



Religiosity Values: Narrative and Cinematic Analysis in Japanese Slice of Life Film *Wood Job!*

Agni Saraswati^{1*}, Nindya Galuh Fatmawati²

¹Animation Study Program, Faculty of Recorded Media Arts, Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta

²Cultural Studies Study Program, Sanata Dharma University

ABSTRACT

Being religious or “menjadi religius” is a stage above the phase of having a religion, namely “religion”. Faith and obedience to religion can be seen in the manners of daily life not only in rituals. It gives an understanding of goodness, equality, humanity, and justice for others, not only in humans but also in nature. Through its narrative and cinematic aspects, the film can provide answers to problems in life, especially regarding religious knowledge and philosophy of life. The purpose of the study is to find out how *Wood Job!* (2014) film can provide an immersive experience for the audience. The research methodology involves a multidimensional approach of filmology that includes the narrative (dialogue) and cinematic (*mise en scene*) languages to see depictions and fragments of daily humanistic life full of religious values. The theoretical approach is David Morgan’s theory of three general modes of embodiment consisting of sacred visual constructions, namely ‘the body before the image, body in the image, and body beyond the image’ in the Religious Studies. The film contains 62 scenes which have 11 scenes depicting religious values in everyday life through its dialogue and *mise en scene*. This film illustrates religious values in accordance with Shinto beliefs. The result shows ‘the body in the image’ from Yuki’s attitude and ‘the body beyond the image’ from the attitude of the people in Kamusari can be seen in 17,7% from the total scenes.

Keywords: religious; film; *Wood Job!*; narrative, cinematic

ABSTRAK

Nilai-Nilai Religiositas: Analisis Naratif dan Sinematik dalam Film Jepang *Slice of Life Wood Job!* *Being religious* atau “menjadi religius” merupakan tahap di atas fase *having religion*, yaitu “beragama”. Beriman dan ketaatan pada agama terlihat dari budi pekerti kehidupan sehari-hari tidak hanya sebatas ritual, namun dapat melahirkan pemahaman kebaikan, kesetaraan, kemanusiaan, dan keadilan kepada sesama makhluk tidak hanya pada manusia namun juga pada alam. Film, baik melalui aspek naratif maupun sinematiknya, mampu memberikan jawaban atas permasalahan hidup, khususnya pengetahuan agama dan filosofi hidup. Tujuan penelitian membedah film Jepang, bergenre drama *slice of life*, berjudul *Wood Job!* dianggap mampu memberikan pengalaman mendalam bagi penonton. Metodologi penelitian ini melibatkan pendekatan multidimensi yang mencakup bahasa naratif (dialog) dan sinematik (*mise en scene*) untuk melihat penggambaran dan penggalan kehidupan sehari-hari yang humanis sarat akan nilai religiusitas. Teori yang digunakan adalah teori religi David Morgan mengenai tiga mode umum perwujudan konstruksi visual sakral, yaitu *the body before the image*, *body in the image*, dan *body beyond the image* dalam Religious Studies. Terdapat total 62 scene yang mencakup 11 scene menggambarkan nilai religiusitas dalam keseharian melalui dialog dan *mise en scene*. Film menampilkan nilai religi yang sesuai dengan kepercayaan Shinto. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan dua mode perwujudan konstruksi visual sakral, *the*



body in the image terlihat dari sikap Yuki dan *the body beyond the image* terlihat dari sikap masyarakat yang memiliki keyakinan sama di Kamusari yang tercermin dalam 17,7% scene dari keseluruhan total scene.

Kata kunci: religius; film; Wood Job!; naratif, sinematik

1. Introduction

It is not easy to understand religion in life. One needs to be religious or “being religious” to reach that stage. People also need to have knowledge and understanding. Formal education tends to provide religious education that only prioritizes the procedures and quantity of rituals, not the quality of understanding of that religion. Growing up in the stage of having religion raises questions in the mind of the author. The main question starts from whether the chosen religion is right; how the chosen religion helps in experiencing life; and how the chosen religion opens our perspective to accept diversity without having fanaticism. Of course, one must be able to learn to be religious to answer these questions.

Being religious in Indonesian is defined as “*menjadi religius*”. It is a stage above the phase of having a religion, namely “religious”. In “becoming religious” someone who has religion will actualize his religion in everyday life. Faith and obedience to religion can be seen in the ways of daily life not only in rituals. It can give an understanding of goodness, equality, humanity, and justice for others, not only in humans but also in nature. Being religious can be practiced in daily life and it can be used to guide the mind and put values into action. It can be a process of transformation. Religious orientation can highlight life goals and offer paths that can be followed to improve the well-being of ourselves, social groups, and the world (The Religious Naturalist Association, n.d.). One must increase his knowledge and experience to reach this phase. They can study in the interreligious fields, read books and enjoy works of art.

