

The Analysis of Miracle in A Film of Noah 2014: in Mysticism Context

Qesha Adrian Ashiddiq¹

Bahar^{2*}

Ibnul Qayyim³

¹²³Universitas Fajar, Makassar, Indonesia

¹adriansiddiq02@gmail.com

²baharsetiawan@unifa.ac.id*

³ibnu.unifa@gmail.com

Abstract

Mysticism is a field that deeply connected with religious beliefs or spiritual experiences, mysticism has been used in many literary works such as film to increase the appeal of the literary works. This research is aimed to; (1) Find types of mysticism that contained in the Film of Noah 2014; (2) How mysticism portrayed in the film. The data used in the study came from the film of Noah 2014. The data is in form of cut scene that contain the mysticism phenomenon. The instrument of this research contains qualitative descriptive analysis, mysticism theory by Walter T. Stace as an analysis tool, and note taking technique as data collecting instrument. The data will be collected by watching the film several times and taking notes and pictures of the scene that contains mysticism phenomenon. The result of the analysis showed that there are two types of mysticism phenomenon that occurred in the film and it was portrayed as several miracles that happen around Noah as the Main character of the film.

Keywords: *Mysticism, Film, Noah*

Introduction

Film has become one of the most consumed literary works nowadays society, film can be categorized as parts of literature because the content of the story is transmitted through various experiences such as emotions, feelings, attitudes, actions and knowledge (Arroio, 2018). It means that film can be classified as imaginative literature to transmit the message in many scenes that film can offer. Nowadays, a film can be contained by many concepts such as miracle, politics, or social issue to attract people to watch. Miracle is an event or things that provokes wonder such as something extraordinary, unusual, beyond expectations. In that sense drug that can cure chronic disease, natural disaster, surviving a disaster or simply a joyful occurrence, and sometimes even some coincidences can be seen as a miracle. Stephen Davis (1993) define miracle as an event that is brought by God and is contrary to the prediction of a law of nature that we have compelling reason to believe is true. By this definition, the writer can conclude that miracle is a violation of the laws of nature or simply it is an event that contradicted with the laws of nature that we use or commonly known.

The law of nature in the conclusion described as the ways in which the world and of course human beings works by its itself without intervention of divine or supranatural (J. L. Mackie 1982). By taking J. L. Mackie's concept of the law of nature as a reference, the definition of "violation" became clearer that there is interference of an entity beyond physical universe such as soul, angel, devil, God, etc. Wayne A. Grudem (1994) stated that a miracle is a less common kind of god's activity in which he arouses people's awe

and wonders and bears witness to himself. This definition takes us deeper into understanding of God's providence, God preserves, controls, and governs all things. Because of its definition, miracle often associated with supernatural events and religious beliefs. In that sense, miracle became deeply connected to the concept of mysticism which often labeled to anything nebulous, esoteric, occult, or supernatural (Moore 2005). Walter T. Stace (1960) distinguished mysticism experiences into 2 different categories, "extrovertive" experience is when sense of perception is included and "introvertive" experience is the feeling of nothingness or an awareness in lacking all differentiated content and an awareness of God lacking sense experiences.

There are several previous studies with miracle and mysticism as the topic of the research. The first previous research was conducted by Ayu Lestari Lihawa and Ary Iswanto Wibowo (2024) with their study with the title "Mysticism concept in the unholy film". The aims of their study are to explore how the film portrays mysticism and its theme such as supernatural and spiritual. The researchers employ a descriptive qualitative method, and the data was collected from the Unholy film. The result of the research is the researcher found pieces of evidence that related to the miracle phenomenon in the film and conclude that miracle is a knowledge when God is near and provides you a new knowledge to attain to the higher providence.

Second, "Miracle Machine in the Making: Soulful Speculation with Kabbalah" by Halperin and Rosner (2023). The researchers employ qualitative method in their research by deep dive into mystical and symbolic language of kabbalah. The research aims to explore how speculative design can be infused with spiritual and mystical elements, drawing from kabbalistic tradition. The result of the research sees miracles as natural phenomenon and its different with mysticism but connected to each other because its led people to believe that God exist.

