

The Representation of Monarchism and Rebellion: Power Struggles Depicted in *The King* (2019) Movie

Hendri Purnomo

ianmaho88@gmail.com

Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an, Wonosobo, Indonesia

Ana Widiyanti

(widiyananti80@gmail.com)

Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an, Wonosobo, Indonesia

Abstract

This study attempts to examine how the 2019 David Michod film "The King" depicts revolt and the monarchical order. The film tells the tale of Prince Hal, who succeeds his father, King Henry IV, as King Henry V. Hal had to deal with a number of difficulties as a young monarch, such as disagreements with disobedient noblemen. Qualitative approaches are the primary tool used in this study. The 2019 film "The King" serves as the primary source of data. The process of gathering data involved reading, observing, recognizing, categorizing, and choosing pertinent information. As part of the data analysis process, the data were presented, clarified, and interpreted using conflict theory. According to the findings, the film portrays the monarchical system of medieval Europe, in which the king, who holds the throne for successive generations, possesses ultimate power. The film also depicts insurrection brought on by dissatisfaction with the king's choices. In addition, the movie looks at how unrest could be sparked by instability and discontent inside the royal circle.

Keyword: *monarchy, rebellion, power struggle, The King (2019)*

Introduction

For many years, there has been heated discussion about the monarchical system. Even though monarchs have been established systems of administration for a long time, they have frequently sparked contentious debates and even uprisings in different parts of the world. Monarchical political dynamics are often characterized by unrest and instability, especially when conflicts emerge between the governing monarchy and the populace at large.

Film is one media that frequently examines these intricate political processes. Films possess the ability to eloquently depict historical occurrences and governmental structures, providing viewers with an insight into diverse historical periods and governing structures. David Michod's 2019 film *"The King"* is one example that explores the complexities of the monarchical system and the uprisings it might spark.

"The King" is a medieval English drama that tells the tale of Prince Hal, who succeeds his father, King Henry IV, to the throne as King Henry V. The movie examines the difficulties of leading a kingdom as well as the internal and exterior disputes that occur in monarchical societies. It depicts the tense relationship between the king and his nobility, the possibility of insurrection, and the inner conflicts of a young monarch attempting to seize power.

The purpose of this study is to examine how *"The King"* depicts the monarchical order and the uprisings against it. We can learn more about how power dynamics, the reasons behind rebellion, and the difficulties of mediaeval government are portrayed in the movie by closely analyzing certain situations and exchanges. This examination will advance our knowledge of how historical political institutions, notably the monarchy and its problems, are portrayed and understood in contemporary film.

Literary Review

Conflict theory

Conflict theory is an important perspective in sociology that emphasizes the role of conflict in society. This theory emerged as a reaction to structural functionalism theory, which was considered to pay insufficient attention to the phenomenon of conflict as an important social issue.

Lewis A. Coser, in his book *"The Functions of Social Conflict"* (1956), argued that conflict has several positive functions in society:

1. Conflict can strengthen group solidarity
2. Conflict can clarify boundaries between groups
3. Conflict can be a catalyst for social change

Coser argued that conflict is not always destructive or dysfunctional for society; under certain conditions, conflict can have positive consequences and contribute to the maintenance and adaptation of the social system (Coser, 1956:87-95). In addition to Coser, other figures have made significant contributions to conflict theory.

Ralf Dahrendorf, in his work *"Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society"* (1959), emphasized the role of authority and power in creating conflict.

Dahrendorf argued that class conflict is not limited to ownership of the means of production, but also involves the distribution of authority in society (Dahrendorf, 1959).

Randall Collins, in "Conflict Sociology: Toward an Explanatory Science" (1975), developed a micro-conflict theory focusing on everyday interactions. Collins argued that conflict is the result of inequalities in the distribution of material and emotional resources (Collins, 1975).

Monarchy System

Monarchy is a form of government led by a king or queen who obtains power through hereditary succession (Budiardjo, 2008). In a monarchy, the supreme ruler has absolute power and is guaranteed a hereditary position in a dynasty.