Enjoying works of art for some people becomes a secondary or even tertiary need. Nowadays art can also be a source of answers to problems in life. It means being able to stimulate the emergence of a new understanding knowledge of religion, culture, and social life. The study will focus on film. In general, there are three types of films, namely documentaries, fiction, and experimental films (Pratista, 2008). The classification varies from drama, action, horror, and comedy genres. Young people have a big interest in watching the film, because of its ability to present narrative and cinematic aspects, which can provide a lot of experience for the audience. The film industry grows along with the easy accessibility in screening as well as online portals, more choices of the genre, and more styles of short films and feature films. The audience will experience views and attitudes from watching a film. This experience can change the audience’s attitude to be more active with issues delivered in the film. The slice of life drama genre is considered the most significant research object as it shows an immersive experience for the audience. Slice of life, which means pieces of life or fragments of life, describes the appearance of everyday experiences in arts and entertainment (“Slice of Life,” n.d.). Viewers are often drawn to locations related to their nostalgic experiences. It is a nostalgic goal that allows viewers to experience a contextual cinematic world by reliving individual memories and nostalgic values (Oh & Kim, 2020). Slice of life films, which used to be found in French films, have now developed in Asia such as Japan, Korea, and India.

The main ideas of a slice of life in Japan depict a simple life in a peaceful village, closeness to nature, cooking culture, family gatherings, family dinner and lunch, and farming activities. It drives a new phenomenon of ruralization or deurbanization among young people today. Deurbanization is population movement from cities to villages permanently or temporarily (“Deurbanization,” n.d.). This lifestyle is later known as living in the countryside. The goal is to find goodness in life, inner peace, and mental health amidst the hustle and bustle of urban life. To get a balance in life, it is necessary to

be religious. Managing mental health in highly urbanized locations, especially big cities, is challenging but exploration of green space will promote well-being (Coldwell & Evans, 2018). Attachment and sense of belonging to the hometown is related to complex patterns of family history, farm ownership and continuing familial networks (Stockdale & Ferguson, 2020). The rural area has become an essential place since it provides the world's land and water and comprises spaces for natural resource extraction, energy resource, agriculture and food production, and climate change mitigation (Gkartzios et al., 2022).

Film, through its narrative and cinematic aspects, can provide answers to problems in life, especially regarding religious knowledge and philosophy of life. In the past, religious values can be seen in the story of Jesus Christ in European and American films, the life of Hindu gods in Indian films, and Islamic stories in Middle Eastern and Indonesian films. Today this has begun to change; both directors and audience have begun to enjoy a meaningful everyday life film. Everyday things can create a sense of belonging to the audience. Paul Tillich said that from a humanistic point of view, the film can tell the human condition, and thus attention to film helps us to understand what humanity, destiny and our purpose are (Plate, 2017). The Japanese aesthetic tradition that appears in Japanese cinema differs significantly from the styles found in European and Western films (Himawan Yudhanto & Setyawan, 2024).

Religion and film are relatively new fields of scientific inquiry and are gaining increasing importance in both religious and film studies. The relationship between religion and film is as old as the history of film itself if you look at the history of film, which began with the first public screening of the Lumière brothers in December 1895. However, in the discourse of film studies itself, articles on the correlation between religion and film are rarely found. Many art schools often forget how important the study of religion or religion is in developing the narrative and cinematic aspects of an audio-visual work, especially a film. Therefore, it is necessary to study the relationship between religion and film.

