CHAPTER III

DISCUSSION

3.1. Intrinsic Analysis

3.1.1. *Apostle (2018)'s* Theme

The theme of *Apostle (2018)* is essentially about desperation, religious extremism, and the quest for redemption. The film is a slow-burning horror-thriller that follows Thomas Richardson, a man who journeys to a distant island to rescue his sister from a religious cult commanded by Prophet Malcolm. As Thomas confronts his dark background and attempts to save his sister from the cult, the film examines themes of religious extremism, desperation, and the battle for redemption. The film also contains gore and brutality, as well as a creative storyline twist that could have raised the film to a truly excellent horror-thriller.

3.1.2. Character

3.1.2.1. Thomas Richardson

In *Apostle (2018)*, Thomas Richardson plays an invader who will rescue his sister who has been kidnapped by a cult community. Throughout the story, Thomas' character develops significantly. He was put through unprecedented moral and physical testing, which transformed him into a more powerful and determined character.



Picture 3.1 Thomas Richardson (*Apostle 2018*, 00:33:23)



Picture 3.2 Thomas threatens Jeremy (Apostle 2018, 00:34:12)

In picture 3.1 was taken by using a close-up shot and picture 3.2 was taken by using a close-up shot with Dutch angle. The scene above showed Thomas and Jeremy was working on a wooden boat. Initially, Thomas wanted to bait Jeremy into telling him about the foreigner who had been taken as a hostage, but because he was insensitive, Thomas finally showed that he was an intruder to free his sister by showing Jeremy a photo. Jeremy's reaction seen was shock and panic. Jeremy wanted to make excuses but Thomas was able to threaten him by telling his secret so that Jeremy revealed the true story of what had happened on this island. This scene shows Thomas' brave character in order to free his sister from prison.

3.1.2.2. Prophet Malcolm

The scene displaying the leader's personality serves as evidence that cults are authoritarian. Malcolm is the character who is considered the leader of the cult, assisted by his two friends, Frank and Quinn, as his accomplices. The reason Malcolm was able to be made leader was because

Malcolm felt he could interact with the Goddess of Erisden Island, who was considered the 'God' of the cult.



Picture 3.3 Malcolm as Leader of Erisden (Apostle 2018, 00:15:31)



Picture 3.4 Malcolm delivered a semon at church (Apostle 2018, 00:15:53)

Malcolm: "Three brothers we became bonded by our escape. Stowaways, cast into the rough seas. Oh, the taste of the ocean beating down my throat, I shall never forget. But, nor will I the sweet, sweet sound of her voice. As she beckoned us out of the storm. She, the goddess of this island who saved us and who chose my tongue through which to speak. A man who once walked godless, she gifted me her wisdom."

(Apostle 2018, 00:15:53 – 00:17:00)

In picture 3.3 and picture 3.4 were taking by medium shot which shows the character of Malcolm as the cult leader on Erisden Island. In this scene, Malcolm creates an authoritative character as a leader who conveys good things such as miracles that occur on this island so that people don't have to worry about their lives. Behind that, Malcolm also has the opposite character from the first evidence.

In the next scene, Malcolm and his two assistants are caught off guard because the intruder is still on the loose. Malcolm and his two assistants kidnapped a girl who was Thomas's sister, Jennifer, with the aim of getting money by taking Thomas's sister as a hostage. In this scene, Malcolm goes around the residential area while carrying Jennifer to lure

Thomas into immediately identifying himself as an intruder. It can be concluded that the community in this film is indeed a cult because it has a leader where the leader acts as he pleases.





Picture 3.5 Malcolm shouted for the people of Erisden (*Apostle 2018*, 00:46:42)

Picture 3.6 Malcolm threatens to lure out the intruder (Apostle 2018, 00:47:22)

Malcolm: "People of Erisden! Hear me! The woman you see before you has broken the laws of our land! She is an agent of a dying god and a weak King. She's come here to corrupt and destroy our community! But there is another. Her kin is here also. Co-conspirator! I call to him now! Make yourself known. Make good on the debt that she owes and forgiveness shall be hers. Stay in the shadows and it be the Heathen's Stand that awaits ye both! The sands of time are sinking! Her life is in your hands!"

