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## The Crimes of Love. The (Un)Censored Version of the Flood Story in Noah (2014)

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# The Crimes of Love. The (Un)Censored Version of the Flood Story in Noah (2014)

## **Abstract**

A swift survey of *Noah* reviews clearly shows that the audience's sensitivity was challenged in several regards; Noah was portrayed as a "religious extremist" and "borderline psychopath", the Creator proved to be a "distant—unaware or uncaring—overseer", while Aronofsky himself was said to have a "sinister purpose of leading people to believe that Christianity and Judaism are something they are not." On closer examination, however, the above summarized pleas are not entirely relevant for two basic reasons. First, the movie consists of ideas that have been in use since antiquity, rearranged and composed into a new-old story and all the arguments directed against *Noah* could be very well addressed to the Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls or Rabbinic midrashim. Second, the movie presents more often than not a "censored" version of the stories furnished by the classical literature itself and the classical variants are far more disturbing. The main purposes of the present paper are (1) to reconstruct several of such "censored" threads from *Noah* that play with the motive of love; (2) to juxtapose them with their equivalents transmitted in the classical sources; (3) to show that had Aronofsky and Handel followed the ancient texts more strictly, they would have produced a far more controversial and unsettling picture; (4) to discuss the possible sources of the controversies evoked by the movie.

## **Keywords**

Aronofsky, Noah, Ham, Naamah, fallen angels, Bible, apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, midrash, exegesis

## **Author Notes**

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***You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain (Exodus 20:7)***

The position of *Noah* (2014) among the films of Darren Aronofsky is unique for at least two reasons. First, while *Pi* (1997) and *The Fountain* (2006, co-written with Ari Handel) can be construed as spiritual or even religious, *Noah* is his first explicitly biblical movie. Counterintuitively however and against the tradition of the genre,<sup>1</sup> most of the outdoor filming took place in the dark and bleak landscapes of Iceland rather than in the sun-scorched deserts of Tunisia or Colorado, while the cast's costumes retained a design that would fit a post-apocalyptic fiction rather than a Hollywood biblical epic. In addition to this, Aronofsky himself labelled it as “the least biblical biblical film ever made”<sup>2</sup> thus acknowledging its liminal status. In result, the audience had all the rights to feel confused; although *Noah* has told the Genesis flood story, the way it did so was far from typical cinematographic portrayal of the Scriptural accounts.

Second, while Aronofsky's other movies along with *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) and *Black Swan* (2010) have evoked significant emotional response, they were far from the turmoil aroused by *Noah*. The latter was screened for the first time on March 28<sup>th</sup> 2014 and despite its PG-13 rating<sup>3</sup> it has quickly been recognized as one of the most controversial religious movies of the last 35 years along with such titles as *The Passion of the Christ* or *The Da Vinci Code*.<sup>4</sup> Even a swift survey of the on-line reviews clearly shows that the viewers found Aronofsky and Handel's biblical retelling challenging in several regards. Accordingly, the noble patriarch, is a Wiccan, “religious extremist” and “borderline psychopath” who befriends the Luciferian fallen angels,<sup>5</sup> while the Creator is a “distant – unaware or uncaring – overseer who cares more about the animals than humans.”<sup>6</sup> It was also stated that the movie outwardly affirms violence and promotes the use of the psychoactive substances such as a vision-inducing tea<sup>7</sup> or tranquilizer used to soothe the animals,<sup>8</sup> confuses creationism with evolutionism,<sup>9</sup> and generally contains “more Tolkien than Torah.”<sup>10</sup> Finally and on top of that, the screening of *Noah* has been banned in United

Arab Emirates, Qatar and Indonesia on religious grounds with other countries following suit.<sup>11</sup>

The negative critique notwithstanding, the movie still managed to gather some support from the religious leaders and theologians who praised it for its evangelizing value. Accordingly, the complex image of Noah was emotionally appealing to the modern audience,<sup>12</sup> the elaborate story went in line with the centuries-old Jewish and Christian exegetical traditions,<sup>13</sup> and the movie's concern with family issues promoted positive values.<sup>14</sup> Other commentators cherished *Noah* for introducing religious themes into the public sphere and encouraging the believer's mindset.<sup>15</sup> Lastly, those with academic background argued that the popular understanding of the actual Genesis story has been distorted by Sunday School simplifications while the biblical account itself leaves much space for creative interpretation.<sup>16</sup> From this perspective, Aronofsky and Handel did "no more violence to the integrity of the biblical ethos than the folks who retroject middle-class, industrial age «family values» onto the Bible, a document that regards polygamy, concubinage, and captive- and slave-brides as normative."<sup>17</sup>

### ***Nothing new under the sun (Ecclesiastes 1:9)***

This latter observation is especially important here, because it leads to the conclusion that the above summarized discussion is not entirely relevant for at least two basic reasons. First, Aronofsky and Handel did not make their movie in a cultural void but just like other filmmakers have been influenced by various modern reiterations of the story of Noah and biblical movies in general.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, in numerous interviews the authors stressed that during the production of *Noah* they devoted much time to studying the classical sources and consulting religious scholars. In consequence, they came up with a movie comprised mostly of ideas and myths that existed in antiquity or the medieval era.<sup>19</sup> This fact, however, by no means diminishes the value of the writers'

genuine effort but suggests that the film follows similar principles as do the ancient or medieval texts retelling the biblical stories. What is more, it clearly shows that the critique directed against *Noah* could be very well extended to the Bible, Dead Sea Scrolls or Rabbinic *midrashim*, since these are the ultimate sources of Aronofsky and Handel's ideas.

Second and more importantly, Aronofsky and Handel's retelling of *Noah* was possible precisely because they have "softened" some traditions and refrained from portraying those which would not fit the age restrictions. In result, their movie more often than not presents a "censored" version of the Jewish and Christian mythology, so that the contents present in the classical versions are far more disturbing. While some scholars have already acknowledged the first premise,<sup>20</sup> the second one has been hardly noticed and as such demands a more detailed treatment. Thus the main purposes of the present paper are to reconstruct several of such "censored" threads from *Noah* that play with the motive of love and to juxtapose them with their classical equivalents so as to show that had Aronofsky and Handel followed the ancient sources more strictly, they would have produced a far more controversial and unsettling picture.

Due to the above outlined purposes, the present paper focuses on these biblical and extra-biblical traditions which are concerned with the erotic dimension of the flood story and its characters. It has to be acknowledged though that both Jewish and Christian exegetes have gone far beyond the "carnality" inherent to these narratives: although the language of the text is often sexually suggestive, the interpretations throughout the ages have differed, often acquiring political and social significance. Thus for instance, the fallen angels of the Enochian traditions have been perceived as a satire against the Greek invaders during Alexander's conquest, while Ham was taken to be the wicked forefather of the Egyptians. In other words, the paper follows only one from among many available expositions.