The theoretical approach is David Morgan's religious theory of three general modes of embodiment in *The Look of the Sacred*. They consist of sacred visual constructions, namely 'the body before the image, body in the image, and body beyond the image'. First, the body before the image is the spatial arrangement of images, their appearance, their physical relationship with the viewer, and their distribution in visual practice. It is about the power of amulets and charms on the body (A.Orsi, 2012). Second, the body in the image is the close relationship between the body and the image in such a way that the image welcomes the habits, feelings, and expectations that the body carries to inhabit the image, that is, to know it physically. This conformity occurs through empathy and anthropomorphism. Both are ways of sensing what the other body is feeling, thinking, or meaning, although they operate in somewhat different ways (A.Orsi, 2012). Finally, I mean the body beyond the image the collective corpus, the public or social body, the nation, clan, divine or sacred community, and the larger historical entity or tradition into which viewing an image places viewers (A.Orsi, 2012). This body comes from outside the image but is evoked by the viewer's relationship to the image, which brings the viewer into a relationship with the transcendent. This form of visual presence may be temporary or lasting. A cult image, object, or space can withstand the presence of a deity in a fixed way, or a sacred one can be temporarily resurrected in ritual performance. The images establish the viewer's relationship with subtle entities such as apparitions, dreams, mythical pasts, or apocalyptic futures; or they essentially evoke noncorporeal realities such as nations, societies, or spirits. Patriotic ceremonies, which easily become sacred phenomena in civil religion, offer an example of the embodiment of performative images of the immaterial (A.Orsi, 2012). The theory of religion by S.Brent Plate and Sokyō Ono will be used to support the analysis.

The study aims to find out what and how religious values are delivered in the dialogue and mise en scene in this film. The study aims to find out how *Wood Job!* (2014) film can provide an immersive experience for the audience. The theoretical approach will be referred to as David Morgan's theory of three general modes of embodiment consisting of sacred visual constructions, namely 'the body before the image, body in the image, and body beyond the image' (A.Orsi, 2012).

2. Literature Review

There are two interesting research about this film. Alria Puspitasari did research entitled *Tindak Tutur Imperatif dalam Film Wood Job! Karya Shinobu Yaguchi (Sociopragmatic studies)* in 2018. She examined the speech acts based on the sociocultural, Spatio-temporal, situational, and textual contexts of a speech community, divided into five social domains, namely: the realm of education; the realm of work; the realm of friendship; social domain; and family realm. The results of the study showed that there are two kinds of imperative forms, namely formal forms (related to structural characteristics) and imperative sociopragmatic forms (related to speech meanings) (Puspitasari, 2018).

Another research was done by Raras Arum Wulandari who wrote *Gambaran Nilai Budaya dan Kearifan Lokal dalam Film Wood Job!* in 2019. She focused on the overview of cultural values and local wisdom in this film by using the semiotics model of Roland Barthes. This research is expected to broaden the Indonesian people to further the preservation of nature, using natural resources wisely (Wulandari, 2019). Both studies have similarities to this study. Puspitasari's research also examines the dialogue presented by the characters. Wulandari's research also explores cultural values. This previous research shows that there is no research that specifically examines the religiosity in the film Wood Job! by using religion theory.

3. Methods

The research methodology involves a multidimensional approach of filmology that includes the narrative (dialogue) and cinematic (*mise en scene*) languages to see depictions and fragments of daily humanistic life full of religious values. Narrative analysis is a common method used for analyzing films which involves breaking down the film's structure into various elements, such as plot, character, and theme. By examining these elements, it is possible to gain insight into how the story unfolds, the motivations of the characters, and the themes explored in the film. When analyzing the plot, the study will identify the film's structure, including the beginning, middle, and end as well as considering the conflict, climax, and resolution of the story. It will show how the story is organized and how the message is delivered through dialogue. Cinematography analysis, on the other hand, involves examining the film's visual elements and for this paper, the *mise en scene* will be the main part to be explored. By analyzing these aspects, the study will examine how visual languages create a specific mood or atmosphere (Pratista, 2008). Meanwhile, it will focus on how each scene illustrates specific ideas to the audience from both elements.

The study will use qualitative research that emphasizes the search for meaning, understanding, concepts, characteristics, symptoms, symbols, and descriptions of a phenomenon; multi-method focus, natural and holistic, prioritizing quality, using several methods and presented in a narrative (Yusuf, 2019).

The stages of qualitative research conducted by researchers are as follows. First, data collection starts by conducting literature studies and gathering relevant data and sources related to Wood Job!, Japanese

