

FROM MYSTIQUE TO MUDDLE: UNRESOLVED LOGIC IN JOKO ANWAR'S SERIES

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Abstract: *Television series, as narrative mediums, rely on the audience's ability to suspend disbelief to emotionally and intellectually engage with fictional worlds. This study examines the "Orphan" episode from Joko Anwar's 'Nightmares and Daydreams', focusing on how logical inconsistencies disrupt this process. Using Samuel Taylor Coleridge's suspension of disbelief theory, the research explores why unanswered questions—stemming from an implausible adoption process, a child's undisclosed peanut allergy, and an unexplained transition from a trash avalanche to a luxury house—undermine audience trust and narrative coherence. A qualitative methodology was employed, involving scene-by-scene analysis to decode messages, document arising questions, search for answers within the film, and log unresolved issues. Findings reveal that while the episode builds anticipation through mystical premises rooted in Indonesian culture, it fails to resolve key logical gaps, pushing the suspension of disbelief beyond its limits and reducing viewer engagement. The study suggests practical alternatives, such as tying adoption ease to insider ties or magical elements, to address these flaws. This analysis underscores the importance of balancing creative liberty with narrative accountability in audiovisual storytelling, offering insights for filmmakers, academics, and critics on sustaining audience immersion in the digital era. It contributes to the broader discourse on narrative quality and the application of suspension of disbelief in contemporary media.*

Keywords: *joko anwar; suspension of disbelief; nightmare and daydream; unresolved issues*

Introduction

Television series have an important role in building narrative experiences that can influence the emotions, thoughts and imagination of the audience. One of the important elements in enjoying the story presented is the audience's ability to suspend disbelief or what is known as "suspension of disbelief." This theory was first introduced by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who stated that the audience or reader needs to set aside certain illogicalities in the story in order to be emotionally and

intellectually engaged. In this context, a successful narrative will be able to bring the audience to accept the fictional world without being hampered by logical or plot inconsistencies (Coleridge, 1817).

This concept not only applies to television series but also in anthology series. An anthology television series is a format in which each episode features a self-contained story with different characters, settings, and plots. Unlike traditional serial shows that follow a continuous narrative, anthology series offer fresh stories

each time, allowing creators to explore a wide range of themes, genres, and storytelling styles. This format has gained popularity for its creative freedom and flexibility. Anthologies often tackle complex or experimental ideas, making them ideal for audiences who enjoy variety and thought-provoking content without long-term commitment to a single storyline. The example of anthology series is our main topic below.

On June 14th 2024, Joko Anwar released the series "Nightmares and Daydreams" on the Netflix platform. This anthology series is packaged in seven episodes. This series was directed by Ray Pakpahan, Tommy Dewo, and Randolph Zaini while Joko Anwar served as executive producer. Joko Anwar said that this genre has great potential to become popular in the film industry. As long as this genre is combined with stories that are close to people's lives (Kompas, 2024). Joko promised that this series will be mind-blowing. (Tempo, 2022)

Promotion of this series was carried out intensively with attracted attention posters. This series succeeded in attracting hype in social medias and their netizen, including the author. The author watched the series soon after its release date. However, the author was disappointed because the series' storyline did not match expectations. The author felt something was odd after watching the first three episodes, especially the second episode entitled "Orphan". The author feels that there is a discrepancy in the logic of the story. Several scenes raise questions that are not answered until the end of the episode, and leave a less cohesive impression on the narrative as a whole.

The author remembered the experiences when watching another similar anthology series. Black Mirror is a British

anthology television series created by Charlie Brooker that explores the dark and often dystopian sides of modern society and technology. Each standalone episode presents a thought-provoking story set in a near-future or alternate reality, highlighting the unintended consequences of innovation and human behavior. The show is known for its sharp social commentary, psychological depth, and unsettling twists that reflect contemporary anxieties about surveillance, artificial intelligence, social media, and digital dependence. The author felt that Black Mirror manages to convince all the scenes was real and believable. It gave an opposite feeling from "Nightmares and Daydreams". This is obviously a subjective opinion from the author but it triggers the need to explore the cause objectively.