(*Apostle 2018*, 00:46:28 – 00:48:43)

In picture 3.5 was taking by close-up shot and picture 3.6 was taking by medium shot. These scenes show Malcolm luring Thomas to appear as an intruder who will free his prisoner. Malcolm's character in this scene is slanderous by accusing the prisoner with him of being someone who will destroy his community. Malcolm still maintained his

authoritative character as a leader but tried to be firm in front of his citizens so that they would believe what Malcolm said.

3.1.2.3. **Quinn**

Quinn in this film as Malcolm's assistant. Since the beginning of the story, the initial scene is that Quinn is just silent but has an intimidating gaze towards things he suspects. At the beginning of Quinn's scene, the antagonist character appears.





Picture 3.7 Quinn is just standing (*Apostle 2018*, 00:13:21)

(Apostle 2018, 01:31:05)

In picture 3.7 was taking by close-up shot and Dutch angle. Another picture 3.8 was taking by close-up shot shows Quinn's character as a man who is always quiet but always carries out tasks quickly. Quinn here tends to get more action near the end of the last scene where Quinn acts selfishly without caring about Malcolm's orders. In picture 3.8, Quinn performed the ritual without the permission of Malcolm as the leader so that the climax of his character is the cruellest antagonist.

3.1.3. **Setting**

3.1.3.1. Setting of Place

After watching *Apostle (2018)*, the writer finds out how a cult community in this film comes from Erisden Island where the cult community lives.



Picture 3.9 Erisden Island's view (*Apostle 2018*, 00:10:01)



Picture 3.10 Erisden Island's statue (*Apostle 2018*, 00:13:36)



Picture 3.11 Erisden Island's statue From behind (*Apostle 2018*, 00:13:39)



Picture 3.12 The Church in Erisden (Apostle 2018, 00:18:09)

In this section, there is picture 3.9 was taking by high angle which shows a view of Erisden Island as the residence of the cult community. In picture 3.10 was taking by medium shot and low angle. Another picture 3.11 was taking by medium shot and eye-level. These scenes show a statue which the writer suspects is a religious statue of the community. Apart from that, picture 3.12 was taking by low angle which shows a church as a place of worship gathering.

3.1.3.2. Setting of Time

In the setting of time there is a flashback or flashback scene where Malcolm told about how he was able to interact directly with the Goddess of Erisden Island

Malcolm: "Three brothers we became bonded by our escape. Stowaways, cast into the rough seas. Oh, the taste of the ocean beating down my throat, I shall never forget. But, nor will I the sweet, sweet sound of her voice. As she beckoned us out of the storm. She, the goddess of this island who saved us and who chose my tongue through which to speak. A man who once walked godless, she gifted me her wisdom."

(*Apostle 2018*, 00:15:53 – 00:17:00)

In this dialogue, Malcolm told how he and his two friends arrived on Erisden Island. They felt the miracle of life given by the Goddess of Erisden Island so that they could survive on the isolated island.

3.1.4. **Conflict**

3.1.4.1. Internal Conflict

There is an internal conflict in the scene where Thomas talks about his own problems with trust. He told a flashback where his back was forcibly plastered with lava in the shape of a cross by a group of Peking.

Thomas: "My faith. I once held fast a belief in the divine. Like you, I knelt before a deity. Armed with the book of Jesus Christ, I led my parish into the heart of Peking. And we showed them the glory and the love of God himself and then they showed us the Devil." (Apostle 2018, 01:13:20)

As a result of the incident that Thomas experienced because of the Peking group, he became distrustful of religion. He felt that God really didn't exist because he didn't show his power to help Thomas. Thomas

really tries to live a quiet life even though he still has traumatic religious beliefs.

3.1.4.2. External Conflict

In picture 3.13 was taking by close-up shot, which shows Queen's conflict with her daughter, Ffion, where Quinn finds out that her daughter is pregnant. Quinn does not approve of his daughter's relationship with Jeremy, resulting in conflict between father and daughter.





Picture 3.13 Quinn interrogated to Ffion (Apostle 2018, 01:24:12)

Picture 3.14 Quinn and Ffion fought (Apostle 2018, 01:23:43)

In picture 3.14 was taking by close-up shot, the conflict between the two was fierce where Quinn forced Ffion to abort her pregnancy. Meanwhile, Ffion tried to avoid her father's attacks. Because Quinn's strength was stronger, Quinn finally succeeded in ending the violent conflict by killing Ffion with the baby in her womb.