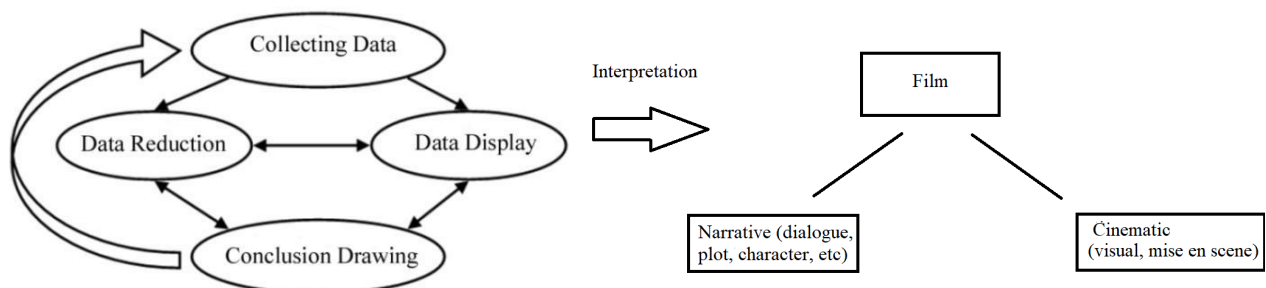


Figure 1: Qualitative research (Source: (Yusuf, 2019) (left) and Narrative and Cinematic Analysis Method (Source: (Pratista, 2008) (right)

culture and religiosity as well as slice of life film. In addition, the observation is done by watching films and identifying the significant scenes containing religious values in Wood Job! film. Second, data reduction begins by selecting an object sample. The data of the 11 selected scenes has been obtained by using the purposive sampling method.

Third, the data display begins by identifying the internal elements of the film which includes the selection of scenes at the beginning, middle, and end which reflect the values. The main consideration is the scene contains religious values that can be seen from its narrative elements (dialogue) and cinematic elements (mise en scene) in the Wood Job! film. It ends by selecting the 6 best scenes from the 11 selected scenes. Finally, conclusions will be drawn by analyzing the narrative and cinematic languages of these scenes. The theoretical approach is David Morgan's theory of three general modes of embodiment consisting of sacred visual constructions, namely 'the body before the image, body in the image, and body beyond the image' in the Religious Studies.

4. Results

Wood Jobs! (2014), a Japanese comedy-drama film directed by Shinobu Yaguchi, is an adaptation novel "*Kamusari naa naa Nichijō*" by Shion Miura. The main casts are Shota Sometani, Masami Nagasawa, and Hideaki Itō. The film was released on May 10, 2014 ("Wood Job!," n.d.). It depicts an isolated village in Mie prefecture and Gifu prefecture, Kansai region of Honshu. A city located in the mountains and surrounded by forest. The story begins when a high school student, Yuki Hirano (Shota Sometani), fails his exam and is dumped by his girlfriend. One day, he accidentally sees a photo of a pretty girl, Naoki Ishii (Masami Nagasawa), on the cover of a magazine. The headline is "*Come Work with Us, Green Trainees*", which offers a training program as a forester. He decides to join the 30-day training program. It is mentioned that everyone who passes the prohibition will be employed as a forester with a probationary period of one year. As a slacker from the first day of the training, he tries to give up and run away a couple of times but finally, he passes the training. Then he works at a company that used Naoki as a model, the Nakamura Company in Kamusari village. Kamusari is a remote village on the mountain. Life is even more difficult than before. The probationary program is harder than the training period; in addition, he must stay at Yuki's house, the instructor who is known as a tough guy. Day after day Yuki begins to get used to the job. He gets enlightenment and learns exemplary, hard work, and respect for others and nature from the forester.

The duration of the film is 1 hour and 56 minutes. It contains 62 scenes. 11 scenes depict religious values in everyday life through its dialogue and mise en scene. The chosen scenes are as follows.

- a. The scene at 00:02:16-00:04:02 shows the main character Yuki Hirano finding a magazine that offers a forester training program. He takes a train to join the program.
- b. The scene at 00:10:21 shows the second day of the training program
- c. The scene at 00:26:10-00:26:30 shows the first day Yuki starts to work at the Nakamura tree company for 1 year.
- d. The scene at 00:29:11 shows Yuki and Nakamura company workers going home after cutting down an old tree
- e. The scene at 00:57:45-00:58:30 shows Yuki, Seiichi Nakamura and Yoki on their way home from the wood auction
- f. The scene at 01:04:48-01:05:10 shows Yuki taking water from the river
- g. The scene at 01:16:20 shows people from Kamusari discussing the festival
- h. The scene at 01:18:46 shows Yuki, Yoki and the children playing by the river in the summer
- i. The scene at 01:22:19-01:24:00 shows all foresters in Kamusari gathering to look for the missing grandson of the village chief

- j. The scene at 01:28:13 shows Naoki visiting Yuki after being bitten by a snake on his way to save the missing child
- k. The scene at 01:35:35-01:43:54 shows the First Great Festival in Kamusari

5. Discussions

There will be 6 selected scenes from the 11 scenes to be analyzed using David Morgan's theory. They are considered important stages from their narrative structure pattern, in the beginning, middle and closing. At this stage, the main and supporting actors, protagonists and antagonists, problems and objectives, as well as the time and location aspects of the story are usually defined (Rodney, n.d.). The beginning is the preliminary stage to be the most critical point in a film story because this is where everything begins.

