netflix channel. The film was directed and written by Joko Anwar. The film produced by Come and See Pictures stars Faradina Mufti (who plays Sita) and Reza Rahadian (who plays Adil). Thus, the film is called a psychological horror genre with a duration of 1 hour 57 minutes.

There are several other film stars who support this work, one of them is Slamet Raharjo who plays Ilham Sutisna or Wahyu Utama. This film has an appeal because of its good cinematic layout and narrative story, supported by experienced filmmakers. The movie *Siksa Kubur*, which was a box office hit and is still showing on over-the-top (OTT) channels, is discussed in this scientific article. The topic is carried out by examining the film's portrayal of Islamic ideals, wherein Islamic teachings are used as a conditional setting. The movie *Siksa Kubur*, which was a box office hit and is still showing on over-the-top (OTT) channels, is discussed in this scientific article. The topic is carried out by examining the film's portrayal of Islamic ideals, wherein Islamic teachings are used as a conditional setting.

The theory used is Michel Foucault's discourse theory. Foucault's discourse theory is used for how this film forms and maintains Islamic values, especially through visuals, narratives, and social representations. Foucault emphasized that discourse is a series of practices that form knowledge and strengthen certain norms in society through language, symbols, and representations (Foucault, 1966).

The movie *Siksa Kubur*, which carries Islamic themes, functions as a discursive medium that conveys moral and religious messages to its audience. From a Foucauldian perspective, the content of this film can be seen as a tool to instill Islamic values through visual representations of torture in the grave, which aims to strengthen the concept of sin, punishment, and repentance. In this context, the film creates a certain "truth" about the afterlife, which in Islamic religious discourse functions as a warning for humanity to live life in obedience to religious teachings. In addition, Foucault's analysis of this film can reveal how power is used to direct individual and societal behavior through representations of fear of the torture of the grave. These representations not only serve as entertainment but also as a means to strengthen social and religious control within society.

In addition to Foucault's discourse theory, Stuart Hall's representation theory is used as a support to understand meaning in the context of culture and religion, especially related to the concept of the torment of the grave and Islamic values conveyed through film visuals. Foucault sees discourse as a system that regulates the way we understand the world and regulates certain subjects within certain boundaries (Foucault, 1979). In *Siksa Kubur*, the discourse on death and torment in the grave is depicted through visual choices that strengthen or oppose the normative Islamic view of the torment of the grave.

Meanwhile, Hall argues that representation is not just about displaying existing meanings, but is active in shaping our understanding (Hall, 1997). In the context of the film *Siksa Kubur*, the representation of the torment of the grave and the punishment after death is the film's way of shaping an understanding of death from an Islamic perspective. The visualization of the torment of the grave represented through cinematographic

choices, certain symbols, and a strong narrative creates meaning in the minds of the audience about the morality and consequences of life. Hall also explains that representation depends on cultural codes (Hall, 1980): in this case, the visuals of death and torment have a special meaning that can be recognized by Muslim audiences as part of a familiar spiritual narrative.

The research problem in this study is how Islamic values are conveyed in the movie *Siksa Kubur*, from the perspective of Foucault's discourse. Several studies are used as references, including research entitled "Islamic Values in The Media (Critical Discourse Analysis Of The Film Hati Suhita)". The research looks at Islamic messages in the film using visual analysis methods (Fitria & Rachman, 2024), while this study analyzes Islamic values using Foucauldian theory and methods. Another research that was used as a reference was entitled "Islam dan Film Horror: Membentengi Individu dengan Keimanan dalam Film Qodrat", which describes the relationship between religious values and horror films that have occurred recently in Indonesia (Hakim, 2023).

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative research uses the Foucauldian discourse analysis approach, as conveyed by Rachmah Ida in a book entitled *Research Methods: Media and Cultural Studies*. There are five important elements studied through this approach (Ida, 2014), discourse as a practice that forms subjectivity; 2) power and knowledge relations; 3) subjects and subjectivity; 4) genealogy; 5) problematization. The movie *Siksa Kubur*, which was seen online through the Netflix channel, served as the study's data source. In October 2024, the researcher saw this movie three times. According to several publications, qualitative research is an interpretive process that entails handling and comprehending data in order to find themes, patterns, and profound meanings in the events under study (Creswell, 1994). Data collection for this study was done by watching the movie *Siksa Kubur*. Following that, all of the data were examined in light of the chosen hypotheses and reputable supporting sources, such as books and other study findings.