The main methodological assumption of the present paper is that a given film can be understood and analyzed as a text, hereby understood as composite set of multimodal (i.e. verbal, visual, audial, etc.) signs transmitting various possible meanings which are re-created in the interaction between the text, its context and the reader. The conceptual metaphor “movie as a text” means that the work of cinematography can become the subject of close reading, analysis, deconstruction and comparison along with other texts forming a particular interpretational tradition.<sup>21</sup> This choice is justified by two reasons. First and foremost, *Noah* is analyzed against the backdrop of the classical Jewish and Christian source-texts and accordingly it has to be reduced to common forms for comparative purposes. Second, especially important are the particular names, phrases and expressions which get whole new meanings due to their changed context. In this regard, *Noah* exemplifies the retelling of classical motives and ideas; a process which is by no means a modern invention and can be traced back as far as ancient literature.

### ***How you are fallen from heaven (Isaiah 14:12)***

The topic of the fallen angels is probably the most vivid example of Aronofsky and Handel’s “censorship” applied to the classical motives. At first, these angels are presented as amorphous stone giants, known only as the Watchers – loathsome creatures inhabiting the fringes of the world who have helped the Cainites in building their wicked civilization.<sup>22</sup> It is only later in the movie that a longer resume is supplied by Og, one of the Watchers.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, the angels are created before humans as their caregivers, fall in love with the new beings and as soon as the first couple is expelled from paradise, the angels follow them thus forfeiting their ethereal nature. The Watchers teach humanity everything they know but the Cainites quickly turn against their benefactors and drive them away. The situation appears to be tragic; the angels no longer have the purpose on earth but at the same time they have no means of getting back to the heavens.

This changes when they become convinced by Noah to help build the ark<sup>24</sup> and defend it against the hordes of Cainites in the deciding battle.<sup>25</sup> In result, the angels who die fighting are immediately taken to heaven.<sup>26</sup>

These Watchers evoke a large dose of sympathy and depart from all the classical variants of the myth of the fallen angels. The latter plays a central role in both the Jewish and Christian attempts at explaining the presence of evil on earth and despite the variety, the core of the narrative remains the same; a group of initially good angels introduces corruption in the divine creation. The biblical origins of the myth are present in Genesis 6:1-4:

1 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. 3 Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” 4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.<sup>27</sup>

One set of the problems furnished by this passage concerns the identity of the sons of God (Heb. *bney ha-'elohim*) and the giants (Heb. *nephilim*, Gr. *gigantes*) and there has been an ongoing theological discussion concerning the aboriginal meaning of these terms.<sup>28</sup> A group of Jewish and Christian exegetes (*inter alia* John Chrysostom, Saint Augustine and Rashi) argued for a non-mythical meaning of the passage. According to them, the “sons of God” would denote the descendants of the righteous Seth while the “daughters of man” would originate from among the wicked Cainites. The other exegetical option was to recognize in *bney ha-'elohim* the angels who beget the *nephilim* with the earthly women – and this is the latter variant which has gained priority over the former<sup>29</sup> and made its way to numerous other works which took on the biblical story. The most elaborate and at the same time the oldest retelling of Genesis 6:1-4 is contained in 1 Enoch – a complex pseudepigraphical work consisting of at least several larger units written somewhere between IV century B.C. and I century

C.E. and belonging to the corpus of Enochian literature.<sup>30</sup> The story of the angelic rebellion appears in *The Book of Watchers* contained in 1 Enoch 6-36, believed to be one of the most distinctive parts of the whole composition. The name “Watchers” itself (Heb. *ir*, Gr. *grigori*) originates from the vision of Nebuchadnezzar described in Daniel 4 where it denotes some intermediary heavenly beings. With time, however, the Watchers became understood as a specific class of angels responsible for looking after earth and humanity.<sup>31</sup> In the following passage from 1 Enoch 6, the Watchers apparently go far beyond their caring responsibilities:

1 And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto 2 them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: ‘Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men 3 and beget us children.’ And Semjaza,<sup>32</sup> who was their leader, said unto them: ‘I fear ye will not 4 indeed agree to do this deed, and I alone shall have to pay the penalty of a great sin.’ And they all answered him and said: ‘Let us all swear an oath, and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecations 5 not to abandon this plan but to do this thing.’ Then swore they all together and bound themselves 6 by mutual imprecations upon it.<sup>33</sup>

The text is definitely more detailed to that of the Bible and explicitly portrays *bney ha-'elohim* as the angels led by Semjaza motivated by the paternal instinct. The angels immediately recognize the transgressive nature of the act and although the text does not specify what is precisely the nature of their sin, the later passages of the composition witness to various traditions in justifying the angels’ punishment: defilement with the earthly women,<sup>34</sup> leaving the heavenly abode and wreaking destruction<sup>35</sup> or teaching unrighteousness and working godlessness.<sup>36</sup> The “love-story” of the Watchers has also a unique promethean-like twist in 1 Enoch 7:1-2 where the angels instruct the women on “charms and enchantments, and the cutting of roots.” However, unlike Prometheus whose fire-giving act bears the marks of altruism, the angels’ decision to reveal the



secret arts seems to be a kind of a barter trade in exchange for progeny rather than the expression of concern and care.<sup>37</sup>

While this motive is expanded on in numerous post-biblical works, suffice it to note here two other examples that add more “indecent” to the core thread. The first one comes from the Book of Jubilees, an apocryphal work roughly contemporary to 1 Enoch. It accommodates a slightly different account: “the angels of the Lord descended on the earth, those who are named the Watchers, that they should instruct the children of men, and that they should do judgment and uprightness on the earth.”<sup>38</sup> At first, the good angels are supposed to serve as the role models for humanity. Yet, what follows in the text clearly shows that the realization of these plans encountered serious difficulties, because the Watchers “had sinned with the daughters of men; for these had begun to unite themselves, so as to be defiled, with the daughters of men, and Enoch testified against (them) all.”<sup>39</sup> Paradoxically then, the angels ultimately fail in righteousness and go astray provoked by the wicked women. This misogynic twist is present in other works of the period such as Testament of Ruben 5:1-7 or Pseudo-Clementine Homilies 8:12-13<sup>40</sup> and an even more explicit version of the story is conveyed in Pirke de rabbi Eliezer, a very popular medieval midrash developing the stories from the Pentateuch.<sup>41</sup> Chapter 22 takes on the subject of Genesis 6 and starts by portraying the Cainites as engaging in all kinds of sexual depravity: incest, sodomy and perversion. Analogically, as was the case in Jubilees, these are the earthly women that are presented as guilty of depraving the angels by means of their indecent exposure and makeup. However, the midrash introduces one element which is new to the previously mentioned expositions, namely the extraordinary interest in the technical details of the coitus. The rabbis wonder how is it possible that the fiery angels cohabit with the “flesh and blood” and come to the conclusion that the former must have changed their nature for this very purpose.

It is clear that the classical versions of the myth are nothing short of presenting the angelic love towards humans as thoroughly carnal and thus its

somewhat sublime and “platonic” exposition in *Noah* is unprecedented. Moreover, it is important to bear in mind that in contrast to the modern positive image of angels, the ancient and medieval sources muster diverse examples of their misanthropy. For instance, midrash Genesis R. 8:5 relates that when God decided to make the first man, the ministering angels formed a very strong opposition while Numbers R. 12:3 has the divine messengers attempt to intercept Moses climbing Mount Sinai in order to prevent him from receiving the Torah. Only with time are these bitter angels substituted with Satan and his minions; the results of this gradual change can be observed, e.g., in *Life of Adam and Eve* (Latin) 12-17.<sup>42</sup> All in all then, Aronofsky and Handel’s Watchers appear in a better light compared with their depiction in the classical texts.