3.2. Extrinsic Analysis

3.2.1. The Creeds of the Cult

3.2.1.1. The Implementation of the Prohibition of Religious Norms

This section showed the proof that cult still applied the rule of religious norms by Emile Durkheim (see in page 19). The proof can be proven in the *Apostle (2018)* movie where Quinn's character is furious when he found out that her daughter, Ffion, was caught pregnant out of wedlock. In picture 3.15 was taking by close-up, Quinn interrogates her daughter, Ffion, because he finds out that Ffion is pregnant when his daughter is not married. Quinn showed his anger when Ffion admitted her pregnancy with Jeremy and always defended Jeremy, who is the son of her father's best friend, Frank.





Picture 3.15 Quinn interrogated to Ffion (*Apostle 2018*, 01:24:12)

Picture 3.16 Quinn and Ffion fought (Apostle 2018, 01:23:43)

Quinn: "Who put that inside you?"

"You have no idea what monstrosity grows inside you!"
"This is an abomination! A bastard mongoloid breed!"

"To be born in lumps of twisted flesh, no mother would ever call her own."

(*Apostle 2018*, 01:23:43 – 01:25:01)

So in the scene in picture 3.16 was taking by close-up shot, Quinn and Ffion had a big fight because Ffion tried to ask her father to understand her situation. Quinn clearly does not accept babies born out of wedlock because Quinn strictly adheres to the teachings of a cult that does not act outside the boundaries of religious norms. This shows that cult teachings can still be considered normal for religious norms in general.

3.2.1.2. The Use of Symbols

In this section, the author proves that religious symbols in the cult environment can be interpreted using cult theory in sociology by Emile Durkheim (see page 19). The community in *Apostle (2018)* can be proven to be a cult group based on the following evidence



Picture 3.17 Erisden Island's Statue Picture 3.18 Erisden Island's Statue

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Picture 3.18 Erisden Island's Statue From behind

(Apostle 2018, 00:13:36)

(Apostle 2018, 00:13:39)



Picture 3.19 The Church in Erisden (*Apostle 2018*, 00:18:09)

The first evidence is seen in a scene that only focuses on the cinematic film where there is a religious statue that is similar to a generally known religious statue found in picture 3.17 (was taking by medium shot and low angle) and picture 3.18 (was taking by medium shot and eye level). Apart from that, the image of a church in picture 3.19 was taking by full shot and low angle which indicates that the cult has a place of worship.

The second piece of evidence found was that there was a statue which was not explained in dialogue, which was located in an area where not all residents could visit it. It is located near the cave and there is a statue. Delving deeper into the cave, there is a painting that depicts a super character that can control Erisden Island.



Picture 3.20 The Statue with 'The Exodus' (Apostle 2018, 00:16:19)



Picture 3.21 Cave Painting

(Apostle 2018, 01:09:57)

When Malcolm is telling his story in the sermon, there is a flashback scene where Malcolm, Frank, and Quinn are walking on the island during a winter storm. The flashback scene shows a statue with 'The Exodus' word in picture 3.20 was taking by close-up shot which is interpreted as 'The Island Goddess'. Likewise with the paintings in the cave in picture 3.21 was taking by medium shot and eye level, the

paintings show gods being worshiped over fire and being given sacrificial offerings in return for abundant harvests.

3.2.2. The Causes to Join the Cult in *Apostle (2018)*

3.2.2.1. The Promises to Alleviate Poverty

The writer analyses why some people join communities in *Apostle* (2018) by applying Alexandra Stein's brainwashing theory (see page 23). As you can see from the two pictures below, there are many people who will carry out the process of registering new members



Picture 3.22 The little girl hugged woman (*Apostle 2018*, 00:11:05)

Note that your sensors

Picture 3.23 Verification of the new members to Erisden community (Apostle 2018, 00:12:05)

Bell ringer: "Name?"

The woman: "Elaine Williams."

Bell ringer: "Age?"

The woman: "Thirty eight."
Bell ringer: "Skill or trade?"
The woman: "Seamstress."

Bell ringer: "Tell of your donation."

The woman: "I offer my undying devotion."
Bell ringer: "..drop of my blood to Our Lady."

The woman: "As we should."

Bell ringer: "Criminal record?"

The woman: "Vagrancy."