The researcher categorizes it through sub-chapters in the "results and discussion" section to make it easier for readers to read this research. The categorization applied refers to the elements of the film presented by Himawan Pratista, namely: narrative elements and cinematic elements (Pratista, 2008). Narrative elements refer to everything that is an idea or story content. Cinematic elements refer to everything that supports the idea or story content to the audience, including appearance (clothes and accessories), sound (background and dialogue), and setting (location and time).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Five things are examined in the Foucauldian discourse analysis approach, specifically, 1) discourse as a practice that forms subjectivity; 2) power and knowledge relations; 3) subjects and subjectivity; 4) genealogy; 5) problematization. According to Michel Foucault, discourse is a social practice that molds people's and groups' subjectivity in addition to creating knowledge. The term "subjectivity" describes how people perceive themselves, their social positions, and how power systems affect them. Subjectivity, in Foucault's view, is created through intricate social processes, including discourse, rather

than existing naturally or being fixed (Foucault, 1980). The concepts of subject and subjectivity are fundamental elements for understanding how individuals are shaped and positioned in society through power and knowledge. Foucault argued that subjectivity is not something "natural" or independently existing, but is the result of interactions with social structures and power.

A key idea that explains how power may both be a creative force that uses information to build social reality and act as a repressive force is the link between power and knowledge. Since information is produced, shared, and applied within the framework of power relations, Foucault argues that knowledge and power are inextricably linked (Foucault, 1979). Meanwhile, according to Michel Foucault, genealogy is a historical analytical technique he created to comprehend the formation and evolution of many social practices, discourses, and institutions over time. In contrast to traditional history, which tends to look for the beginnings or linearity of an institution's or concept's growth, genealogy seeks to show how knowledge and power contribute to the formation of meaning and values in society.

However, according to Michel Foucault, the term "problematization" refers to how a phenomenon or issue is perceived, characterized, and handled as a "problem" within a certain social setting. Foucault argues that problematization refers to how society constructs and interprets phenomena through dominant discourse and power practices rather than the objective conditions of the phenomenon. Stated differently, problematization is the process through which some things get "problematized" and become issues that require control or management (Foucault, 1966).

3.1. Narrative elements

The movie *Siksa Kubur* tells the story of Sita and Adil who lost both of their parents in a suicide bombing. Their father (named Sanjaya played by Fahri Albar) and mother (named Mutia played by Happy Salma) owned a bakery. One day, when Sita, Adil, Sanjaya, and Mutia were in the bakery, someone entered the shop. The person who looked trembling gave Adil a cassette tape that he said contained the screams of corpses in the afterlife.

Shortly after that, the individual exited the bakery and proceeded to the foreign franchise bakery next door. As it happened, he detonated a suicide bomb inside the foreign company's bakery. When Sanjaya and Mutia left their bakery to pursue a criminal who had stolen money from the cashier's drawer, which Sita was watching over, they perished in the incident. The explosive went off while they were disputing with the robbers at the foreign bakery next door.

The suicide bomber handed Adil a cassette tape, which Sita listened to. He thought the screams were the result of folks playing about and were superstitious. However, he thought that religion and the agony of death had driven many to act rashly to the brink of suicide under the guise of defending their faith. His family had also been shattered by the suicide blast.

It is said that Sita and Adil are Muslims. They attended an Islamic boarding school following the event that claimed the lives of their two parents. As it happened, they didn't feel comfortable there. In actuality, Ilham Sutisna/Wahyu Utama (played by Slamet Rahardjo), the founder of the Islamic boarding school, sexually harassed Adil. Even as they grew up, the events at the Islamic boarding school continued to traumatize them. Furthermore, Ilham Sutisna's status as a child predator was well recognized.