After all preview research were reviewed. Although all the research had different subject, each research has similarities. The first research that conducted by Ayu Lestari Lihawa and Ary Iswanto Wibowo (2024) and Halperin and Rosner (2023) have same objective which focuses on the concept of mysticism. However, the object from both of research are different. Ayu Lestari Lihawa and Ary Iswanto Wibowo (2024) analysed film entitled The Unholy while Halperin and Rosner (2023) analysed kabbalah tradition of Jewish people.

Based on the explanation above, the writer was interested in analysing more deeply about the concept of mysticism in literary works by taking consideration such as the interaction between the divine being and human, and the role of a certain individual as an apostle of God. The writer decided to take the film of Noah (2014) as the object of the research because the film of Noah (2014) clearly illustrated how the process of miracle occurred and to what extent the miracle affected humanity.

Method

This research will be categorized as qualitative research because the researcher is using non-numerical data in this research and the writer processed the data himself, so that the information obtained is influenced by assumptions, and personal biases of the researcher. Researcher uses the film of Noah (2014) as the main resource of the data and the script of Noah (2014) as the secondary data resource. The film of Noah (2014) is American biblical drama film directed by [Darren Aronofsky](#), who co-wrote the screenplay with [Ari Handel](#). Inspired by the biblical story of [Noah's Ark](#) from the [Book of Genesis](#) and the [Book of Enoch](#). This film is released on theatres on March 2014 with a

duration of 2 hours 18 minutes. The data is the miracle that happen in the film which are taken from the scene of the film and the script.

The researcher does documentation and notes-taking in collecting data procedure. Documentation is a way to collect data which produces important notes related to the topic of the research, and it will be used to collect data in form of images and description text. By utilizing documentation and note-taking technique, researcher could gather data by visually examine scenes and recorded the scene that contain miracle phenomenon in the film of Noah (2014) in form of images and description notes. The details of the data collection steps will be shorted below:

1. The researcher repeatedly watches the film to gain deep understanding of the film's storyline.
2. After understanding the storyline, researcher re-watches specific scene in the film to get the data that contains miracle phenomenon.
3. Next, the researcher takes a screenshot of the scene that contain miracle phenomenon in the film.
4. After that, the researcher highlights the dialogue of the scene that written in the film's script.
5. Last, the researcher writes the dialogues from the script that matched with the images of the scene that had been taken to the notes.

Qualitative descriptive analysis technique will be employed for the data analysis in this research. The focus of the analysis will be on analysing the scene of miracle in the film of Noah (2014). Three steps of qualitative technique conducted by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2020) will be used by the researcher in analysing the problem of the research.

The step of the data analysis is divided into three:

1. Data Condensation

Data condensation is a useful technique that can be used to extract the most important information from the film. This makes analysing and understanding the film much easier and helps you to gain meaningful insights (Miles et al., 2020). In addition, researcher focused on scenes in the film that related on the mysticism theory by Walter T. Stace (1960).

2. Data Display

After condensing the data, the researcher displays it in descriptive form. This is because data presentation is a clear and organized way to present information that help us think and act effectively (Miles et al., 2020). The Data will be presented in descriptive form taken from selected and focused scene which specifically quoted from the film of Noah (2014).

3. Drawing Conclusion

Conclusion is the final stage of data collection and should be done after the data are condensed and displayed (Miles et al., 2020). Based on the research questions the researcher will complete the data and drawing conclusions from the analysis results.

Results

Kinds of Mysticism

Walter T. Stace (1960) distinguish mysticism into two different types in the mysticism and philosophy. Extrovertive mysticism and introvertive mysticism, when there is sense of perception then it was extrovertive mysticism and introvertive mysticism if it involves feeling of nothingness or profound joy, peace and bliss.

Extrovertive Mysticism

According to Walter Stace (1960), Extrovertive mysticism is when the consciousness of the unity of nature overlaid onto one's sense perception of the world, as well as non-unitive extrovertive experiences such "cosmic consciousness". By this definition, extrovertive mysticism can be described as a mystical experience which include sense of hearing and vision or simply an experience that can be felt physically. Stace describes seven characteristics of extrovertive mysticism.