### ***But Noah found grace (Genesis 6:8)***

The broad subject of the angelic-human love is all the more interesting given the relationship that develops between the Watchers and the main protagonist of the movie. Even before the angels become convinced to help Noah build the ark,<sup>43</sup> Og recognizes the special status of the patriarch: “I look at you and I see a glimmer of Adam again. The man I knew. The man I came to help”.<sup>44</sup> The examples of this affinity are more numerous<sup>45</sup> but the movie does not disclose what made Noah appear so special in the angels’ eyes. Obviously, he is portrayed as one of the few decent people on earth, but he is by no means a morally unequivocal hero. Another hint is given by noting his noble ancestry,<sup>46</sup> but again, it does not explain why precisely Noah is chosen for his mission. However, if one examines the ancient sources, it turns out that the matter of the origins of Noah is far more complicated and as such has the potential to clarify his privileged position as the earth’s savior.

According to the movie, Noah comes from the line of the righteous Seth and that roughly conforms to the genealogy furnished by Genesis 5:1-32 describing the patriarchs as enjoying the divine grace, good health and

longevity. The generations of Genesis 5, however, are directly preceded by the story of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4, which provides a very similar line of ancestry in verses 17-24, yet in a totally different context (table 1).

Genesis 4: 17-24	Genesis 5:1-32	<i>Noah</i> [00:02]
[Adam]	Adam	Adam
Cain	Seth	Seth
Enoch	Enosh	Enosh
Irad	Kenan	Kenan
Mehujael	Mahalalel	Mahalalel
Methushael	Jared	Methuselah
Lamech	Enoch	Lamech
[Noah]	Methuselah	Noah
	Lamech	
	Noah	

**Table 1. The comparison of the genealogies of Noah. The names in brackets do not appear in the biblical text.**

This doublet has been traditionally taken to mean two different lineages; the wicked Cainites in ch. 4 and the righteous Sethites in ch. 5. The Bible however does not explicitly connect these two accounts and the only point of convergence is Genesis 4:25 which reads: “And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, ‘God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him.’” Apart from this sole verse no other place in the Bible witnesses to Seth and Cain being brothers, as if these two independent traditions of Genesis 4-5 had been simply juxtaposed without any additional commentary. Another striking facet is the similarity or even the identity of some of the names listed in both accounts. This is the case with Lamech present in both records; yet a seven-time super-centenarian and the father of a large family in Genesis 5:28-31 promotes ruthless, sevenfold

vengeance in Genesis 4:23-24. In result of these ambiguities, chapters 4 and 5 furnish two images of Noah's father. And although it is the latter which has gained the recognition of the exegetes due to the explicit connection with Noah in v. 29 and later mention in 1 Chronicles 1:1-4, the cautious reader has to acknowledge the other option as well.<sup>47</sup>

Also, each time the reader is confronted with an outward discrepancy between two or more parallel accounts, it can be surmised that even more variants might have been intact in antiquity apart from the less problematic ones included in the biblical corpus.<sup>48</sup> In the case of the origins of Noah one such version is furnished by Genesis Apocryphon – a parallel of the biblical narrative which was discovered in the caves of the Judean Desert and dated to sometime between the III and I century B.C.<sup>49</sup> Genesis Apocryphon is exceptionally occupied with the ritual purity of Israel and retells the Pentateuchal stories so as to emphasize that the Hebrew patriarchs come from the uncontaminated line.<sup>50</sup> This is also the case with Lamech who contemplates the actual origins of his son and entertains the possibility that “the conception was the work of the Watchers and the pregnancy, of the Holy Ones, and it belonged to the Gian[ts].”<sup>51</sup> Lamech then asks his wife, Bitenosh, for explanations and is met with a rather suspicious answer:

13 then she suppressed her anger, speaking to me and saying to me: O my lord and [brother! Remember] 14 my pleasure.<sup>52</sup> I swear to you by the Great Holy One, by the King of the hea[vens] 15 that this seed comes from you, that this pregnancy comes from you, that the planting of this fruit comes from you, 16 and not from any foreigner or watcher or son of heaven. [Why is the expression] 17 of your face so changed and distorted, and your spirit so depressed? [18 I speak truthfully to you.<sup>53</sup>

Despite Bitenosh's ferocity she fails to explicitly deny the sexual contacts with the angels.<sup>54</sup> No wonder then that the patriarch remains confused and turns to his father Methuselah with a plea to ask Enoch, the favorite of the “holy ones,” for the ultimate verdict.<sup>55</sup> The poor material condition of the text in column V

precludes the possibility of knowing Enoch's answer, but there are several arguments to assume that this passage witnesses to the tradition of the supernatural origins of Noah. First, the notion of human-divine unions resulting in the begetting of mythical heroes is well attested in the literature of the ancient Near East and the Bible as well. Suffice it to note Yahveh and Eve in Genesis 4:1, angel of Yahveh and wife of Manoah in Judges 16 or the sons of God and the daughters of man in Genesis 6:4. Second and more importantly, the case of Genesis 6:1-4 seems to be of special pertinence here due to the name of Lamech's wife, Bitenosh. Most probably it is a contracted form of Heb. *bat 'enosh*, i.e. "daughter of man" that reverberates strongly with *banot ha-'adam* of Genesis 6:1-4. Given the unpopularity of this name in the extra-biblical literature the choice of wording seems even more relevant thus clearly connecting these two accounts. Third, the very vigorousness of Bitenosh's denial can be taken as reflecting the strength of the tradition of the angelic origins of Noah which was subjected to the direct critique here. Finally, the remnants of this notion can be recovered in other post-biblical works such as *The Book of Noah* preserved in 1 Enoch 106-108. The text says that both Lamech and Methuselah were suspicious of Noah's origins, because his body was "white as snow and red as the blooming of a rose, and the hair of his head and his long locks were white as wool, and his eyes beautiful."<sup>56</sup> In addition to this Noah glows with the divine radiance thus "resembling the sons of the God of heaven."<sup>57</sup>

Exactly as was the case with the story of the Enochian fallen angels, the idea that the heavenly beings beget Noah may have been too "mythological" for those among the exegetes who would rather construe the Scripture in rationalistic or even naturalistic ways and see the patriarch simply as a righteous man rather than some supernatural hybrid. The more specific problem may have been encountered by the Christian expositors for whom this tradition was dangerously close to challenging the assumption that Jesus was the only divine son sent down to bring salvation to the world. *Mutatis mutandis*, the modern

audience might have had significant problems with this version, since the default interpretations posit Noah as a regular man who earns the divine recognition due to his virtues. On the other hand, one can only envision the additional complexity and depth of *Noah* had Aronofsky and Handel decided to follow this interpretational path.