Figure 1. Sita (Left) is at the Islamic Boarding School (00.14.14)
Source: *Come and See Pictures* through Netflix

Sita had an obsession with researching the torments of the grave as an adult. Adil, who was a Muslim mortuary officer and didn't really want to be involved, helped her. Sita would film a video in the grave whenever someone was deemed bad. It was hoped that people would be less inclined to trust in religious ideas if they had proof that the tortures of the grave were not real, which suicide bombers killed their two parents because of religious ideologies. Sejak kecil, Sita tidak pernah benar-benar percaya pada konsep siksa kubur maupun agama. Bahkan ketika di pesantren, ia pernah berdebat dengan salah satu gurunya yang mengatakan bahwa semua manusia akan meninggal setelah nyawanya dicabut oleh malaikat. Sita menanggapi dengan sinis, "Nyawa bisa saja dicabut oleh malaikat, atau mungkin oleh seseorang yang ketakutan akan siksa malaikat." (00.16.31).

She once succeeded in recording at the tomb of Ilham Sutisna, whom she thought had committed numerous misdeeds. She discovered that there was no evidence of torture in the tomb. She therefore desired to broadcast it on national television. The recording did not show up when she tried to play it on a memory card. She was certain that the sabotage was carried out by Adil. She was upset with Adil for allegedly failing to assist her, but she was also ashamed in front of national television.

However, several persons who claimed to have heard torture in the grave (both firsthand and through recordings) made confessions following Sita's appearance on National TV. Put otherwise, Sita's attempts were unsuccessful. It is implied at the film's conclusion that Sita passed away and struggled with the momentum of her demise. The song "Man Robbuka (Who is your God?)" that plays before the movie concludes serves as a symbol for this. The challenge of dying, as though it were a prelude to the suffering Sita, who had long questioned religion, would experience in the hereafter.

It can be explored several issues using visual analysis and Foucault's discourse theory, emphasizing how the film represents Islamic beliefs about death, morality, and the afterlife. The narrative places Sita and Adil in an Islamic boarding school following their parents' tragic death. The film portrays the founder, Ilham Sutisna, as a child predator, which challenges the authority and purity typically ascribed to religious institutions. Foucault's concept of "power-knowledge" here illustrates how the institution exerts control over the characters (Foucault, 1980), influencing their behaviors and shaping their trauma. Sutisna's actions imply that religious authority can be misused, and the hidden nature of his misconduct reveals how institutional secrecy contributes to power structures in religious contexts.

Sita's obsession with documenting the torments of the grave reflects a Foucauldian interest in surveillance and truth production. The visual sequences of her recordings at the gravesite serve as a critique of blind belief. Her attempts to capture the "truth" about the afterlife indicate a struggle against traditional religious narratives. The visuals contribute to a discourse where death and judgment are not merely concepts but spectrums of personal belief and skepticism (Becker, 2024). This juxtaposition highlights how visual media is used as a means of asserting control over religious narratives—attempting to validate or disprove widely held Islamic beliefs regarding the afterlife (Wardhani, 2023).

The film's climax, where Sita questions the existence of afterlife torture, aligns with Foucault's theory of subject formation through discourse. Her obsession with uncovering the "truth" behind Islamic eschatology indicates a personal journey shaped by both trauma and skepticism. This theme visually unfolds in her isolation and frustration, emphasizing the inner conflict as she grapples with faith. The question "Man Robbuka (Who is your God?)" heard in the film's final moments symbolizes her internalized struggle with identity and belief—a Foucauldian reflection on how discourse forms individual subjectivities, especially in matters of religious ideology and moral consequence (Adiprasatio & Larasati, 2023).

In Foucauldian terms, the film employs religious discourse to impose control over actions and beliefs concerning death. The portrayal of Sita's death and her encounter with questions associated with Islamic eschatology visually intensifies the idea of "disciplinary power." The audio element of "Man Robbuka" in the film's closing scene functions as a symbol of judgment that confronts Sita's lifetime of skepticism, reinforcing the Foucauldian idea of religion as a discourse that disciplines thought and behavior, especially regarding death and moral evaluation.

These analytical points underscore how *Siksa Kubur* uses religious discourse and visual cues to depict power dynamics, the construction of knowledge, and the internalization of Islamic values. By presenting characters that are shaped by trauma and skeptical of religious teachings, the film provides a Foucauldian critique of how religious beliefs and practices discipline individuals and form identities.