In an effort to understand this flaw, the author was motivated to analyze one episode of the series using the suspension of disbelief theory approach. This analysis aims to identify aspects that cause confusion, reveal potential causes of logical inconsistencies, and explore ways to prevent similar problems from recurring in the future. Through this research, it is hoped that it can contribute to a deeper understanding of the importance of logic and consistency in building stories that are able to maintain the audience's suspension of disbelief.

By focusing on the second episode, this research will dive into the messages in each scene to find the missing messages. It is hoped that the results of the analysis will provide practical recommendations that can help content creators avoid similar problems in the future, as well as enrich the study of the theory of suspension of disbelief in the context of audiovisual narratives.

Research on suspension of disbelief

has become an important focus in narrative studies, media theory, and aesthetics, especially in understanding how audiences engage with works of fiction. This concept was first introduced by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria* in 1817. For the past two centuries that phrase “willing suspension of disbelief”—has been repeatedly used by scholars and laity alike to describe how readers, listeners, viewers, and players seemingly disregard reality to enter into and become engaged with the circumstances and the inhabitants of fictional worlds (Ji, 2016).

David Bordwell, a leading figure in film studies, heavily emphasizes the concept of cause and effect as the fundamental organizing principle of classical narrative cinema. For Bordwell, a narrative is essentially “a chain of events in cause-effect relationship occurring in time and space.” This means that events in a film are not random occurrences, but rather interconnected by a logical progression where one event serves as the catalyst for the next, propelling the story forward. Characters, in this framework, often act as the primary causal agents, initiating actions that elicit reactions from others, thereby weaving a coherent and engaging plot. This reliance on clear causality is central to how classical Hollywood cinema, in particular, constructs its narratives, encouraging viewers to constantly form hypotheses and anticipate future events, thus generating curiosity, suspense, and surprise as the causal chain unfolds towards a resolution (Bordwell, 2020).

The process of suspension of disbelief involves the audience's ability to integrate imaginative experiences with everyday reality. In this context, elements that may be unrealistic - such as the presence of supernatural beings, futuristic technology, or situations that are far from real-world possibilities - are accepted as part of the

narrative world as long as the story presents a consistent logic. This logic will be reflected creatively in character development, a solid plot and clear rules of the story world. If this logic is well received by the audience, then suspension of disbelief can be said to be successful.

This is linear with the screenplay theory where character must live in the believable environment that creates problems which can be solved by the character and or with the help of the environment itself (Maras, 2019).

In media studies and film theory, suspension of disbelief is an important framework for understanding audiences' relationships with various forms of entertainment, including film, television, and video games. For example, in science fiction or fantasy films, audiences often encounter elements such as alien worlds, magic, or technology that does not exist in the real world. However, if these elements are combined with a convincing narrative and the creation of cause-and-effect logic for the existence of these elements, the audience will not only accept their presence but also feel emotionally involved in the story.

It is important to note that suspension of disbelief has limitations. When a story violates its own internal logic or fails to answer important questions raised in the narrative, audiences tend to lose their emotional and intellectual engagement. A work's inability to maintain narrative coherence can make viewers doubt the fictional world, ultimately ruining the viewing experience.

Janet H. Murray argues that interactive media, such as film and television, have the unique ability to create worlds that are relatable to audiences (Murray, 2017). This is reinforced by Jenkins who explains that elements of a fictional

world, such as internal consistency, in-depth characterization, and a structured storyline, are key in maintaining suspension of disbelief. When these elements are compromised, the audience's engagement with the story can be significantly reduced (Jenkins, 2006).