### ***Her steps follow the path to Sheol (Proverbs 5:5)***

The problem of the human-angelic love relationships also concerns the cinematographic portrayal of Naameh, the wife of Noah. She is probably the least morally ambivalent figure in the movie; a caring mother and grandmother, supporting wife and a devoted believer but overall quiet and submissive character. The choice of Aronofsky and Handel of this particular name for the otherwise anonymous wife of Noah is justified by the early Rabbinic literature – the earliest instance of this tradition appears in midrash Genesis R. 23:3 and is furthermore strengthened by Rashi who transmits it in his commentary to Genesis 4:22. Thus portrayed, Naameh seems to be the less likely character to evoke any controversies on the audience's side.

This, however, is just a part of the much more complex image of Noah's spouse in the classical sources. First of all, the biblical counterpart of Naameh is Naamah. The latter name appears only 5 times in the entire Bible: once as a toponym among other towns of Judah in Joshua 15:41, thrice as the name of an Ammonite mother of King Rehoboam in 1 Kings 14:21,31 and 1 Chronicles 12:13 and once in the genealogy of Cain as the name of Tubal-Cain's sister in Genesis 4:22. Obviously, the only viable parallel is the latter character and although the Scripture remains very laconic in regards to this figure, the very fact that Noah's wife comes from among the Cainites should be suspicious. Moreover, she is the only woman from among the Cainites and as such the only candidate to be the female descendant of Adam in Genesis 6. In fact, this

tradition is transmitted in Midrash ha-Gadol ad Genesis 4:22 which claims that the angels had come down to earth precisely because of her.

This scarcity of biblical information translated into the creativity of the Jewish exegetes who tried and supplied some additional explanations about Naamah. According to the rabbis, a semantic hint was contained in the name itself and thus in midrash Genesis R. 23:3 it is said that either her deeds were pleasing (Heb. *ne'imim*) or she sang (Heb. *man'emet*) idolatrous songs. The later rabbinic sources are even less positive about the biblical Naamah and this is the case in the Zohar; the basic text of medieval Jewish mysticism which emerged sometime in 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century Spain.<sup>58</sup> Naamah herself appears just about a dozen times in the scope of the entire composition, yet all of the appearances apart from the few mentions can be roughly clustered in two larger units: one passage in Zohar I 55a and the other in III 76b. According to the first one, Naamah is “the great seducer not only of men, but also of spirits and demons” who even managed to entice Uzza and Azael, the angelic leaders of the Enochian tradition. Clearly then, the text utilizes the motif of the earthly women beguiling the angels in Jubilees 4 and Pirke de-rabbi Eliezer 22. Moreover, the said fragment attributes Naamah with begetting all the “evil spirits which mix with men and arouse in them concupiscence, which leads them to defilement.”<sup>59</sup> Not only is she a supernatural demonic villain, but also her role in bringing evil to the world is particularly developed, thus turning her into a somewhat perverted mother of all life.

Exactly this latter theme is exploited in Zohar III 76b where after Cain's felony Adam withholds himself from sleeping with Eve for 130 years so as not to beget more villains. Adam's celibacy notwithstanding he becomes the target of demonic sexual assaults and as such forcibly engenders “the plagues of the children of men,” the myriads of demons who inhabit the world. Two of these malevolent spirits are the other “great” seductresses of the rabbinic tradition, Lilith and Igrat bat Mahalat. Naamah in turn appears here together with Tubal-Cain as the spirits who inhabit the mythical “great sea” and spawn malicious

phantoms. In addition to this Zohar III 76b has Naamah come to men in their dreams, incite their passions, steal their semen and give birth to even more numerous demonic progeny who follows the steps of their corrupted mother.

In sum, by choosing this particular name for Noah's wife, Aronofsky and Handel have followed one of the ancient extra-biblical traditions but have transmitted only a small part of the overall complex picture to the movie. While it would be rather difficult to include the demonic aspect present in the Zohar into the main plot, the tradition of Naamah being the sister of Tubal-Cain would have definitely added complexity and depth to the family relations. In the end, none of these ambiguities made it to the movie, and Naameh is a flat character overshadowed by the struggles and dilemmas of her male company.

### ***Honor Thy Father (Exodus 20:12)***

Finally, we arrive at the movie's depiction of Ham where the most "radical" censorship took place. Ham is presented as the middle of the brothers, the older Shem and younger Japheth, thus emphasizing his somewhat liminal position. Whereas Japheth is still a child and Shem is already a grown up man who has paired up with Ila, Ham is experiencing two intertwined challenges of the adolescent period; the lack of a female partner and a competition with his overwhelming and dominant father. Although Noah is initially eager to help his son find a proper wife,<sup>60</sup> he eventually changes his mind and decides that all humanity is destined to die in the flood. Thus when Ham meets with a firm and authoritative refusal,<sup>61</sup> he decides to look for a spouse on his own.<sup>62</sup> He finally manages to find a girl, Na'el, just before the commencing of the flood, but during the retreat to the ark, she is caught in one of the Cainite leg-hold traps and Noah prevents Ham from rescuing her.<sup>63</sup> The father-son conflict escalates and is additionally complicated by the relationship that forms between Ham and Tubal-Cain, the main antagonist of the movie, who plots to murder Noah and take over the ark. Ham initially teams up with his father's contender, yet, in the



key moment when he has the opportunity to take revenge on Noah, he kills Tubal-Cain instead.<sup>64</sup> This gradually built tension between Ham and Noah finds release in the last minutes of the movie. Ham encounters his father drunk and laying naked on the beach, observes Shem and Japheth cover Noah, then he throws at him the serpent's skin and walks away.<sup>65</sup> The strong emotional pressure of this scene notwithstanding, the actual graphical presentation is rather restrained in comparison to the variants found in the classical literature.

First of all, Ham is definitely a marginal figure in the Bible. He appears just several times, mostly in the genealogical lists of the patriarchs in Genesis 10:1-6 or 1 Chronicles 1:4-8 and is identified as the progenitor of Egypt in Psalm 105:23-27. The most developed account involving Ham is furnished in Genesis 9:20-25, which is obviously the point of departure for the cinematographic portrayal:

20 Noah began to be a man of the soil, and he planted a vineyard. 21 He drank of the wine and became drunk and lay uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brothers outside. 23 Then Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned backward, and they did not see their father's nakedness. 24 When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, 25 he said, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be to his brothers."<sup>66</sup>