Expert Views on Monarchy

Several experts have provided their views on the monarchy system:

1. Montesquieu (1689-1755) explained that monarchy is governed by one person, based on immutable laws and acquired through inheritance (Montesquieu, 1748).
2. Max Weber (1864-1920) distinguished three types of legitimate authority in a government system, one of which is traditional authority characteristic of monarchical systems (Weber, 1922).
3. Robert A. Dahl (1915-2014) explained that in a monarchy, supreme power is held by one person who obtains the position through generations (Dahl, 1998).
4. Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) argued that the main purpose of monarchy is to maintain security and peace within the state (Hobbes, 1651).
5. John Locke (1632-1704) emphasized that the king's power must be limited and subject to law (Locke, 1689).

Evolution of the Monarchy System

The monarchy system has evolved throughout history. Reinhard Bendix, in his work "Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule" (1978), explains how the legitimacy of monarchical power changed from being sacred to more secular as society modernized.

David Cannadine, in his essay "The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the 'Invention of Tradition', c. 1820-1977" (1983), describes how the British monarchy adapted to changing times through the creation of new traditions to maintain its relevance.

Rebellion

Rebellion is an act of resistance carried out to oppose the current power or authority. Ted Robert Gurr in his work "Why Men Rebel" (1970) defines rebellion as an act of violence carried out collectively with the aim of changing the policies and practices of the ruling regime.

James C. Scott in "Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance" (1985) sees rebellion as a form of resistance carried out by groups of people who are economically and politically in a weak position against the system that dominates them.

Theda Skocpol, in "States and Social Revolutions" (1979), analyzes rebellion in the broader context of social revolution. Skocpol argues that revolution occurs when state structures experience crises and the lower classes are able to mobilize themselves to overthrow existing power.

Charles Tilly, in "From Mobilization to Revolution" (1978), emphasizes the importance of resource mobilization processes in rebellion. Tilly argues that the success of rebellion depends on a group's ability to mobilize human and material resources.

Film as a Medium of Representation

Film is a powerful medium for representing social reality, including political systems and rebellion. Graeme Turner, in "Film as Social Practice" (1999), explains how film not only reflects social reality but also plays a role in shaping society's perceptions of that reality.

Douglas Kellner, in "Cinema Wars: Hollywood Film and Politics in the Bush-Cheney Era" (2010), analyzes how Hollywood films represent and respond to contemporary political issues. Kellner

Representation of History in Film

Historical films like "*The King*" play an important role in shaping public understanding of historical events. Robert A. Rosenstone, in "History on

Film/Film on History" (2006), explores how historical films can provide new perspectives on the past and influence how we understand history.

Natalie Zemon Davis, in "Slaves on Screen: Film and Historical Vision" (2000), examines how films about slavery represent history and their implications for our understanding of issues of race and power.

The Concept of Power in Monarchy

Understanding power is crucial in analyzing the monarchy system. Max Weber, in "Economy and Society" (1978), identified three types of legitimate authority: traditional, charismatic, and legal-rational. Monarchy is generally based on traditional authority, where the legitimacy of power comes from tradition and inheritance.

Michel Foucault, in various works collected in "Power/Knowledge" (1980), offers a different perspective on power. Foucault argues that power is not only possessed by rulers but is spread throughout social networks and manifested through everyday social practices.

By combining these perspectives, we can understand how power in the monarchy system is not only limited to the figure of the king or queen but also involves various complex social practices, rituals, and power relations in society.

This literature review provides a strong theoretical foundation for analyzing the representation of the monarchy system and rebellion in the film "*The King*" (2019). By understanding conflict theory, the concept of monarchy, the dynamics of rebellion, and the role of film as a medium of representation, we can explore how this film represents and reflects issues of power, conflict, and social change in a historical context.