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative approach to conduct an in-depth analysis of cinematic scenes. This methodology is specifically designed to unpack the intricate layers of meaning within the series, moving beyond surface-level plot points to explore the deeper messages and implied narratives embedded in each scene. Rather than focusing on quantitative metrics, the author approach prioritizes a rich, nuanced understanding of the series storytelling efficacy and artistic intent. While the introduction to this study alludes to broader discussions concerning narrative logic in other series, the core of this methodology is dedicated to a meticulous, scene-by-scene deconstruction of the chosen episode, ensuring a granular understanding of its internal coherence and thematic development. The following steps outline our systematic process for analyzing and interpreting the visual and auditory information presented in the episode. The steps are:

1. Information parsing per scene.

Each scene in the series is analyzed to identify the scene's message. The information contained in the scene is described in detail to understand the context and its contribution to conveying the story message.

2. Collecting arising questions. If during the scene describing process the author needs to question something, the

question will be noted. These questions may cover aspects of the story, symbolism, cinematography techniques, or the intent of a particular scene.

3. Search for information in the episode to find answers for the questions.

The questions that have been prepared are then answered by reviewing scenes or other parts in the film. This process aims to ensure that each question is answered based on the evidence contained in the film work itself.

4. Logging unanswered questions.

If there are questions that cannot be answered even though they have been explored in the film, these questions are specifically noted. This is to identify empty spaces in the analysis that can become a focus for further research or critical discussion.

This methodology aims to support in-depth and structured analysis, with an emphasis on understanding the context and meaning of each scene in the film.

Result

The following are the results of research conducted by the author. The report format consists of three elements. The first is the time of the scene in the episode. Second is the content of the story. Third are questions that arise naturally when watching scenes over a certain period of time. The research results are sorted by broadcast time from start to finish.

00:00 – 01:30

Story content: Iyos took part in washing the body. Iyos wonders about the body. He then discovered that he was not

a relative or neighbor of the corpse. He was chased but managed to escape.

Questions: No questions arise in this scene.

01:30 – 02:30

Story content: bumper series

Question: No question.

02:30 – 06:19

Story content: In the hut where they live, Iyos tells the truth about the gossip which says that the corpse he washed became rich because he picked up a magical child in an orphanage. Iyos suggested his wife, Ipah, to adopt a magical child so he can become rich. Ipah disagreed because according to him there was no point in being rich but dying on the seventh day of adoption. Iyos convinced Ipah to still adopt the child and immediately throw them away on the seventh day so they wouldn't die. Ipah still doesn't want to. Considering their income continues to fall and debt collectors threaten to burn down their house, Ipah changed her mind and is willing to adopt the miracle child.

Question: No question.

06:20 – 07:30

Iyos and Ipah went to the adoption place. They intend to adopt the child that Mas Bagas adopted yesterday. The Adoption Officer seemed to know that the child they adopted was indeed special and had magical powers. The Adoption Officer asked why they had to adopt the child. Ipah replied that if they didn't adopt, they would both die. The officer approved their request.

Question: Is it that easy for them to adopt? They are a poor family but can adopt a child?

07:30 – 08:40

The Adoption Officer handed Syafin over to Iyos and Ipah. The officer suspected that Iyos and Ipah were looking for something from the child. The officer only asked them to love Syafin.

Question: What made Iyos and Ipah to be approved for adoption? What's the argument other than they will die? Will there be additional information?

08:40 – 12:38

First day of adoption. Ipah offers Harum Manis, a cheap cake. Syafin refused and instead looked at an expensive restaurant called The Maja. Ipah approached the restaurant and seemed to intend to find information. However, Ipah was asked to leave the restaurant. Ipah then took Iyos and Syafin home. When they got home, Ipah immediately fed Syafin only with rice and fried egg. At night when Syafin was asleep, Iyos and Ipah wondered if they were going to be rich. They both want to buy a house and cook delicious food. Suddenly, they found five hundred thousand rupiah behind the pillow. They don't know the origin of this money but they are sure this is the impact of Syafin's presence.

Question: This scene raises an even sharper question, why could a poor scavenger adopt a child and take the child to a rickety house?