At first glance, the reader is left to suppose that it was the act of looking at the naked body of Noah that was considered sinful and precisely this interpretation is supported by the early expositions and numerous graphical portrayals. Still, there are at least several hints present in the biblical text that suggest the act of Ham extended beyond the border of contemporarily understood indecency. First, the text's insistence on Noah lying in his tent suggests that the nakedness was not something one might involuntarily see and Ham must have put some effort in his actions. Second, the excruciating anger of Noah in v. 25 and the subsequent tirade against Ham and his uninvolved descendant suggest that

something more grave must have happened. Third, the structure and contents of v. 23 do not fit the flow of narration, what suggests that this verse may be a later interpolation to the fragment. One of such markers of incoherence is the presence of the Hebrew word *simlah* used to denote the garment with which Noah was covered. The term appears approximately 30 times in the entire Hebrew Bible, 5 times in Genesis and only once in the antediluvian history (Genesis 1-11), what makes it a statistically atypical choice in this context.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, the present account is best explained by the scrutiny of the problematic expression “to see nakedness” (Heb. *lir’ot ‘ervah*) which is applied in v. 22. The term for “nakedness” (Heb. *‘ervah*) has strong sexual connotations,<sup>68</sup> so the story is not just about seeing Noah as a man lacking his clothes but as a sexual partner. This expression is in turn parallel to the phrase “to uncover nakedness” (Heb. *legalot ‘ervah*) which appears in other places in the Pentateuch – in particular, Leviticus 18 and 20 which express interest in various forms of incest. For instance, Leviticus 20:11 reads: “If a man lies with his father’s wife, he has uncovered his father’s nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.” Although the vocabulary seems mundane, the context clearly suggests that to see or to uncover somebody’s nakedness is taken as a euphemism for an act of lovemaking. This semantic aspect of “seeing” is furthermore corroborated by the application of the verb in other problematic Genesis passages in which the act itself is closely connected to some form of transgression. Thus for instance the Egyptians see and take Sarah in Genesis 12:14-15, Shechem sees and humiliates Dinah in Genesis 34:2-3, Potiphar’s wife sees and seduces Joseph in Genesis 39:6-7.<sup>69</sup>

Simply put, to read Genesis 9:20-25 from the perspective of the Leviticus phraseology, the actual misdeed of Ham appears to be sodomizing his father and thus committing two serious crimes; pederasty and incest. The act itself must have been repellent for the early readers of the Bible, especially since it concerned the archetypal righteous man and the father of the postdiluvian generations.<sup>70</sup> Surely then some exegetical actions must have been taken so as

to deal with the outwardly offensive contents of the passage. Furthermore, v. 23 which initially seemed out of place here, now becomes intelligible as a literal reading of the problematic idiom of v. 22 and so does Noah's fury become justified in the face of his son's deed. Moreover, such exposition fits the broader composition of the flood narratives which commence with a sexual transgression in Genesis 6:1-4 and end up with one here in Genesis 9:20-25.<sup>71</sup>

Interestingly enough however, this does not deplete the scale of abominations concerning Ham and Noah in the later rabbinic literature which accommodates two additional stories. The first one appears in BT Sanhedrin 70a and has the rabbis dispute whether Ham has raped or castrated his father, thus somewhat following the initial emphasis of the biblical account. The other one in Genesis R. 36:7 tries to divert the attention from the horror of Genesis 9:20-25 by introducing other, no less unsettling traditions. Accordingly, Ham castrates Noah right after emerging from the ark where he copulates with a dog, thus not only engaging in an act of bestiality but also trespassing the divine command not to reproduce during the flood. In this particular case of a "paradoxical censorship" one could wonder whether the explicit and memorable crimes of Ham presented in the Rabbinic literature are not intended to distract attention from something even more hideous.<sup>72</sup>

In sum then, Aronofsky and Handel's version definitely remains a far cry from the classical stories of Ham and Noah; while the latter seem to delight themselves in the lewd details, the former diverts from this hermeneutical direction altogether. In fact, the writers admitted to know these variants but decided that it "might have been too much for our PG-13 film."<sup>73</sup> It is difficult not to agree with their explanation, since one can only think of the scale of the controversies on the audience's side. At the same time the writers need to be commended for wittily reformulating the sexual meaning of the initial story and skillfully building the background for the culmination scene. By extension and in relation to the previously analyzed fragments it can be said that despite

relying on the old motifs Aronofsky and Handel have managed to invest it with new ideas. In this case, with a unique softening twist.

***The words of a man's mouth are deep waters (Proverbs 18:4)***

Still, an inevitable question arises; if these are the classical sources, which are far more unsettling by modern standards, and if Aronofsky and Handel presented a milder version of the flood story, why has *Noah* led to such a ruckus? The interviews with the writers clearly show that they had indeed anticipated the heated debate and attributed it to the general ignorance of the Bible and extra-biblical traditions.<sup>74</sup> This assumption has in turn led the producers to undertake three steps with the eventual controversies in mind. First and foremost, an appropriate statement has been released to inform the viewers that “artistic license has been taken” and the movie was an unrestrained dramatization rather than a literal representation of the Bible. This in turn was supposed to alter the audience’s expectations on the one hand and to sidestep the accusations of infidelity to the Bible on the other.<sup>75</sup> Underlying this assertion is the premise that it is possible to make a movie veraciously reenacting the Bible – a “perennial bestseller”<sup>76</sup> and a “a godsend (so to speak) for filmmakers, for whom it provides a ready-made set.”<sup>77</sup> The problem, however, is that the filmmakers more often than not have to deal with scarce and cryptic data which is open to a wide range of interpretations. In the case of *Noah*, the biblical archetype is contained in just four chapters of Genesis leaving much space for creative retelling.<sup>78</sup> In other words, despite the “veil of familiar venerability,”<sup>79</sup> the biblical narratives are inherently ambiguous to the point where it is less and less justified to speak about its hypothetical original meaning.<sup>80</sup> From this perspective each and every biblical film is more of an individual creation rather than veracious recreation of the scriptural account. This invites the question of what the audience might perceive as the correct version.

The second precaution taken by the producers was to adjust the details so as to make the movie “less faithful to Genesis and more faithful to people’s sentimental recollections of Genesis.”<sup>81</sup> This act of conformity to the “proper” version of Scriptural events was important, because some percentage of the audience considered the Bible divinely inspired and holy. The sacredness of the Bible or, for that matter, of its interpretation is inherently connected to the issue of the group’s identity based on its commonly shared exposition. Accordingly, to question this default interpretation is to assault the very essence of the group. Thus, the lesser known exegetical traditions presented by Aronofsky and Handel have not only challenged the audience’s sensitivity but also must have threatened its coherence as a religious body. In fact, the filmmakers have been accused of a “sinister purpose of leading people to believe that Christianity and Judaism are something they are not”<sup>82</sup> and of trying to convince the younger audience that the story conveyed by *Noah* is more real than the one present in the Bible and told by the preachers.<sup>83</sup> This observation is especially relevant in regards to the faith in the literal meaning of the Bible. For instance, one of the relatively recent polls done in the United States reports that 28% of Americans hold this belief.<sup>84</sup> Yet, this does not specify what exactly is understood by the “Bible”; one particular edition, a specific interpretation, or the text in its original languages. A separate question is then how many people read the Bible itself and actually experience its vagueness as its inherent quality.

This leads to the broader social context of the Biblical exegesis demonstrated by the third action taken by the producers. While two American evangelists, Ray Comfort and Emeal Zwayne, came up with *Noah and the Last Days*, with the purpose to counteract the potential threats of *Noah* in mind,<sup>85</sup> both Aronofsky and Crowe applied for an audience with Pope Francis so as to receive his endorsement for the movie. And although the personal meeting did not take place and the official Vatican newspaper *L’Avennire* called *Noah* a “missed opportunity,”<sup>86</sup> the result of these efforts have been appropriately broadcasted by means of the Internet media.<sup>87</sup> In addition to this and despite the

pleas that the film has been made by atheists, Aronofsky defined himself by saying “I think I definitely believe”<sup>88</sup> and adding that so do all the characters portrayed in the movie.<sup>89</sup> It is difficult to assess the personal motivation behind these actions, but it can be surmised that they were directed at presenting *Noah* as a legitimate religious film and against the accusations of biblical infidelity. This also clearly exemplifies a present-day battle of biblical interpretations which is by no means a modern phenomenon. A vivid parallel is furnished by the history of early Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism, which relied on a very similar body of texts but interpreted them in a completely different manner, as the Old Testament or the Hebrew Bible respectively.