5.1. The Beginning: Empathy



Figure 2: Scenes at 00:02:16 - 00:04:02 (Source: personal screenshot from the film, 2025)

Breakdown analysis	
Scene	00:02:16 - 00:04:02 (beginning)
Narrative languages through the dialogue	Yuki : I don't want to spend next year in a cram school. Friend : But why forestry? Yuki : It's a man's work. It's green. It's good for the planet.
Cinematic / Mise en scene	a) Yuki was so gloomy. The mood is sad with a dark tone. Medium shot and long shot. b) The visual showed the bright white light when he found the magazine from the shop. Yuki smiled and felt happy. c) Yuki talked to his friend on the phone on the way to the camp by train.
Description	It shows Yuki Hirano noticing a pretty girl on the cover of a magazine with the caption "Come Work with Us". It offers a forester training program. It shows that he finds a solution to his problem. He decides to do a positive thing instead of waiting for university exams for a year.
Concept	Empathy

Empathy according to Morgan is one of the important operations in the way to feel what the body feels (A.Orsi, 2012) . The *mise en scene* that can be seen in this part is how the main character, Yuki, unconsciously finds a positive solution for his failure. From David Morgan's theory, this action is a reflection of the body in the image. This scene is a response to the relationship between the mind and heart. It creates an action to help oneself with the events he experienced. It can be called empathy. This attitude does not always have to be dealing with others but can be towards oneself as Yuki did.

5.2. Immortality and the Unseen

The middle part mostly contains the efforts of the main character to solve the problem. It is at this stage that the storyline changes direction caused by unexpected actions from the main or supporting characters. This action will create conflict and there are three scenes that will be selected. Yuki has passed the training. He will start working at the Nakamura company for 1 year. On the first day of arriving at Kamusari village, Yuki is immediately invited to work with Nakamura's boss, Seiichi Nakamura.



Figure 3: Scenes at 00:26:10 - 00:26:30 (Source: personal screenshot from the film, 2025)

Breakdown analysis

Scene	00:26:10 - 00:26:30 (middle)
Narrative languages through the dialogue	No dialogue
Cinematic / Mise en scene	a) The mood is intense with a neutral tone. Medium Close Up and Extreme Long Shot. b) Yuki, Seiichi, and Yoki are driving across the forest to cut down the falling tree that blocks the road. Before entering the forest, Seiichi and Yoki pay homage to the forest God. c) In this scene, the statue is placed on the edge of the bridge before entering the forest.
Description	Seiichi and Yoki have a big respect for the divine. Yuki sees what they are doing but he does not care about it.
Concept	Existence of the divine

These scenes show the body beyond the image. The embodied image is shown by Seiichi and Yoki who spontaneously pay homage to the sacred stone, something that symbolizes the existence of the divine. As is known in Japan, there are many statues of gods and goddesses, usually made of stone carved

with various shapes and expressions. The stone is thought to be from the incarnation of the spirit that guards the sacred place. As is known in the concept of Shinto belief, the Japanese consider nature as the abode of Kami (gods) (Ono, 1962). In this scene, a performative image of the immaterial happens for Seiichi and Yuki (A.Orsi, 2012) . Yuki cannot feel it because he still doesn't think that respecting nature is important. Yuki's disrespectful attitude ends up causing a lot of friction with the other forester.

Yuki's atheist attitude as a young person is caused by the absence of religious teachings in Japan. Referring to Fernando M. Basabe's research entitled *Japanese Youth Confronts Religion: A Sociological Survey*, the teaching of religion in schools was forbidden in the country, and in their twelve years of study, before reaching university level, they didn't have any religion class (Basabe, 1967). From Basabe's research, it can be concluded that Yuki's attitude is reasonable. Yuki lives in an urban area, so he does not understand the value of this divinity.

The second scene is found in the middle stage. Minute 00:57:45-00:58:30 shows Yuki, Seiichi Nakamura, and Yuki are on their way home from the wood auction. Yuki told Seiichi if they cut down all the trees on the mountain, he would be rich. Yuki replied that "the trees are not just for us. What will be left for the next generation if you sell all our ancestral trees?"