12:39 – 19:20

Second day of adoption. It turns out

that Ipah once had a child named Rian. Rian is dead. Iyos came with toys for Syafin. Iyos then said goodbye and went to work fixing the gutter. Ipah will go scavenging. Syafin joins Ipah in scavenging. While Ipah is scavenging, Ipah's memories go back to the past when Rian was ran over by a garbage truck. When Ipah woke up from her reverie, Ipah saw that Syafin was in danger of being ran over by a garbage truck too. Ipah immediately saved Syafin. Syafin was saved. Syafin felt safe and started calling 'Mum'. That evening, Iyos questioned Ipah's attitude in allowing Syafin to call her 'Mum'. Iyos reminded Ipah not to get too carried away with children who are considered to be descendants of the devil. That night, they both got a gold bracelet.

Question: The adoption process looks even more strange and impossible when we discover the fact that Ipah once had a child and died in an accident because he was run over by a garbage truck. How could a poor family with a history of negligence be able to get an adoption?

19:20 – 21:00

Third day of adoption. Iyos sells the gold bracelet they got the night before. Iyos earned enough money to pay off the debt. Iyos told Syafin that he would buy a luxury house to live in with Ipah and Syafin. On the evening of the third day, Iyos found a gold necklace in the drinking kettle.

Question: No question but the question from the previous scene is still annoying.

21.01 – 25.30

Fourth day of adoption. Ipah and

Iyos took Syafin to an expensive restaurant that they couldn't afford to visit before. Ipah, Iyos and Syafin ordered a lot of food. When they were eating, Syafin choked and then lost consciousness. Ipah and Iyos panicked and immediately took Syafin to the hospital. Syafin turned out to have a history of allergy to peanuts. Ipah was shocked. Iyos then protested to Ipah who was considered too affectionate. Iyos reminds the purpose of adoption is to get money and not to love him. Ipah didn't seem to care about Iyos. That night they did not get money.

Question: A new fact related to the adoption process. How is it possible that a child who has acute allergies to something can be adopted by a poor family who does not have enough knowledge about health?

25.30 – 29.40

Fifth day. Iyos invited Syafin to play at the night market. Ipah reminds them they don't have any money. Iyos persuades Ipah to use the remaining money to please Syafin. If Syafin is happy, they will get more money. Ipah begins to have an emotional attachment to Syafin. Ipah wants Iyos to forget about money. Iyos ignored Ipah and instead forced Syafin to bring in money. Iyos got emotional and hit Syafin. That night, again they didn't get any money.

Question: none.

29.41 – 33.00

The sixth day. Syafin wakes up in the morning and leaves the hut. Ipah wakes up and realizes Syafin is not by his side. Ipah rushed out and found Syafin playing near the curb of the garbage pile. Sudden-

ly there was an avalanche of garbage that hit Syafin. Ipah and Iyos immediately rescue Syafin. A moment later, a larger landslide occurred and this time it hit Ipah and Iyos. They then woke up in a luxury house and had a certificate in the name of Ipah and Iyos. Syafin is still unconscious due to the landslide.

Question: how did they get to the luxury house? Who helps or picks them up from the garbage avalanche? Who completed the luxury house?

33.01 – 45.37

The seventh day. Iyos wakes up in his luxurious house. He found Ipah and Syafin in the next room. Syafin is in a sick condition due to a landslide. Ipah told Iyos that it was not Syafin who would kill them. Iyos immediately eliminated all items that could possibly kill them both. Iyos' attitude changed. This time he apologized to Syafin. Iyos wants to be a good father. That night, Iyos got sacks of money. Unexpectedly, Iyos actually changed after getting a lot of money. Iyos is convinced again that Syafin is the son of the devil and should be killed. Without Ipah's knowledge, Syafin is taken and will be buried by Iyos. Ipah realized what was going to happen and immediately saved Syafin. Ipah carried Syafin and ran back to their ramshackle hut. Iyos chases Ipah. Iyos wanted to kill Syafin but it was Ipah who stabbed Iyos. Iyos lost. Not long after, Ipah committed suicide. Syafin mourns Ipah's passing.

Question: Why did you run to the shack? Why not ask the people for help? Why didn't Syafin turn into a demon? Where is the 'miracle of the devil's son' who is thought to kill on the seventh day?