In sum then, the controversies around *Noah* seem to stem from rather limited familiarity with the biblical and extra-biblical narratives as well as from the unwillingness to accept the interpretational openness inherent to the Bible. More importantly, these controversies are not simply a matter of abstract hermeneutics but revolve around social issues. Finally, although not every biblical movie makes it to the list of the most controversial religious films, it is obvious that while tackling religious and spiritual topics, especially those that involve generally held views, it is very difficult not to challenge the sensitivity of some viewers by introducing the elements that do not fit their expectations. Yet, one should not forget that the meaning is not exactly “found” in the movie but rather “made” in the interaction with the interpretative audience.<sup>90</sup> And just like the interpretation of the Bible depends on the one who interprets, so is the controversy in the eye of the beholder.

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<sup>1</sup> Adele Reinhartz, *Bible and Cinema: An Introduction*, (London, New York: Routledge, 2013), 1, 5-7.

<sup>2</sup> Sarah Pulliam Bailey, “A conversation with ‘Noah’ director Darren Aronofsky,” [http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/a-conversation-with-noah-director-darren-aronofsky/2014/03/28/8c469388-b46d-11e3-b899-20667de76985\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/a-conversation-with-noah-director-darren-aronofsky/2014/03/28/8c469388-b46d-11e3-b899-20667de76985_story.html), accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Internet Movie Database, <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1959490/>, accessed July 12, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Box Office Mojo, <http://www.boxofficemojo.com/genres/chart/?id=controversy.htm>, accessed July 12, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> David Criswell, “Noah – Movie Review,” <http://christiananswers.net/spotlight/movies/2014/noah2014.html>, accessed July 8, 2015. Beck Glenn, after Ben Child, “Noah rest: Russell Crowe goes from pope to Archbishop of Canterbury,” <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/apr/02/russell-crowe-archbishop-canterbury-meet-noah>, accessed July 8, 2015. John Nolte, “‘Noah’ Review: Brilliantly Sinister Anti-Christian Filmmaking,” <http://www.breitbart.com/big-hollywood/2014/03/28/noah-review-brilliantly-sinister-anti-christian-filmmaking/>, accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Devon Spencer, “Ten Concerns with the Noah Movie,” <https://answersingenesis.org/noahs-ark/ten-concerns-noah-movie/>, accessed July 15, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Aronofsky Daren and Ari Handel, “Noah” [the movie], Protozoa Pictures 2014, [00:27-00:28]. The numbers in square brackets indicate the play time of the movie. All dialogue transcriptions are author’s own.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., [00:37-00:40]. Paul Asay, “Noah – Review,” <http://www.pluggedin.com/movie-reviews/noah-2014>, accessed July 8, 2015. Richard Corliss, “REVIEW: Darren Aronofsky’s Noah Movie: Better Than the Book,” <http://time.com/38365/noah-movie-darren-aronofsky-russell-crowe/>, accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>9</sup> Aronofsky, Handel, “Noah” [the movie], [01:24-01:28]. Somewhat ironically, this plea has been advanced by the adherents of both creationism and evolutionism. Tad Friend, “Heavy Weather. Darren Aronofsky gets Biblical,” <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/03/17/heavy-weather-2>, accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Asay, “Noah...”

<sup>11</sup> Ben Child, “Noah? No way. Biblical epic refused entry into China on religious grounds,” <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/may/09/russell-crowe-noah-banned-in-china-religious-grounds>, accessed July 8, 2015. Sam Frizell, “Noah Banned In Qatar, Bahrain and UAE,” <http://time.com/16935/noahbanned-in-qatar-bahrain-and-uae/>, accessed July 8, 2015. Yenni Kwok, “Indonesia Bans Noah,” <http://time.com/36564/noah-russell-crowe-movie-banned-by-indonesia/>, accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Steven D. Greydanus, “Everybody chill out about the ‘Noah’ movie,” <http://www.ncregister.com/blog/steven-greydanus/chill-out-about-noah/>, accessed July 10, 2015.

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<sup>13</sup> Geoff Dennis, "Aronofsky's Noah: Reaching Deep into Jewish Myth," <http://ejmmm2007.blogspot.com/2013/10/aronofskys-noah-reaching-deep-into.html>, accessed July 16, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Asay, "Noah..."

<sup>15</sup> Charlotte Alter, "Religious Leaders Urge Flock to See Noah", <http://time.com/35667/noah-movie-religious-leaders/>, accessed July 8, 2015. Asay, "Noah..." Paul Bond, "Glenn Beck: I Hope 'Dangerous' 'Noah' Is a 'Massive Failure'," <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/glenn-beck-i-hope-dangerous-690255>, accessed July 8, 2015. Danny Pegg, "Noah," *Journal of Religion & Film*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2015), article 47.

<sup>16</sup> Geoff Dennis, "Dream Work Noah: The Cinematic and Jewish Greatness of the Weirdest Story Ever Told," <http://ejmmm2007.blogspot.com/2014/03/dream-work-noah-cinematic-and-jewish.html>, accessed July 16, 2015. Greydanus, "Everybody Chill Out..." Josh Sanburn, "Jonathan Bock's Film Flock," <http://time.com/31915/jonathan-bocks-film-flock/>, accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Dennis, "Dream Work..." For a concise summary of the religious responses to the movie see the cycle of interviews with Jerry A. Johnson, the president of NRB on-line and conducted by Ed Stetzer, listed in the references of the present paper.

<sup>18</sup> George Aichele and Richard G. Walsh, "Introduction: Scripture as Precursor", in *Screening Scripture: Intertextual Connections Between Scripture and Film*, eds. George Aichele and Richard G. Walsh (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press International, 2002), ix. Thomas Schatz, after: Reinhartz, *Bible...*, 4-6.

<sup>19</sup> Chattaway, "Darren Aronofsky...", Stephen D. Greydanus, "Interview: 'Noah' Writer-Director Darren Aronofsky and Co-Writer Ari Handel," <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/interview-darren-aronofsky-ari-handel>, accessed July 9, 2015. Pulliam Bailey, "A Conversation..."

<sup>20</sup> See for instance a very scrupulous study of Dave Burke, who has collected a number of classical references in order to show that *Noah* does not go beyond the classical Jewish sources. Ibid., "A Review of Aronofsky's Noah (2014)," [https://www.academia.edu/7006722/Aronofskys\\_Noah\\_A\\_Review](https://www.academia.edu/7006722/Aronofskys_Noah_A_Review), accessed August 11, 2015. Similar remarks have been posed by Seth Sanders, "Noah: The Movie", *Religion in the News*, October 2014, 30-32.