Figure 4: Scenes at 00:57:45 - 00:58:30 (Source: personal screenshot from the film, 2025)

Breakdown analysis	
Scene	00:57:45 - 00:58:30 (middle)
Narrative languages through the dialogue	Yuki : Clear the mountain and you'd be millionaires! Why are you driving this? You could have a Mercedes! Seiichi : What's left for the next generations if we sell all our ancestors' trees. When the time comes to judge our work, we'll all be dead.
Cinematic / Mise en scene	a) The mood is humorous with a neutral tone. Medium Close Up. b) Yuki, Seiichi, and Yuki are having a conversation while driving back home.
Description	Seiichi and Yuki have a strong awareness to share prosperity with the next generation. Yuki has material desire but is trying to understand this value.
Concept	Control the desire for material things

Seiichi ends the conversation by saying "if we only think about the personal benefits of our work cutting down that tree, we will all die." This dialogue clearly shows how the body beyond the image is produced. Seiichi and Yuki in the scene are depicted as religious people. They show that people must

be able to control the lust of the world to create a balance in life. They must be able to live in harmony with nature and the divine. In accordance with Shinto teachings, people must be able to control the desire for material things not overdo it. Shinto doesn't look down on material things. Shinto does not regard the absence of material things as admirable, nor does Shinto regard the desire for things as evil. On the contrary, Shinto regards such desires as a natural development of life as worship of Kami (Ono, 1962). Therefore, if material desires are related to Kami, and for the sake of the general welfare, it is good and should be blessed by Kami (Ono, 1962). People who seek and use wealth for selfish purposes or in a way that harms others or nature are not blessed by Kami. In this scene, Yuki's atheism begins to fade, he starts to think about what Seiichi and Yoki said.



Figure 5: Scenes at 01:04:48 - 01:05:10 (Source: personal screenshot from the film, 2025)

Breakdown analysis	
Scene	01:04:48 - 01:05:10 (middle)
Narrative languages through the dialogue	No dialogue
Cinematic / Mise en scene	a) The mood is happy with a neutral tone. Medium Close Up and Medium Long Shot. b) Yuki took water from the river after having lunch with Naoki. Before taking water in the river, he pays homage to the statue and gives his rice as an offering.
Description	Yuki tries to understand and accept all the things outside of himself and appreciates them.
Concept	Existence of the divine

The third scene is found in the middle stage. This scene shows the journey to the resolution where Yuki's attitude has reached a point of inner turmoil. This scene shows how Yuki transforms to perform the body beyond the image stage by performing a spontaneous action. Before taking water in the river, he pays homage to the statue and gives his rice as an offering. This scene depicts the embodiment of performative images from the immaterial.

5.3. Enlightenment

Closing is the final stage of the story, which is the culmination of the final conflict or confrontation (Rodney, n.d.). It is at this point that the film's story reaches its highest point of tension. This stage is the moment the conflict ends and there are two important scenes in this stage.



Figure 6: Scenes at 01:22:19 - 01:24:00 (Source: personal screenshot from the film, 2025)

Breakdown analysis	
Scene	01:22:19 - 01:24:00 (middle)
Narrative languages through the dialogue	Yuki : The Goddess is telling us to stay out Yuki : Naoki? Is that you? Kenji! I've found him!
Cinematic / Mise en scene	a) The mood is intense with a mystery atmosphere and dark tone. Medium Close Up. b) The men in Kamasari village gathering to look for the missing grandson of the village chief, Kenji Yamane. According to the Kamasari people, it is forbidden to enter the forest during that sacred day. On that day the Goddess is counting the trees so that whoever entered the forest would be lost. The men who enter the forest must leave all their weapons. This action is intended to surrender to what will happen in the forest.
Description	Yuki begins to understand what the connection with the transcendent is and believes it to be the solution in life.
Concept	Enlightenment

In this scene, Yuki experiences a resolution process in his life journey. He was a figure who did not respect nature and was considered an outsider who could bring curses to Kamasari village. In this scene, he emerges as a hero because he can find Kenji Yamane, the missing child. He gets help from the Goddess of the forest. The Goddess's help is a response to Yuki's attitude when he left the rice offering on the riverside statue the other day. At this stage, Yuki and the audience have experienced the body beyond the image process. Yuki begins to see nature (forest) as an important part of life. Sokyō Ono

revealed that religious people are reminded of the closeness of Kami (gods) just by looking at the forest area. In addition, the close relationship between trees and temples can be seen in the use of the ancient word meaning “forest” (mori) to designate a temple, and the word meaning “shelter” Kami (Ono, 1962).