Bell ringer: "Worry not, Elaine. You'll want for nothing here. Please

take your receptacle."

(*Apostle 2018*, 00:11:33 – 00:12:05)

In picture 3.22 which was taking by full shot, there are migrants entering the Erisden area, and a woman named Elaine is happy when she sees a little girl approaching and hugging her as if they miss each other. After that, there is a scene of Bell Ringer's dialogue as a new member recorder with Elaine and a few questions. In the final question-and-answer session in picture 3.23 which was taking by medium shot, the bell ringer said that Elaine would not want anything at Erisden because she interpreted that everything she needed was always there at Erisden. This shows a cult brainwashing scene from the bell ringer's perspective as a community officer with its members. So it can be concluded that the woman often worship at the Erisden Island church but is not yet a member of the cult community. The brainwashing shown in this scene is transparent.

Apostle (2018) movie tells about Thomas and his mission to save his sister, Jennifer, who is kidnapped by Erisden cult community officers and then taken hostage so that Thomas will give them some money to free Jennifer. However, with Thomas' ingenuity, he exchanged the special mark with someone else's so that other people who were not intruders were tortured bloodily. In that dialogue, Malcolm just found out that his men caught the wrong intruders, so Malcolm was forced to ask Quinn to kill his own members. Malcolm tries to calm his members, who are in pain after being tortured by some of the community's security guards. This scene is still brainwashing because, in his dialogue, Malcolm shows an implied

message that his members will be fine even though Quinn ends up slashing his neck.

Malcolm: "My brother. I have promised you a life of riches without the icy sting of suffering, greed, and injustice.

And yet here you are and there you suffer."

(Apostle 2018, 00:19:28 – 00:19:58)

In that dialogue, Malcolm just found out that his men caught the wrong intruders, so Malcolm was forced to ask Quinn to kill his own members. Malcolm tries to calm his members, who are in pain after being tortured by some of the community's security guards. This scene is still brainwashing because, in his dialogue, Malcolm shows an implied message that his members will be fine even though Quinn ends up slashing his neck.

The next proof is about Malcolm who plays character as a cult leader or is referred to as "Prophet Malcolm". The reason of "Prophet Malcolm" name is because Malcolm told how he was made a mediator from The Goddess of Erisden Island for all members of the cult.

Malcolm: "Three brothers we became bonded by our escape. Stowaways, cast into the rough seas. Oh, the taste of the ocean beating down my throat, I shall never forget. But, nor will I the sweet, sweet sound of her voice. As she beckoned us out of the storm. She, the goddess of this island who saved us and who chose my tongue through which to speak. A man who once walked godless, she gifted me her wisdom."

(*Apostle 2018*, 00:15:53 – 00:17:00)

Brainwashing is done as in that dialogue, where Malcolm told himself as a mediator between 'The Goddess' and his followers, so that the

way to attract new members to join this cult is by inviting worship together, then Malcolm and his colleagues act by brainwashing a miracle story that can attract the interest of potential new members.

3.2.2.2. The Perspective to Use Natural Resources

In discussing this point, the writer found several scenes that could show that the people on Erisden Island featured in *Apostle (2018)* movie had been brainwashed by the safe, comfortable and peaceful environment of Erisden Island linked to Alexandra Stein's statement (see in page 23). The first proof is in the scene in picture 3.24 was taking by close up shot, where the new arrivals from the Erisden people are on their way to the island. A woman sitting opposite Thomas felt strange because this was the first time she had seen Thomas visiting Erisden Island.



Picture 3.24 Member of the Congregation (*Apostle 2018*, 00:06:48)

(*Apostle 2018*, 00:07:13)



Picture 3.26 Two people talked about 'The Goddess' (*Apostle 2018*, 00:07:30)

The Woman : "Brother."
Thomas : "Sister."

The Woman : "Forgive me, it's just, I don't recall having seen

you at anyprayer meetings."

Thomas : "Nor I you. Some happenstance?"

The Woman : "Quite. Only"

Thomas : "Only we meet now."

The Woman : "We do."

(*Apostle 2018*, 00:06:48 – 00:07:08)

(The lamb was thrown by the man who is beside the woman)

The Man : "It was as intended. Only She decides whether to

give or take. We do not intervene."

Other people : "Amen."