<sup>21</sup> See: Berys Gaut, *A Philosophy of Cinematic Art*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 51-52. For the evolution of the term "text" see: Urpo Kovala, "Cultural Studies and Cultural Text Analysis", *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, Vol. 4 (2002), Issue 4, [electronic document, no pagination]. For the discussion of this approach see *inter alia* Garry Gillard, *Film as Text*, <http://www.garrygillard.net/writing/filmastext.html>, accessed September 13, 2015. Justine Kemlo, *Different Voices? Film and Text or Film as Text: Considering the Process of Film Adaptation from the Perspective of Discourse*, "MHRA Working Papers in Humanities", 3 (2008), 13-24.

<sup>22</sup> Aronofsky, Handel, "Noah" [the movie], [00:01].

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., [00:21-00:22].

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., [00:36].



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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., [01:14-01:19].

<sup>26</sup> What in itself bears a strong resemblance to the popular and simplified perception of the Muslim *jihad*. Surprisingly enough, this plea has not been raised in any of the cited reviews. The matter is even more apparent in the alternative script, which explicitly labels the Cainites as “the infidels”. Aronofsky and Handel, “Noah” [alternative script], 65.

<sup>27</sup> Genesis 6:1-4.

<sup>28</sup> For a very scrupulous exposition of the passage against the backdrop of the early Jewish and Christian interpretations of Genesis 6:1-4 see Archie T. Wright, *The Origin of Evil Spirits. The Reception of Genesis 6. 1-4 in Early Jewish Literature*, (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005).

<sup>29</sup> For the discussion of the chronological priority see Joshua Ezra Burns, “The Watchers Traditions in Targum and Midrash”, in *The Watchers in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, eds. Angela Kim Harkins, Kelley Coblenz Bautch, John C. Endres, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 199-216.

<sup>30</sup> For a concise introduction including most up to date discoveries see Loren Stuckenbruck, “1 Enoch or Ethiopic Enoch in Outline,” [https://www.academia.edu/7820262/Condensed\\_Outline\\_and\\_Introduction\\_to\\_1\\_Enoch\\_or\\_Ethiopic\\_Enoch](https://www.academia.edu/7820262/Condensed_Outline_and_Introduction_to_1_Enoch_or_Ethiopic_Enoch), accessed September 12, 2015. More on the tradition of the fallen angels in the Enochian literature in: Annette Yoshiko Reed, *Fallen Angels and the History of Judaism and Christianity: The Reception of Enochic Literature*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>31</sup> Ida Fröhlich, “The Figures of the Watchers in the Enochic Tradition (1-3 Enoch),” *Henoch* No. 1 (2011), *Enochic Traditions and Mediatorial Figures in Second Temple Judaism and Their Legacy in Early Christianity, Rabbinic Judaism, and Islam*, 6-26.

<sup>32</sup> Although Semjaza appears in *Noah* as one of the angelic leaders, more information is provided by the alternative script. In words of Og, Semjaza “was the greatest of us then. He loved men most of all and decided we should leave the Creator’s side and come down to help man”. Aronofsky and Handel, “Noah” [alternative script], 23.

<sup>33</sup> 1 Enoch 6:1-6.

<sup>34</sup> 1 Enoch 9:7-9.

<sup>35</sup> 1 Enoch 12:4-5.

<sup>36</sup> 1 Enoch 13:1-2.

<sup>37</sup> More on the parallels with the Greek mythology in: Ron S. Hendel, “Of Demigods and the Deluge: Toward an Interpretation of Genesis 6:1-4,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 106, No. 1 (1987), 13-26. For the possible ancient Mesopotamian background of the motive of revelation in the sexual union see: Beate Pongratz-Leisten, “Sacred Marriage and the Transfer of Divine Knowledge: Alliances between the Gods and the King in Ancient Mesopotamia,” in *Sacred Marriages. The Divine-Human Sexual Metaphor from Sumer to Early Christianity*, eds. Martti Nissinen, Risto Uro, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008), 43-73.

<sup>38</sup> Jubilees 4:15.

<sup>39</sup> Jubilees 4:22.

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<sup>40</sup> Kelley Coblenz Bautch, "What Becomes of the Angels' Wives? A Text-Critical Study of 1 Enoch 19:2," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 125, No. 4 (2006), 766-780.

<sup>41</sup> For an approachable primer in midrash as a rabbinic exegetical technique see e.g.: Jacob Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*, (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1994), 223-245.

<sup>42</sup> The early stage of this transformation is meticulously described in: Tina J. Wray, Gregory Mobley, *The Birth of Satan. Tracing the Devil's Biblical Roots*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005).

<sup>43</sup> Aronofsky, Handel, "Noah" [the movie], [00:33-00:34].

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, [00:22].

<sup>45</sup> These are even more visible in the alternative script. For instance, Noah can speak the language of angels and uses the same explosive weapons. Aronofsky and Handel, "Noah" [alternative script], 20-21.

<sup>46</sup> Aronofsky, Handel, "Noah" [the movie], [00:02].

<sup>47</sup> The hermeneutic hypothesis of the Cainite ancestry of Noah is particularly tempting, given the supernatural origins of Cain himself suggested in Genesis 4:1. David E. Bokovoy, "Did Eve Acquire, Create, or Procreate with Yahweh? A Grammatical and Contextual Reassessment Of קַיִן in Genesis 4:1," *Vetus Testamentum* No. 63 (2013), 19-35. Nicolas Wyatt, "Cain's Wife," *Folklore*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (1986), 88-95. Moreover, this idea fits well the hypothesis of the Kenite origins of Yahvism. For a relatively recent evaluation of this theory see: Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited and the Origins of Judah," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, Vol. 33 No. 2 (2008), 131-153.

<sup>48</sup> Avigdor Shinan and Yair Zakovitch, *From Gods to God. How the Bible, Debunked, Suppressed, or Changed Ancient Myths and Legends*, (Philadelphia: Nebraska University Press, 2012), 7-8.

<sup>49</sup> For a summary of these findings see: Russell Fuller, "Some Thoughts on How the Dead Sea Scrolls Have Changed Our Understanding of the Text of the Hebrew Bible and its History and the Practice of Textual Criticism," in *The Hebrew Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, eds. Nora Dávid, Armin Lange, Kristin De Troyer, Shani Tzoref, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2012), 23-28.

<sup>50</sup> Elena Dugan, "This Holy Seed is From You: Miscegenation Polemics and Social Reality in the Genesis Apocryphon," [online], [https://www.academia.edu/9669682/\\_This\\_Holy\\_Seed\\_is\\_From\\_You\\_Miscegenation\\_Polemics\\_and\\_Social\\_Reality\\_in\\_the\\_Genesis\\_Apocryphon](https://www.academia.edu/9669682/_This_Holy_Seed_is_From_You_Miscegenation_Polemics_and_Social_Reality_in_the_Genesis_Apocryphon), accessed September 12, 2015, especially 1-4.

<sup>51</sup> 1QGenAp col. 2:1-2.

<sup>52</sup> The word "pleasure" (Heb. *'ednah*) most probably suggests a successful conception. Pieter Willem van der Horst, "Bitenosh's Orgasm (1 QapGen 2:9-15)," *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, Vol. 43 (2012), 613-628.