- (a) The unifying vision, expressed abstractly by the formula "All is one."
The one is, in extrovertive mysticism, perceived through the physical sense, in or through the multiplicity of objects.
- (b) The more concrete apprehension of the One as being an inner subjectivity in all things, described variously as life, consciousness, or a living presence. The discovery that nothing is "really" dead.
- (c) Sense of objectivity or reality.
- (d) Feeling of blessedness, joy, happiness, satisfaction, etc.
- (e) Feeling that what is apprehended is holy, or sacred, or divine.
- (f) Paradoxicality.
- (g) Alleged by mystics to be ineffable, incapable of being described in words, etc.

Introvertive Mysticism

The introvertive mystical experience involves an experience of unity that is otherwise devoid of content, sometimes referred to as "the void", Walter Stace (1960). By taking Stace definition of introvertive mysticism, the researcher concluded that introvertive mysticism is a mystical experience that involve one's feeling or spirituality such as the process of getting devine revelation. Stace describes seven characteristics of introvertive mysticism.

- (a) The unitary consciousness, from which all the multiplicity of sensuous or conceptual or other empirical content has been excluded, so that there remains only a void and empty unity. This is the one basic, essential, nuclear characteristic, from which most of the others inevitably follow.
- (b) Being nonspatial and nontemporal.
- (c) Sense of objectivity or reality.
- (d) Feeling of blessedness, joy, peace, happiness, etc.
- (e) Feeling that what is apprehended is holy, or sacred, or divine. Perhaps it should be added that this feeling seems less strong in Buddhist mystics than in others, though it is not wholly absent and appears at least in the form of deep reverence for enlightenment that is regarded as supremely noble.
- (f) Paradoxicality.
- (g) Alleged by mystics to be ineffable.

Portray of Mysticism

In the tables below illustrates the portrays of mysticism in the film of Noah 2014 based on its type.

Table 1. Introvertive Mysticism

Characteristics	Description	Evidence	Timestamp
Feeling of blessedness, Paradoxicality.	In this scene, Noah was told by his father about his ancestor's story and about their task. In this scene Noah's father about to pass down his position as the head of the family to him.		02:12-03:00
Being nonspatial and nontemporal. Paradoxicality.	This scene shown that Noah got an enlightenment thought his dream about a big flood that about to happen.		10:30-11:40
Being nonspatial and nontemporal. Paradoxicality, alleged by mystics to be ineffable.	In this scene, Noah is consulting to his grandfather about vision in his dream and got an enlightenment to build an ark to survive the flood.		26:00-29:50
Being nonspatial and nontemporal. Paradoxicality, alleged by mystics to be ineffable.	Noah got another vision about a big disaster that about to happen and got a glimpse of vision about the snake in eden.		56:00-57:10

Table 2. Extrovertive Mysticism

Characteristics	Description	Evidence	Timestamp
Sense of objectivity or reality, Paradoxicality, alleged by mystics to be ineffable.	In this scene, there is a drop of water that fall in front of Noah even if the sky was clear and there is a flower that sprout from that drop of water.		05:45-06:10
Sense of objectivity or reality, alleged by mystics to be ineffable.	This scene shown that Noah has encountered a creature called the watcher made by devine being called the creator.		16:50-18:38
Sense of objectivity or reality, alleged by mystics to be ineffable, feeling that what is apprehended is divine.	In this scene, after planting the seed that he got from his grandfather it grows into a forest instantly.		31:30-34:25
Sense of objectivity or reality, alleged by mystics to be ineffable, feeling that what is apprehended is divine.	In the scene, all the birds are coming to evacuate into Noah's ark and then followed by reptiles and bugs like what he had seen in his dream.		37:00-43:00

Sense of objectivity or reality, alleged by mystics to be ineffable, feeling that what is apprehended is divine.	All the animals with 4 legs also coming to evacuate into Noah's ark just like the Birds.		49:35-51:00
Sense of objectivity or reality, alleged by mystics to be ineffable, feeling that what is apprehended is divine.	The sky suddenly turned dark and a big rain that will cause the flood is about to fall.		01:09:26-01:11:58
Sense of objectivity or reality, alleged by mystics to be ineffable, feeling that what is apprehended is divine.	Water started to gush from the ground and the big flood just like in Noah's dream finally happen.		01:18:40-01:19:30