3.2. Cinematic Elements

The movie *Siksa Kubur*'s cinematic elements demonstrate its Islamic principles. The commercial poster features a serpent and skull-shaped corpses. The bodies in question are dressed in white, as is customary for Muslim burials if you look closely. In Islamic teachings, religious authorities typically employ the snake as a symbol of the anguish of the grave to explain concepts. All of the funeral processions in the movie are based on Islamic principles, not just the poster. A snake that feeds on the body, particularly the head, is actually one of the tortures in the grave depicted in the movie. The head of the body is once again bitten, then destroyed, then reformed, and so on. Several works, like *Irsyadul Ibad* by Zainuddin Al Malibari and *Fathul Bari* by Ibnu Hajar Al Asqolani, provide information about torture in the shape of a deadly and biting snake. *Suja Al Aqra* or *Syujaul Aqra* are the alleged names of the snake in dispute (Ahmad, 2020).

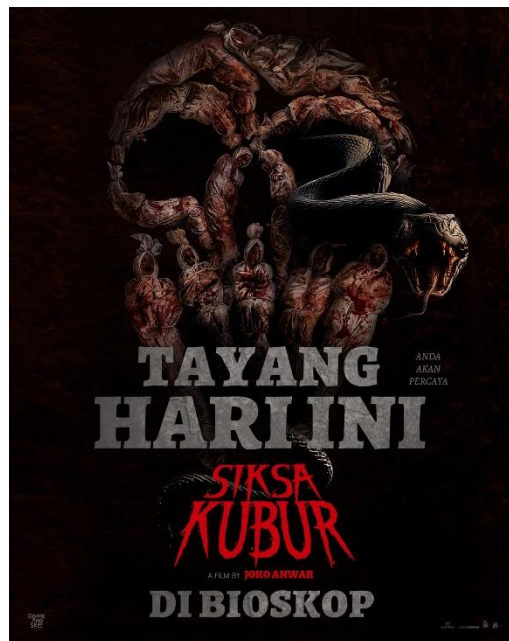


Figure 2. Movie Promotion Poster
Source: Instagram *Come and See Pictures*

n Islamic boarding school, a representation of an Islamic educational establishment, serves as one of the movie's locations. In the Islamic boarding school, there are a number of incidents that form the basis of the story. There, the character Adil is sexually harassed by the character Ilham Sutisna (who later changed his name to Wahyu Sutama). Ilham has the freedom to do this because he is the one who always funds the school. Therefore, the character Sita (Adil's older sister) tries to save Adil by running away from the Islamic boarding school. At that point, a grudge is planted that always resides in the hearts of Sita and Adil.

In the movie *Siksa Kubur*, the existence of torture after a person dies and enters the grave is discussed. According to Foucault, discourse is the structure of knowledge and power that shapes society's perspective (Foucault, 1980) on a concept (which is associated with the momentum after someone is buried). Naturally, individuals who are bad in their lives are the target of this suffering.

The conditions in the grave are depicted in this movie. This movie subtly communicates the authority of the idea of severe punishment in Islamic teachings by using close-ups, eerie sound effects, and gloomy lighting methods to evoke a sense of dread and unease. This film component demonstrates the discursive power in shaping people's views of the afterlife by forming a discourse of fear and devotion to religious beliefs. When religious teachings accept the repercussions of one's views, the film's questions about faith or good deeds—such as *Man Robbuka* (who is your God)—become symbolic of discourse "control". According to Foucault's theory, this can be viewed as a type of normalization (Foucault, 1998), whereby the storyline of the movie perpetuates religious doctrines on the afterlife that demand moral compliance in this life.

The audience finds these abstract ideas to be "real" because of the utilization of grave settings and figures to give them tangible representations. According to Foucault, this normalizes the audience's religious attitudes inside the framework of religion by establishing a body and place that are regulated by religious discourse that governs what

is good and wrong. Through these cinematic components, *Siksa Kubur* portrays religious discourse as a reality that may affect people's beliefs and conduct in addition to being a set of teachings.