Discussion

From the research results, it can be seen that there are several questions that arise when watching the "Orphan" episode. This question arises and is not answered until the end of the story. In fact, this question is not answered in other episodes in this series.

Iyos and Ipah heard rumors that there was a child born to Satan who could be adopted and could bring a big fortune in a week. His fortune can be in the form of sacks of money, a big house and a luxury car. However, those who receive good fortune are threatened with death on the seventh day after adoption. Increasingly pressing economic factors make Iyos and Ipah agree to adopt the magical child with all the risks.

When the author watched it, the issue about magical children was not surprising. Mystical premises like this are nothing new in local cinema or in the daily lives of Indonesian citizens. Many people believe in magical things beyond logic. There are still residents who are deceived by someone who has magical powers (Ibrahim, 2024).

The "Orphan" episode series went quite smoothly at the start. The introduction of the characters and their life problems went on without any significant questions. However, there is a scene that starts to raise questions when Iyos and Ipah adopt the devil's child. The adoption process went smoothly without a hitch and without drama. Iyos and Ipah also did not pay or reimburse the costs, which makes the logical question even bigger.

In the adoption scene, Iyos and Ipah only need a few hours to get Syafin, the name of the child to be adopted. This scene raises the question: is the adoption process that easy?

The scene depicting the effort to get Syafin looks flat. Moreover, the argument put forward was that Iyos and Ipah were threatened with death by debt collectors if they did not immediately pay off their debt. Doesn't that argument actually show their poor economic situation? Iyos and Ipah are completely ineligible to adopt a child due to their difficult economic conditions. Then why were they allowed to adopt Syafin?

Actually, the audience can accept this not-so-logic considering they are watching a film. A good film breaks down information little by little. Not all information can be put at the beginning of the film because that can make the film end quickly (Bordwell, 2020). This is where the suspension of disbelief occurs. The audience is willing to postpone requests for answers to questions that arise. The audience is still willing to continue watching the scene. Of course, that question shouldn't be left floating around for too long. The question must be answered.

When suspending disbelief, the audience can assume that the adoption process was easy because of the closeness to the insider. Viewers may also think that the adoption institution has bad administration so that people easily take children home. In scenario theory, the audience is carrying out an anticipation process (Bordwell, 2020). The audience prepares answers to questions that arise when they find oddities in the film.

In the experience of watching a film, it is normal for questions to arise in the viewer's mind. These questions may vary depending on the information presented in the film and the subjective perspective of each viewer. In screenwriting, there is a technique of deliberately delaying providing answers to questions that arise to create suspense and surprise. As Linda

Cowgill explains, audiences often have anticipation for the resolution of the conflict, but effective scenarios provide unexpected resolutions, creating satisfying surprises (Cowgill, 2007).

Cowgill said that the character will play the rhythm of the story; the character's actions will help in building suspense, and provide unexpected surprises for the audience. According to Cowgill, this is called the relationship between anticipation and surprise. She said that creating anticipation and providing surprises is one of the jobs of a screenwriter in satisfying the audience. The scenario must be interesting, not boring, entertaining and make sure the character's actions in the story can be understood by the audience. For that, the scenario should not provide too much information to the audience because it makes the scenario story easy to predict by the audience. According to him, a good scenario story is one that influences the audience. A story that makes the audience always want to guess the unanswered problems and is in front of the character in resolving the conflict. The audience has anticipation of the resolution of the conflict but the scenario story provides something else in resolving the conflict so that it creates a surprise for the audience.

However, it is important to note that while a delay in answers is acceptable, ultimately the questions must be answered to maintain the audience's satisfaction and trust in the narrative (Martin, 2015). Donald Spoto said suspense is the audience's emotional reaction to the characters resulting from delaying or withholding information from the film's story. According to him, suspense can work by involving the protagonist and opposition characters (Spoto, 2010).

The statement is reinforced by Robert

McKee who said that suspense can create curiosity and attention in the audience about the film's story. Suspense can be done by delaying information. According to him, 90% of films use suspense in their stories. The screenwriter does this because suspense can make the audience empathize with the characters. He continued to empathize with the audience by searching throughout the film to obtain pending information. According to him, when the audience does this, the suspense in the story will cause anxiety (McKee, 1997).

