# Chapter 2
# Darren Aronofsky's Dramatic Space:
## *Noah's Ark* as a Re-Presentation of a Universal Narrative

**Mehmet Yılmaz**
*Ordu University, Turkey*

**Yılmaz Demir**
*Ordu University, Turkey*

## ABSTRACT

*American cinema significantly makes use of universal narratives which originate from myths and religious stories. These narratives which are accepted universally address universe of common meaning values of humanity and people's common perceptions. Noah, directed by Darren Aronofsky, had a great box office success thanks to having a story which was based on a universally accepted holy narration. The director refictionalizes the narratives which serve as an inspirational source for the movie in order to adapt them to the cinematographic language and to express himself better through these narratives. Accordingly, Noah, the reinterpretation of a universal narrative by Aronofsky, is seen as a topic of analysis and evaluated from an intertextual perspective by a descriptive film analysis.*

## INTRODUCTION

Darren Aronofsky's film "Noah" which was released in 2014 had a great boxoffice success thanks to narrating a story, which was based on a universally accepted holy narrative. The story of the film was remarkable with the myths explaining the creation and the descend of the humankind onto the earth and was enriched by other several religious themes.

The genesis of humankind, and Adam-Eve, the Flood and Noah's Ark legends is taking place in all divine religions and numerous myhtical narratives. Thus these narratives, which receive a universal acceptation, are all addressing to the universe of common meaning values of humanity and people's

common perceptions for centruies. Co-sreenwriter (with Ari Handel) and director of "Noah", Aronofsky, utilizes the impact of these ancient narratives, so he touches and reaches to viewers all over the world with a "Noah", who was easily re-shaped and inspired by these narratives.

On the other hand, themes based on holy legends may cause interpretational clashes due to different religious dogmatisms. "Noah" has been banned in many countries like United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Malaysia etc. (Apalaçi, 2014) since the common holy and historical contexts were emptied and deformed in this movie. However Aronofsky had used these themes merely as mythological narratives rather than holy stories. In terms of narrative theory, the narrator (Aronofsky) has a feature that does not have a counterpart in the real world just like the heroes of the story, and narrators serve both as the constructive and reflective elements of the narrative World (Bolat, 2019, p. 37). He basically refictionalized the narratives, which serve as an inspirational source for the movie "Noah", in order to adapt them to cinematographic language and to express himself better through these narratives.

Aronofsky conveys his ideas and worries, the clues of which were already provided in the 2006 movie ("The Fountain"), related to the contemporary society, humankind, environment, and beliefs through his new movie. Due to these intentions; almost all religious stories, including "Noah" itself, differ from traditional narratives. All the holy narratives included in this movie were re-shaped by Aronofsky as his own dramatic space. Thus Aronofsky's, "Noah" reinterpretation was selected as a topic worth analysing and evaluating from an intertextual perspective by using thematic film analysis (Yılmaz & Candan, 2018, p. 2413) method.

## NARRATIVE of "NOAH" and "THE FLOOD":

## Aronofsky's Dramatic Space

"Noah" starts with the religious narrative based on the genesis, the first book of the Bible, which includes the texts about the creation of the humankind, starting with God's expelling Adam and Eve from Eden, the flood, Noah's Ark etc. These Biblical tales originating from ancient Jewish culture and forerunners of the Islamic Religion, share significant similarities with the creation mythologies from all around the world. Stories of a great flood, very similar to Noah's Ark, are told in Australia, the Indian Archipelago, Eastern Asia, Mexico, Central America, and Polynesia as well (Kiernan, 2009:1). The expanded impact and common ground provided by these kind of myths have a strong potential to reach people beyond boundaries.

The stories, which are humanity's common cultural heritage, are used in movies as extensive themes with reference to their potential to arouse everybody's interest easily. With Aronofsky's interpretation (or in his dramatic space); It was just good to understand that there's something elemental to the flood story that connects people all over the planet (Greydanus, 2014). In "Noah" Aronofsky re-shapes or fictionalizes these universal, and religious narratives to express his messages about life, questions like whether the humanitiy deserves a second chance, a salvation, justice, mercy, environmental sensitivities etc.

Aronofsky has selected some of narrative elements contained in the scriptures to support his goals. He has edited a dramatic space according to cinematographic understanding. A dramatic space (Foss, 1992, 158) is not the reality itself. It is the form of reality which is condensed and re-edited by the script writer and director. Thus Aronofsky explains this artistic situation as a reality, and an interpretation of relations with this statement: "In our research we started to notice that 300 or 400 years ago, that the dove

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