Research Methodology

This research employs a qualitative method as the primary instrument of analysis. Qualitative research is used to explore phenomena that illustrate and explain new concepts or deconstruct common stereotypes, as seen in the movie "*The King*" (2019). This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the meaning behind the representations of monarchy and rebellion in the film.

The main data source for this research is the movie *"The King"* (2019), directed by David Michod. The film was released on October 11, 2019, in the United States by Plan B Entertainment and distributed by Netflix, with a duration of 140 minutes.

Data collection techniques include:

1. Watching: Viewing the movie multiple times to understand its content and identify relevant scenes.
2. Reading: Analyzing the film's script and subtitles for accurate dialogue and context.
3. Identifying: Recognizing scenes and dialogues that represent aspects of monarchy and rebellion.
4. Classifying: Categorizing the identified data based on themes related to monarchy and rebellion.
5. Selecting: Choosing the most relevant and significant data for analysis.

The data analysis method involves:

1. Displaying: Presenting the selected data that answers the research questions
2. Explaining: Providing context and interpretation for the selected data.
3. Interpreting: Analyzing the data using conflict theory and other relevant concepts from the literature review.

This methodology allows for a comprehensive examination of how *"The King"* (2019) represents the monarchical system and depicts rebellion within that system.

Finding and Discussion

1. Representation of the Monarchy System in *"The King"* (2019)

The film *"The King"* vividly portrays the monarchical system in medieval Europe, where supreme power resides with the king who inherits the throne from one generation to the next. This representation is evident in various scenes and dialogues throughout the movie.

Absolute Power of the Monarch

The absolute power of the monarch is clearly depicted in several scenes. One notable example is when King Henry IV threatens Percy for not bringing Scottish prisoners quickly enough:

Henry IV : "You are right, young Percy. I owe you much. I owe your family still more. You have fought nobly for me. You carry wounds fresh for me to see. And your grievances too - they have been heard. But if the Scottish traitors you have taken prisoner are not brought to me as speedily as they might travel, I will hang you by your fucking neck."

This dialogue demonstrates the king's ability to issue life-threatening commands to even his noble subjects, highlighting the absolute nature of monarchical power.

Succession and Legitimacy

The film explores the importance of succession in a monarchy. When King Henry IV is dying, he discusses the issue of succession with his son, Hal:

Henry IV : "The time has come for me to consider the issue of my succession. You will not be king. While you are my eldest son, for reasons that must be evident to you, that are on display for all here to see and smell, you will not inherit this crown."

This scene underscores the hereditary nature of monarchy while also showing that the king has the power to choose his successor based on his judgment of their fitness to rule.

The King's Divine Right and Responsibilities

The film portrays the concept of the divine right of kings and the responsibilities that come with it. When Hal becomes King Henry V, his advisor William discusses the expectations placed on a king:

William : "We share your concerns, my liege. We share your longing for peace. But the stability of peace today needs more than harmony. It needs strength and confidence. These are qualities that can originate only in you, the King. Our King."

This dialogue emphasizes the belief that the king's authority comes from a higher power and that he alone can provide the strength and confidence needed to maintain peace and stability in the kingdom.

The Monarch's Role in Foreign Policy and War

The film extensively portrays the king's central role in determining foreign policy and declaring war. When faced with provocations from France, King Henry V makes the decision to go to war:

Hal : "As of this day we are at war with France. Twice I have given her the benefit of my doubt. Once as a trifling joust which I paid. The second I met with messaged caution. This third will not be left unchecked."

This scene illustrates the monarch's power to make decisions that affect the entire kingdom, including the declaration of war

The Loneliness of Power

The film also explores the personal aspect of being a monarch, including the isolation that comes with the position. In a conversation with his friend Falstaff, Hal expresses this sentiment:

Hal : "These concerns are mine and mine alone. But the fact that this here, be the first occasion I've had to sound them aloud to anyone other than myself speaks volumes. It speaks to the loneliness of the position in which I find myself."

This dialogue provides insight into the personal challenges faced by monarchs, who often bear the weight of their decisions alone.