McKee gives an example of suspense in a drama film in Michael Curtiz's work entitled *Casablanca* (1942). In the film, much information is withheld from the audience. This is exemplified by McKee in the first act of the film. The audience is not told what anxiety Rick's character is experiencing. Information is only given through the character Yvone (a girl who was rejected by Rick) and the conversation of the character Renault. When the character Ilsa appears and her relationship with Rick, the audience only gets information about the reason Rick rejected Yvone. McKee continues that the audience only finds out the real relationship between Rick and Ilsa at the end of the first act during the flashback scene. In that scene, the audience is given information about Rick's love affair with Ilsa while in Paris. According to McKee, suspense in drama films can be applied by delaying information and giving it to the audience slowly before it is finally revealed.

Several scenes later, new information emerges that it turns out Syafin has a peanut allergy. This allergy turned out to be at an acute stage where he could faint if he ate the wrong food. Syafin had to be taken to hospital because of the allergy. This information made the audience even more surprised. There are more and more audience questions. How is it possible that

a child with a health condition that is at risk of being fatal can be easily adopted by poor people who cannot afford rent or even a hospital?

The author's increasing number of questions brought the suspension of disbelief process to an end. The author thought this episode has a logical flaw and reduces their interest in continuing to watch. At this point, Coleridge's theory of suspension of disbelief has been proven. This series of scenes and questions proves that there is a time for audience awkwardness and should not be left for too long without an answer.

The arising questions haven't stopped. There is a scene where Iyos, Ipah and Syafin are buried by an avalanche of rubbish. Using human logic, they should have died. However, they instead moved to a room in a luxurious house. In that room there is a house certificate in their name which indicates that the house belongs to them. The luxury house does not raise any questions because from the beginning of the story it has been informed that Iyos and Ipah can get luxuries including a house. In short, their dream of getting wealth has been achieved. The audience was not happy but instead asked how they could get to the house? With technology? Or by miracle? Moreover, the house is shown as a reality which can be interpreted as meaning that Iyos and Ipah are not living in a dream or magic world. This means that the house is as real as most people's houses. At this stage, the audience needs clarity so that they can continue watching the film without any further distractions in their minds.

Filmmakers are allowed to create any scene, but that doesn't mean they are free from the obligation to explain the logical consequences of this creativity. They have to be careful with all objects displayed

in the frame as they will create meaning in the mind of audiences (Tierno, 2024). The transition from the avalanche of trash to the luxury house just happens and is never explained until the end of the story. In fact, a funny thing happened when Ipah decided to go home to the hut. Ipah carried Syafin and moved from the luxury house back to the hut 'manually' a.k.a running. Leave for the luxurious house with magical help and return to the hut with a run. Next question: why did you have to run to the hut? Wouldn't it be true that if she was threatened, Ipah could run to the authorities or a known neighbor? The audience's logic is damaged. If we look at it from the theory of suspension of disbelief, it can be said that the audience's trust has been completely destroyed. No upcoming information which can restore the ruined trust.

We need defensive questions to correct this failure. Should illogical scenes not be created? Can't the story in this episode be improved? If possible, what should be done?

Delaying logic is necessary to make an interesting story. Without any suspension of logic, we may never see a film about a man who can crawl on walls after being bitten by a spider. Maybe we also won't see a human war with extraterrestrial creatures. However, delaying logic has consequences.

Coleridge said that the suspension of disbelief must be resolved immediately. In the context of the Iyos and Ipah case, the director must know what the audience thinks or questions after seeing scene after scene. The director should be ready to answer questions about the ease of the adoption process shortly after the adoption scene takes place. That is the main function of a director: to direct.

If viewed from the perspective of the

suspense of disbelief theory, there are two things that the director should pay attention to. First, the audience should not be left wondering for too long about the illogicality. Second, the director must refocus the audience and prepare for the next scene. Audience focus is part of the Director's responsibility.