(*Apostle 2018*, 00:07:30 – 00:07.39)

After the interaction scene between Thomas and a woman is finished, the scene of the sheep falling and getting stuck in the ship in picture 3.25 was taking by close up shot and eye level which is shown due to a rainstorm that attacked their sea voyage to Erisden Island. Thomas helped the lamb, which surprised the people around him so much that a man who was sitting beside the woman immediately took over the sheep and then threw it into the sea. In picture 3.26 was taking by close up shot, the man said about The Goddess of Erisden Island's decision regarding the lamb that, as her congregation, there is no need to reach out to animals, and the people around him agree about that. By looking at Thomas'

interactions with some of the people around him, it can be seen that they are a congregation on Erisden Island who often go back and forth just to carry out worship there until they finally decide to live on Erisden Island permanently to become part of the Erisden Island community.

In next proof, Malcolm becomes aware of intruders on the island of Erisden after an incident where cult officers kidnap a family member for ransom. The cult officers were fooled by Thomas' actions so they mistakenly tortured another person who was one of Malcolm's loyal followers. Therefore Malcolm asked the new members to return to the church to check who the intruder was by continuing to recite the contents of the book that Malcolm made as a prophet. Before Thomas was revealed as the intruder, it turned out that one person immediately attacked Malcolm with his knife, but in picture 3.27 which was taking by medium shot and Dutch angle, Thomas immediately blocked the intruder so that Thomas was accidentally hit by the attack.



Picture 3.27 Thomas blocked a man who attacked Malcolm (*Apostle 2018*, 00:40:58)





Picture 3.28 Malcolm slashed his hand

(Apostle 2018, 00:42:34)

Picture 3.29 Malcolm pressed his bloody hand into Thomas's

(Apostle 2018, 00:42:39)

Malcolm: "If the knife of that bastard cut just one of us, we all bleed together. If your blood has been shed in my name, I shed mine for you. I'm indebted to you, brother. Your act of bravery shall not go unrewarded. You have my word."

(*Apostle 2018*, 00:42:24 – 00:42:44)

Malcolm, who witnessed Thomas' attempt to protect him, as picture 3.28 and 3.29 which were taking by medium shot and low angle, he immediately slashed his own hand with a knife and then held Thomas' hand with blood flowing profusely. In Malcolm's dialogue, this includes brainwashing Malcolm, who is willing to make Malcolm cut his hand to show Thomas' appreciation for protecting him.

The brainwashes that the cult leaders have applied in *Apostle* (2018) as a way of attracting new members are dangerous acts as the application of brainwashing in the film is linked to the abuse of ritual by

volunteering blood. Blood in a cultural context is no stranger, especially regarding rituals. This film shows more blood scenes so that it can bring up the problem of blood fluid with the rituals contained in *Apostle (2018)* movie. The writer finds several meanings of the bloody scenes that are done consciously which are related to the ritual purpose of the Erisden Island cult version.

Blood as a supplement to the need of 'The Goddess' in the Erisden Island cult is because the writer found the reason why the cult member had to slash their own hand. In this section, writer used ritual theory by Rene Girard (2005) to analyses the meaning of blood to ritual in this film. This is due to the lack of land fertility for livestock feed, so that when livestock give birth, the results are not good.



Picture 3.30 Erisden failed the goat breeding (*Apostle 2018*, 00:06:33)



Picture 3.31 Sign of Erisden's barren harvest (Apostle 2018, 00:18:27)

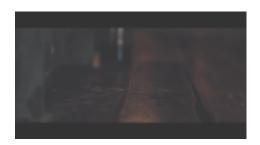
In picture 3.30 was taking by medium shot and then picture 3.31 was taking by close up shot and Dutch angle, Malcolm and Quinn are trying to help with the goat breeding process. When the breeding process was complete, the breeding products failed. By linking attachments to Stein's theory, if livestock breeding is bad, then the condition of Erisden's land will slowly become barren and the providers of life sources will

decrease, so this is the reason community officials try to kidnap a member of a rich family in order to get money to meet the needs of the Erisden people.

To deal with the failure of Erisden's livestock breeding, in picture 3.32 which was taking by medium shot and high angle, the community was asked to donate their own blood and then distribute it on the floors of their respective houses.