Cinematic elements in Islamic psychological horror movies such as *Siksa Kubur* play an important role in creating a strong visual and emotional experience, which is not only scary but also contains a moral or religious message (Mubasyaroh, 2015). These cinematic elements are used to deepen the message of Islamic teachings regarding the afterlife and the concept of the torment of the grave. Light and shadow displays in Islamic psychological horror films can symbolize the contrast between righteousness and sin. In *Siksa Kubur*, dim lighting effects and sharp shadows are often used to create a tense atmosphere and give the impression of supernatural things. Slowly moving shadows or black shadows in the corners of the room can depict supernatural entities, sins, or the torment of the grave that awaits the human soul.

Close-up shots or low camera angles create a feeling of discomfort and fear as if the audience is part of the scene. Close-ups of frightened faces or shots of dark rooms with unstable camera angles can depict psychological pressure and fear of the torment of the grave (Sari, Haruna, & Maisarah, 2024). High camera angles that show characters from above can also give the impression of human smallness and helplessness before the power of God. In Islamic horror films, sound plays a big role in creating a religious nuance and adding to the scary effect. For example, *Siksa Kubur* can use the sound of dhikr, sighs, or the recitation of verses from the Qur'an to give a sacred and frightening impression. Sound effects such as echoing footsteps, creaking doors, or gusts of wind add to the intensity of the feeling of fear of the afterlife.



Figure 3. A close-up shot of Sita's face is shown as she watches the scene of the torment of the grave at 01:52:20. Shortly after, a voice asks, "Man Robbuka (Who is your Lord)" as if she herself has entered the realm of the grave (01:54:06).

Source: *Come and See Pictures* through Netflix

Dark colors and gloomy visual tones are often used in Islamic psychological horror to depict the darkness of sin and the mystery of the afterlife. Gray, black, or dark red can add to the effect of depression or fear. In *Siksa Kubur*, this tone can depict the atmosphere of the grave, the solitude of torture, and the mystery of the barzakh realm. In Islamic psychological horror, the depiction of the grave or supernatural entities is usually

adjusted to the symbolism in the Islamic religion (Zikri, Handayani, & Mirdad, 2024). *Siksa Kubur* can depict questions in the grave and the punishment that awaits the soul with symbols such as shackles, worms, or haunting silence, which represent inner torture and the consequences of sins that have been committed. With these cinematic elements, *Siksa Kubur* not only aims to scare but also convey spiritual reflection.

4. CONCLUSION

The analysis of *Siksa Kubur* through Michel Foucault's discourse theory and cinematic elements demonstrates how the film conveys Islamic values about morality, the afterlife, and the power-knowledge dynamic. The film's depiction of Sita and Adil's trauma at an Islamic boarding school reveals how power, knowledge, and religious authority intersect to control subjectivity. The institution's authority, represented by a morally corrupt founder, illustrates Foucault's concept of how institutions can shape individuals' behaviors and beliefs, often under the guise of religious morality. Sita's obsession with documenting the torture of the grave critiques religious narratives by problematizing Islamic eschatology. Her actions symbolize a Foucauldian struggle to confront deeply ingrained beliefs, challenging the legitimacy of religious concepts about the afterlife. This aligns with Foucault's concept of problematization, where discourse surrounding life after death and moral consequence becomes a site of control.

The visual elements—dark tones, eerie soundscapes, and close-up shots—intensify the theme of religious punishment. These cinematic choices build a discourse of fear, using sensory experiences to reinforce moral teachings about death and judgment. This serves as a means of “disciplinary power,” subtly guiding the audience toward moral introspection aligned with Islamic beliefs about the afterlife. Through Sita's final encounter with Islamic eschatological questions like "Man Robbuka" (Who is your God?), the film emphasizes the internalization of religious discourse. This represents Foucault's notion of normalization, where repeated religious symbolism shapes the audience perception of identity, faith, and morality. *Siksa Kubur* employs both narrative and cinematic elements to critique and affirm religious discourse. It challenges the audience to consider the control that religious teachings exert over individual beliefs and behaviors while exploring the fearsome consequences of moral deviance as viewed through an Islamic lens.

5. SUGGESTION

Other approaches, such as Gillian Rose's visual method, can be used to further this research. Three factors are examined by the method: the production site, the image site, and the audience site. Depending on the requirements of the study, many theories may be employed.

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