2. Representation of Rebellion in "*The King*" (2019)

The film also depicts various forms of rebellion against the monarchical system, ranging from open defiance to subtle acts of disobedience.

The Percy Rebellion

The most prominent rebellion in the film is led by the Percy family, particularly Hotspur. The seeds of this rebellion are sown when King Henry IV refuses to ransom Mortimer, Hotspur's cousin:

Hotspur : "Cousin Mortimer is held by the rebels of Wales. Why do you refuse to pay his ransom?"
Henry IV : "I refuse to pay Mortimer's ransom because I refuse to believe Mortimer a prisoner. I rather believe Mortimer to be a traitor."

This exchange highlights the tension between the king and his nobles, which eventually leads to open rebellion.

Motivations for Rebellion

The film explores various motivations for rebellion, including personal grievances, perceived injustice, and ambition. Hotspur's father, Northumberland, expresses their intent to overthrow the king:

Northumberland : "You're eager to fight, my son. And you will. And we shall fight alongside you. We will burn them. We will burn Henry's reign to the ground."

This dialogue reveals the depth of the rebels' determination and their goal to completely overthrow the existing power structure.

Internal Dissent and Conspiracy

The film also portrays more subtle forms of rebellion through internal dissent and conspiracy. This is evident in the scene where French envoys attempt to sow discord among English nobles:

Envoy : "My King has sent me to seek out men he feels he can trust. He believes there is discreet discussion to be had."
Cambridge : "What discussion?"
Envoy : "He believes there is discussion to be had about your new King of England."

This scene illustrates how foreign powers attempt to exploit internal divisions to weaken the monarchy.

Consequences of Rebellion

The film doesn't shy away from showing the harsh consequences of rebellion. When King Henry V discovers the plot involving Lords Grey and Cambridge, he swiftly condemns them:

Hal : "Lords Grey and Cambridge. I would ask you deliver this message to France given your familiarity with its recipient, but I believe in the morning you be otherwise engaged."
Cambridge : "Pray how, my liege?"
Hal : "Tomorrow you will have your heads axed off. I have chosen to send you as an advance party to Hell for the considerable French number that will soon be needing to find space there."

This scene demonstrates the severe punishment for treason and the king's resolve in maintaining his authority.

Conclusion

The analysis of *"The King"* (2019) reveals a nuanced portrayal of the monarchical system and the rebellions it faces. The film depicts the absolute power of the

monarch, the importance of succession and legitimacy, the divine right and responsibilities of kings, and the monarch's central role in foreign policy and war. It also explores the personal challenges faced by those in power, including the loneliness and isolation that come with the position. Regarding rebellion, the film presents various forms of resistance against monarchical rule, from open military confrontation to subtle internal dissent and foreign-backed conspiracies. It explores the motivations behind rebellion, including personal grievances, perceived injustice, and political ambition. The harsh consequences of rebellion are also starkly portrayed, emphasizing the high stakes involved in challenging royal authority. Through its depiction of both the monarchy and the forces that oppose it, *"The King"* offers a complex view of power dynamics in medieval Europe. It highlights the inherent tensions within the monarchical system and the constant struggle between centralized authority and those who seek to challenge or overthrow it.

References

- Budiardjo, M. 2008. Dasar-dasar Ilmu Politik. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Coser, L. A. 1956. The Functions of Social Conflict. Free Press.
- Dahl, R. A. 1998. On Democracy. Yale University Press.
- Gurr, T. R. 1970. Why Men Rebel. Princeton University Press.
- Hobbes, T. 1651. Leviathan. Andrew Crooke.
- Huntington, S. P. 1968. Political Order in Changing Societies. Yale University Press.
- Locke, J. 1689. Two Treatises of Government. Awnsham Churchill.
- Montesquieu, C. D. S. 1748. The Spirit of Laws. Paris: Chez Barrillot & Fils.
- Scott, J. C. 1985. Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance. Yale University Press.
- Weber, M. 1922. Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.