Picture 3. 32 The woman slashed her hand (*Apostle 2018*, 00:24:22)



Picture 3.33 Blood disappear slowly (Apostle 2018, 00:28:39)

Certainly by brainwashing them, that's easy to make they slash their own hands in order to drain fresh blood onto the floor. This film is fictional, so when blood is poured onto the floor, over time the liquid traces of blood disappear automatically as in picture 3.33 which was taking by close up shot and high angle, because they were absorbed by the Island Goddess Erisden as a food supplement

Also there is a scene in picture 3.34 was taking by close up shot. Thomas is trapped in a sewer whose water is mixed blood of animals. It was in the sewers that 'The Goddess' appeared in her true form. It can be seen in the scene, 'The Goddess' likes Thomas's blood so that when she met, she immediately chased Thomas to get his blood even though it

ended in failure. So, apart from animal blood, 'The Goddess' really needs
Thomas's blood to awaken her power to control the fertility of the land of
Erisden.



Picture 3.34 The real looks of "The Goddess" (*Apostle 2018*, 01:07:44)



Picture 3.5 Malcolm gives his blood to "The Goddess" (Apostle 2018, 01:11:00)

Malcolm: "You showed yourself. To him. Why? He's not to be trusted. He won't worship you as I. Ah. No more shall you poison our crop. I swear you shall starve, lest you give us pure harvest!"

(Apostle 2018, 01:10:16 – 01:11:00)

In addition, there is also a scene of Malcolm slashing his own palm which aims to give 'The Goddess' a lot of blood as a supplement to further revive Erisden Island with the power of 'The Goddess'. From that dialogue, Malcolm knew that Thomas is an intruder and is wanted by The Goddess. Malcolm badmouths Thomas for not worshiping The Goddess. He hoped that by sacrificing his blood for the needs of The Goddess, he would bring back control of the land of Erisden and make it fertile. In the scene in picture 3.35 was taking by medium shot and low angle, when Malcolm gives the blood, some plants immediately react but don't show a good reaction. With this, it can be concluded that blood is a symbol of the source of fertility of The Goddess of Erisden.

In the scene in picture 3.36 which was taking by full shot, Quinn screams to attract the attention of the Erisden people to find out what's going on. Quinn, who actually killed his own daughter, Ffion, dropped slander on Jeremy as his daughter's killer.





Picture 3.37 Quinn hold a ceremony to purify Jeremy's soul

Picture 3.36 Quinn screams slander at Jeremy (*Apostle 2018*, 01:27:14)

(*Apostle 2018*, 01:28:25)

Quinn: "Help! Help! Help! Help! Somebody help! He killed her! He killed my girl! Murderer! Don't let him escape! After him! After him! This way! Prepare the Heathen's Stand! By order of purification! Malcolm is not the divine ruler of this land! Now, follow my orders. Or I swear by the blood of my kin ye shall face the same fate. Now! Sound the alarm."

(Apostle 2018, 01:27:07 – 01:28:25)

The proof of brainwashing in picture 3.37 which was taking by close up shot is very clear until Quinn did it as a team partner with Malcolm and Frank in Erisden, so that the residents and all prepared a

ritual for Jeremy as a result of Quinn's brainwashing by slandering Jeremy as a murderer.

At this point there is a scene that is tense and makes the reactions of those who watch goosebumps. In picture 3.38 was taking by full shot, after Quinn slanders Jeremy as a murderer, a purification ceremony is held on Heathen's Stand, which is a stone pedestal with five side clamps so that the object used as a ritual does not escape easily.





Picture 3.38 Purifying Ritual Ceremony (*Apostle 2018*, 01:31:57)

Picture 3.39 Jeremy's final purifying ritual ceremony (Apostle 2018, 01:34:28)



Picture 3.40 Quinn stuck a rose petal into Jeremy's hollowed out head (*Apostle 2018*, 01:33:08)

Quinn: "He shall be cleansed. Please! According to the edict of this land, Let us begin. I've wanted this. I grant unto thee this symbol of purity. Let it guide you. Pray for him."

(Apostle 2018, 01:31:57 – 01:34:54)

The ritual purification process shown in picture 3.39 and picture 3.40 which were taking by close up shot begin with making a hole in the head to insert a rose petal as a sign that Jeremy's soul has become pure again, which is then followed by a prayer session as the closing of the ritual ceremony. In this section, the point of discussing the blood symbol in the rituals performed by the Erisden cult community has been completed.