When a viewer looks at an image, they try to make sense of it and when it is placed next to another image they try to make sense of the relationship between them. Beneath each is written the viewer's interpretation (Lambden, 2022).

The illogical adoption scene needs to find a solution. The author proposes several alternatives to answer the question about the adoption process being too easy. Of course, this alternative is only an example and not a requirement. The first alternative, the director can create a story that the admin who takes care of the adoption is part of Iyos and Ipah's environment. It could also be said that the admin is Iyos' brother. The admin understands the threats faced and is willing to help. The second alternative, Iyos and Ipah know the secret of the crimes committed by the admin or adoption agency so that the admin is forced to pass the adoption. The third alternative, it turns out that the admin is part of the devil's strategy which deliberately ensnares poor people who have reached a dead end.

The addition of the suggested stories will complete the mise en scene. The information will become a whole where the action and reaction are available. This formula will resolve the question (Eisenstein, 2020).

Meanwhile, in the context of the scene of moving from the avalanche of rubbish to the luxury house, the director can use the 'power' of the devil child to create a magic portal that instantly transports

them. This also shows that Syafin is a child who has magical powers. Syafin is not seen as the incarnation of Satan throughout the film. In fact, the child looked like a weak child. This magic portal could also be the answer to the suspension of disbelief from the logic that has been distorted in the previous scenes. The director was also able to show Syafin's physical changes when he transformed into a devil.

This idea is just a common visualization of demons. This is the easiest way to tell someone is evil because that is the stereotype of a demon. Audience has seen many visualizations of demons before and it helps them to acknowledge the boy character. A common symbol will make the film easier to understand (Bartesaghi, 2016).

Joko tried to explain the timeline of this anthology (CNN Indonesia, 2024). The Author was seeking additional information to answer the unresolved logic. The effort returned failed.

The Author was not alone in questioning the logic in this series. A reviewer named Yuni also suggested that the audience watch the movie a few times because the series is raising questions (Usmanda, 2024). She did not mention which scene that raises questions or whether rewatching will help answer those questions. The Author has rewatched many times and did not find the answers.

As stated in an article, a confusing or ambiguous ending can trigger debate among viewers and influence their perception of the entire film (Protheroe, 2023).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the "Orphan" episode presents a compelling yet flawed narrative that struggles to maintain the audience's

suspension of disbelief due to unresolved logical inconsistencies. The story of Iyos and Ipah adopting Syafin, a child rumored to be born of Satan, introduces mystical elements that initially captivate viewers, aligning with cultural beliefs in Indonesia about the supernatural. However, the ease of the adoption process, Syafin's undisclosed peanut allergy, and the abrupt transition from a trash avalanche to a luxurious house without explanation stretch the audience's willingness to overlook logical gaps beyond a reasonable limit. Theories from Coleridge, Cowgill, Spoto, and McKee highlight the importance of suspense and delayed information in storytelling, but they also emphasize that such delays must eventually be resolved to preserve narrative coherence and audience trust.

While the episode successfully builds anticipation, it fails to deliver satisfying surprises or explanations, leaving viewers with lingering questions that undermine their engagement. Proposed alternatives—such as tying the adoption to insider connections, blackmail, or Syafin's magical powers—demonstrate how the story could address these flaws, though these remain speculative without evidence from the creative team. Ultimately, "Orphan" serves as a case study in the delicate balance between creative liberty and logical accountability, underscoring that while audiences are willing to suspend disbelief, they require eventual clarity to sustain their investment in the narrative. Without it, as seen here, the story risks losing its emotional and intellectual impact, leaving viewers frustrated rather than fulfilled.

This research is also relevant in the context of fictional content production in the digital era, where streaming platforms such as Netflix have become the main medium for story distribution. In

the increasingly fierce competition in the entertainment industry, narrative quality and the ability to maintain audience trust are key factors in the success of a work. Therefore, learning from this analysis is not only useful for filmmakers, but also for academics, critics, and fans who want to understand more deeply the dynamics between story, logic, and audience reception.

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