From the data above, we can likely see that the mysticism portrayed in the film of Noah 2014 are in forms of miracle phenomenon. By employing the theory of mysticism by Walter T. Stace, the mysticism phenomenon is categorized into two types "introvertive mysticism" and "extrovertive mysticism". The introvertive mysticism that Noah experienced mostly occurred in form of a dream that given Noah an enlightments about what will happen in the near future and as a guide to save his family. The extrovertive mysticism are occurred in form of physical experiences or miracle such as the big flood, animals gathered themselves, a forest that grown from a seed, and etc.,

Conclusion

In the analysis of mysticism on the film of Noah 2014 using applied theory in the introduction of the research, the author concluded that the miracle that happen in the film of Noah 2014 are representation of mysticism concept that portrayed in the film. By using the grand theory of mysticism by Walter T. Stace, the author found two (2) types of mysticism; introvertive mysticism and extrovertive mysticism. Noah as the main character of the film experienced miracles in form of enlightments and a phenomenon that cannot be explained by the law of nature.

The author found found four (4) pieces of evidence related to the introvertive mysticism such as; the story about Noah's ancestors, the dream about the big flood, Noah's enlightment about how to save his family by building an ark, and Noah's dream about a big disaster that'll happen to the humanity. The author also found seven (7)

pieces of evidence related to the extrovertive mysticism such as; the flower that sprout from a drop of water, the creature that made by a rock, a forest that grow from a singel seed, the birds and the reptiles coming to evacuate by themselves, followed by the four leg animals coming to evacuate, the clear sky that suddenly turned dark, and the water that gushed out from the ground at the beginning of the flood. The author concluded with the evidences that provided, the introvertive and extrovertive mysticism that Noah has experienced is a journey to get closer to devine being and to fix the humanity itself.

For the future research, the author recommended to broaden the scope of analysing mysticism in literary works not only in terms of religious beliefs but also in supranatural or scientific approach. This research supposed to deepen the author and readers understanding about the mysticism in the literary works.

References

- Arroio, A. (2018). *Cinema As Narrative to Teach Nature of Science in Science Education*. *Western Anatolia Journal of Educational Sciences (WAJES)*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326401436>
- Stephen T. Davis (1993). *Risen Indeed: Making Sense of the Resurrection*. Grand rapids, 1993. 166-169. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373960761>
- J. L. Mackie (1982). *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and against the existence of God*. 19-20. <https://archive.org/details/TheMiracleOfTheismArgumentsForAndAgainstTheExistenceOfGodJLMackie>
- Wayne A. Grudem (1994). *Systematic theology*. <https://www.waynegrudem.com/test/2006/112606.pdf>
- Moore, Peter (2005) "Mysticism (further considerations)", in Jones, Lindsay (ed.), MacMillan Encyclopaedia of Religion, MacMillan. <https://pub.deadnet.se/Books and manuals on various stuff/Religion/Encyclopedia%20of%20Religion/Ed.%20L.Jones-Encyclopedia%20of%20Religion%2C%20vol.%201.%20%28Aaron-Attention%29-2004.pdf>
- Walter T. Stace (1960). *Mysticism and Philosophy*. <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.190986>
- Świeżyński, A., & Wieeyski, A. (2014). *The concept of miracle as an extraordinary event*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/236620178>
- Halperin, B. A., & Rosner, D. K. (2023). *Miracle Machine in the Making: Soulful Speculation with Kabbalah*. 1740–1756. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3563657.3595990>
- Ayu Lestari Lihawa & Ary Iswanto Wibowo (2024). *Mysticism Concept in the Unholy Film*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/385663559>
- Daren Aronofsky (2014). The film of Noah (2014) – Synopsis. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1959490/plotsummary>
- Siswanto, P. (2019). Note Taking Strategy: Its effect on Reading Comprehension. *Journal of English Language Studies*, 4(1), 32. <https://doi.org/10.30870/jels.v4i1.4465>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J (2020). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (4th ed.). SAGE Publication