<sup>53</sup> 1QGenAp col. 2:13-18.

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<sup>54</sup> Dugan, “This Holy Seed...”, 9. I would also like to thank Jeremiah N. Bailey from the Baylor University for a very insightful private discussion on the possible Enochic background of this tradition.

<sup>55</sup> 1QGenAp col. 2:19-21.

<sup>56</sup> 1 Enoch 106:2.

<sup>57</sup> 1 Enoch 106:5. Silviu N. Bunta, “Cain the Giant: Watchers Traditions in the Life of Adam and Eve”, in *The Watchers in Jewish and Christian Traditions*, eds. Angela Kim Harkins, Kelley Coblentz Bautch, John C. Endres, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 181-197.

<sup>58</sup> For a concise introduction to Kabbalah in general and Zohar in particular see: Joseph Dan, *Kabbalah. A Very Short Introduction*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), especially 25-35.

<sup>59</sup> Zohar III 76b.

<sup>60</sup> Aronofsky, Handel, “Noah” [the movie], [00:41].

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, [00:57].

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, [01:04; 01:10].

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, [01:13].

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, [01:53-01:54].

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, [02:01-02:02]. In the alternative script Akkad, the equivalent of Tubal-Cain, helps Ham escape with his girlfriend (here named Na’eltamuk after Jubilees 7:13-16) to the ark before the angry mob, but Noah banishes the girl therefrom (p. 61-64). In this context it is significant that in the ending scene Ham throws a piece of Na’eltamuk’s cloth at the drunk Noah (p. 123).

<sup>66</sup> Genesis 9:20-25.

<sup>67</sup> BDB 9470. TWOT 2270b.

<sup>68</sup> BDB 7411. HALOT 6564. TWOT 1692b. Contra: John A. Bailey, “Initiation and the Primal Woman in Gilgamesh and Genesis 2-3,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 89 no. 2 (1970), 145. The latter author interprets being naked as the loss of dignity.

<sup>69</sup> Devora Steinmetz, “Vineyard, Farm and Garden: the Drunkenness of Noah in the Context of Primeval History”, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 113/2 (1994), 199, footnote number 12.

<sup>70</sup> Steinmetz, “Vineyard, Farm and Garden...”, 193.

<sup>71</sup> These in turn mirror two other significant sexual transgressions in Genesis: the people of Sodom lusting after angels (19:4-11) and the daughters of Lot seducing their father (19:30-38).

<sup>72</sup> More on the interpretational directions of the deed of Ham in: Karel van der Toorn, “Ham”, in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, eds. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, Pieter Willem van der Horst, (Leiden-Boston-Koln: Brill, 1999), 383-384. Michael Wechsler,

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“Ham (Person) - Judaism,” in *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception*, eds. Dale C. Allison Jr., et al., vol. 11, De Gruyter 2015, cols. 64-71.

<sup>73</sup> Friend, “Heavy Weather...”

<sup>74</sup> “A lot of people are going to be like «What? Noah, drunk and naked? How dare you?!» It’s in the Bible. People are going to say, «Giants walking the earth? Fallen angels? How dare you?!» But it’s in there”. Sarah Pulliam Bailey, “A conversation with ‘Noah’ director Darren Aronofsky,” [http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/a-conversation-with-noah-director-darren-aronofsky/2014/03/28/8c469388-b46d-11e3-b899-20667de76985\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/religion/a-conversation-with-noah-director-darren-aronofsky/2014/03/28/8c469388-b46d-11e3-b899-20667de76985_story.html), accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>75</sup> Sharon Waxman, “Paramount Adds Explanatory Note to ‘Noah’ After Pressure by Religious Group,” <http://www.thewrap.com/noah-explanatory-message-religious-groups/>, accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>76</sup> Reinhartz, *Scripture on the Silver Screen*, (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 186.

<sup>77</sup> Reinhartz, *Bible...*, 7.

<sup>78</sup> Francis Landy has analyzed several versions of the flood story for children and inferred that “it may be contextualized in a children’s Bible, and reproduce or adapt a conventional translation; it may lose virtually all its sacred and biblical associations”. Francis Landy, “Noah’s Ark and Mrs. Monkey”, in *Biblical Interpretation*, 15 (2007), 352. The conclusions can be extrapolated to the other media as well.

<sup>79</sup> Joel Rosenberg, “What the Bible and Old Movies Have in Common?”, in *Beyond the Biblical Horizon: The Bible and the Arts*, ed. Jo Cheryl Exum, (Leiden, Boston, Koeln: Brill, 1999), 12.

<sup>80</sup> Aichele and Walsh, “Introduction...”, vii-viii. Jo Cheryl Exum, “Beyond the Biblical Horizon: The Bible and the Arts”, in *Beyond the Biblical Horizon: The Bible and the Arts*, ed. Jo Cheryl Exum, (Leiden, Boston, Koeln: Brill, 1999), 1-2, 6. Such Bible “will never run out of undiscovered nuances, nor ever run dry of puns and rebuses left to uncover”, Rosenberg, “What the Bible...”, 13-14.

<sup>81</sup> Friend, “Heavy Weather...” See also: David Manier, “What Is Left of Creation,” *PsycCRITIQUES*, Vol. 59 (43), (2014).

<sup>82</sup> Nolte, “Noah...”

<sup>83</sup> Beck Glenn after Child, “Noah rest...”

<sup>84</sup> Lydia Saad, *Three in Four in U.S. Still See the Bible as Word of God*, on-line, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/170834/three-four-bible-word-god.aspx>, accessed on January 2 2016.

<sup>85</sup> On-line: <http://www.noahthemovie.com/>, accessed January 1<sup>st</sup> 2016.

<sup>86</sup> Ben Child, “Vatican newspaper slams Noah movie as ‘lost opportunity’ that ignores God,” <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2014/apr/11/vatican-slams-noah-lost-opportunity-ignores-god>, accessed July 8, 2015.

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<sup>87</sup> Eric J. Lyman, “Russell Crowe, 'Noah' Team Briefly Meet Pope Francis,” <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/russell-crowe-noah-team-briefly-689572>, accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>88</sup> Cathleen Falsani, “The 'Terror' of Noah: How Darren Aronofsky Interprets the Bible,” <http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2014/03/the-terror-of-em-noah-em-how-darren-aronofsky-interprets-the-bible/359587/>, accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>89</sup> Peter T. Chattaway, “Darren Aronofsky Talks to CT about 'Noah',” <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2014/march-web-only/darren-aronofsky-interview-noah.html>, accessed July 8, 2015.

<sup>90</sup> Holger Szesnat, “Notes on Monty Python, Pasolini and Gibson,” [https://www.academia.edu/1432079/Notes\\_on\\_Monty\\_Python\\_Pasolini\\_and\\_Gibson](https://www.academia.edu/1432079/Notes_on_Monty_Python_Pasolini_and_Gibson), 2-3, accessed December 28 2015. Janina Wildfeuer, *Film Discourse Interpretation: Towards a New Paradigm for Multimodal Film Analysis*, (New York, London: Routledge, 2014), 1-5.

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