Figure 7: Scenes at 01:35:35 - 01:43:54 (Source: personal screenshot from the film, 2025)

Breakdown analysis

Scene	01:35:35 - 01:43:54 (ending)
Narrative languages through the dialogue	Seiichi : May your spirit flow in smooth tranquility for ever more. This we most humbly ask. May our children prosper! May our crops grow! Villagers: Your blessing be upon me!
Cinematic / Mise en scene	a) The mood is intense with a dark tone. In the last scene, the mood is happy with a bright tone. b) Combination of Medium Close Up and Extreme Long Shot. c) Sound: Japanese Worship Song. d) The men in Kamusari village gathering dressed in mawashi (sumo pants) in celebration of the First Great Festival. Before starting to cut down the trees, the men make offerings and pray to the Goddess of the Mountain. This is a form of respect and gratitude for their prosperity and plants that grow well in their forest.
Description	Collective involvement of the body, divine or sacred community along with the influence of historical entities performed by Yuki and villagers.
Concept	Enlightenment

In this scene, the oldest sacred tree cutting ritual is performed. The tree was planted by the ancestors of the Kamusari people in the Meiji era, 105 years ago. The First Great Festival is held every 48 years. This big and sacred ritual ceremony is held to honor the Goddess of the Mountain. After the sun rises, all men begin the tree-cutting process which begins by sprinkling salt and sake around the tree. To respect and not injure the Goddess of the Mountain, the cutting down is done manually by using simple tools. After being cut down, the tree trunks are trimmed and then launched down the mountainside via a wooden bridge that has been prepared. All women of Kamusari village wait for the tree trunk to be able to touch the big hole down the hill. This ritual is done to get the Goddess's blessing for life.

The stage of interpreting the body beyond the image in this scene involves more aspects. The First Great Festival is a phenomenon of the embodiment of performative images of the immaterial, born from the collective involvement of the body, divine or sacred community along with the influence of historical

entities. Tree worship is a very common ritual in Shinto. Shinto believers find that the presence of trees is an aid in their approach to Kami. There is always a special tree that is considered very sacred in a certain area. The tree is protected by a fence or a straw rope around its trunk. These trees are believed to be the special abode of some Kami. In primitive times, people believed that through such a tree, Kami's spirit could be understood; but today the tree is simply an expression of divine consciousness (Ono, 1962).

6. Conclusions

Wood Job! through its narrative elements of dialogue, cinematic, and mise en scene (acting, setting, and artistic), can display religious values in Shinto beliefs. These religious humanist values are related to David Morgan's theory in three general modes of embodiment. It consists of sacred visual constructions: the body before the image, the body in the image, and the body beyond the image (A.Orsi, 2012). From the selected scenes, there are two general modes of embodiment of sacred visual constructions that appear. They are bodies in the image which can be seen from Yuki's attitude in solving his problems in life. The body and self-experience spontaneously drive him to seek solutions with something that is beyond himself. The action taken by Yuki is a response to the relationship between his mind and heart that causes empathy, an action to help one with the events experienced. He finds enlightenment and understands the meaning of humanitarianism and religiosity. According to Basabe, some of his sources said that young Japanese feel that when they get older and experience the complexity of life, they will need religion to calm the soul. It seems that one wants to believe in God as one gets older (Basabe, 1967).

The construction of daily life in Kamusari, which is dominated by farmers and foresters, teaches them to respect nature, statues, or objects that are considered sacred and the rituals of their ancestors. The body beyond the image can be seen in the middle to last stages. It can be seen from the attitude of people who have the same beliefs in Kamusari. According to Mary Douglas, when it comes to the analytical description of ritualism, one begins to see the dramatic nature of the creation of the world. Myths and rituals assist in the creation of the world through activities that frame, exclude, focus, organize, and re-enact the elements of the known world. Douglas speaks of the function of ritual, indirectly noting the power of mythical stories: "a ritual provides a frame." The marked time or place recalls a special kind of hope and creates a mood for those who receive fantastic stories at a time (Plate, 2017). People will repeat the ritual from generation to generation to experience the same things as their ancestors.

The Kamusari people live a simple life and are full of enthusiasm. They work hard to reach the balance of physical and mental strength. Their self-awareness in restraining lust is also manifested in consistent actions. Preserving nature is an effort to create a cult space to be able to maintain the presence of Kami who is their grip in life. There is not only Kami but also the Goddess of the Mountain, the Goddess of the Sun and Jizo, and the God who protects children. This film can show polytheism which is the worship of more than one Kami or God.

At the end of the story Yuki as the main character who at the beginning of the story does not believe in actions and attitudes that are worth kindness, beauty, and justice, has gained enlightenment after seeing the lives of the Kamusari people. The daily activities of Japanese society reflect a cultural pattern that remains consistent despite environmental changes and the passage of time. This flexibility gives rise to universal values. For Western culture, these unchanging values are sometimes seen as 'the Other' due to their adaptability and strength in addressing life's challenges. It is seen that daily activity that is spontaneous but has the value of sincerity, and kindness will create beauty and will answer the question of life. At this stage, religion gives meaning to human life and explains the purpose of its existence. Basabe said that this statement presents religion in a doctrinal aspect, but religion indirectly teaches humans what their goals are, enlightens them, gives meaning to their lives, and explains the reasons for their existence (Basabe, 1967). The research shows that religious values, as it is explained by Plate and Ono, can be seen from the dialogue and mise en scene in Wood Job!

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my lecturer, Dr. Stanislaus Sunardi, for his invaluable guidance and support throughout the completion of this paper. This research received no external funding.

References

- A.Orsi, R. (Ed.). (2012). *Religious Studies*. Northwestern University.
- Basabe, F. M. (1967). *Japanese Youth Confronts Religion: A Sociological Survey*. Sophia University.
- Coldwell, D. F., & Evans, K. L. (2018). Visits to Urban Green-Space and The Countryside Associate with Different Components of Mental Well-Being and Are Better Predictors Than Perceived or Actual Local Urbanisation Intensity. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 175(November 2017), 114–122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2018.02.007>
- Deurbanization. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Counterurbanization>
- Gkartzios, M., Gallent, N., & Scott, M. (2022). A Capitals Framework for Rural Areas: ‘Place-planning’ the Global Countryside. *Habitat International*, 127(July 2022), 102625. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2022.102625>
- Himawan Yudhanto, S., & Setyawan, A. (2024). Concept (問) MA: Philosophical Identification and Analysis in Animated Films Howl’s Moving Castle. *Journal of Urban Society’s Arts*, 11(2), 77–92. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24821/jousa.v11i2>
- Oh, J. E., & Kim, K. J. (2020). How Nostalgic Animations Bring Tourists to Theme Parks: The Case of Hayao Miyazaki’s Works. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 45(August), 464–469. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2020.10.004>
- Ono, S. (1962). *Shinto; The Kami Way* (Issue 1). Tuttle Publishing Company.
- Plate, S. B. (2017). Religion and Film: Cinema and the Re-Creation of the World. In *Columbia University Press* (Second). Columbia University Press.
- Pratista, H. (2008). *Memahami Film*. Homerian Pustaka. <http://homerian.wordpress.com/2008/06/27/memahami-film-bersama-homerian-pustaka/>
- Puspitasari, N. A. (2018). *Tindak Tutur Imperatif dalam Film Wood Job! Karya Shinabu Yaguchi (Sociopragmatic studies)* [Universitas Brawijaya]. <http://repository.ub.ac.id/id/eprint/166349>
- Rodney, S. (n.d.). *Storytelling Handbook: The Basics of Storytelling*. Museweb Foundation. <https://www.museweb.us/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2-StorytellingBasics-StorytellingHandbook-v1.pdf>
- Slice of life. (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slice_of_life
- Stockdale, A., & Ferguson, S. (2020). Planning to Stay in the Countryside: The Insider-Advantages of Young Adults from Farm Families. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 78(February), 364–371. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2020.06.029>
- The Religious Naturalist Association. (n.d.). *Religious Naturalism Taking Nature to Heart: Being Religious, with Religious Responses to Nature*. <https://religiousnaturalism.org/being-religious/>
- Wood Job! (n.d.). In *Wikipedia*. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wood_Job!#cite_note-5
- Wulandari, R. A. (2019). Gambaran Nilai Budaya dan Kearifan Lokal dalam Film Wood Job! *Jurnal Ilmiah Komunikasi Makna*, 7(2), 79–96. <https://doi.org/10.30659/jikm.7.2.79-96>
- Yusuf, M. A. (2019). *Metode Penelitian: Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan Penelitian Gabungan* (5th ed.). Prenamedia Group. <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=RnA-DwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=id#v=onepage&q&f=false>