ISSN: 1812-0512 (Print) 2790-346X (online)

Waist Journal for Human Sciences

Journal Homepage: https://wjfh.uowasit.edu.iq/index.php/wjfh/en

Research article

Three Types of Binary Oppositions in Norse Mythology: A Levi – Straussian Reading of Joanne Harris's *The Gospel of Loki* (2014)

Prof. Ansam Yaroub Khyoon[1], Prof. Dr. Ansam Riyadh Abdulla Almaaroof[2]

University of Baghdad College of Physical Education and Sport Sciences Department of Theoretical Studies[1], College of Education for Women, Tikrit University[2]

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Cantrip, fatalism, Ragnarok, Runes, Structuralism, Shape-shifting, and Xenophobic.

***Correspondence author*:**

ansam.abd@cope.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Sbc.s5@tu.edu.iq

Received: 28 **September** 2026

Revised: 12 **October** 2026

Accepted: 18 **October** 2026

Published: 25 **November** 2026

1812-0512 /© 2026 The Author(s). Published by Wasit Journal for Humanities Sciences, Wasit University. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

***Cite*:**

Khyoon, A. Y., & Almaaroof, A. R. A. (2026). Three Types of Binary Oppositions in Norse Mythology: A Levi – Straussian Reading of Joanne Harris's The Gospel of Loki (2014). *Wasit Journal for Human Sciences*, *22*(4/Pt2). https://doi.org/10.31185/wjfh.Vol22.Iss4/Pt2.2327

ABSTRACT

Binary opposition is the base for Structural literary criticism and analysis of world mythology. The problem of the research lies in the lack of a procedural guidelines for classifying binary oppositions in original mythology as well as in their contemporary representations. The researchers proposed a method for classifying binary oppositions and applied it to Joanne Harris's ***The Gospel Of Loki*** as a contemporary representation of Norse mythology. Binary oppositions are classified into three types; existence vs nonexistence, coexistence and associations. After the analysis of the novel, the researchers concluded that following this classification make the process of identifying binary oppositions easier as well as the analysis deeper and more accurate. The researchers recommended applying this classification to other novels based on world mythologies.

الانواع الثلاثة لتصنيف الاضداد الثنائية في الاساطير النوردية : قراءة رواية جوان هارس
***انجيل لوكي* ٢٠١٤ على طريقة ليفي ستراوس**

ا.أنسام يعرب خيون[1] ، ا.د. أنسام رياض عبد الله المعروف[2]
جامعة بغداد كلية التربية البدنية وعلوم الرياضة قسم الدراسات النظرية[١]
كلية التربية للبنات، جامعة تكريت[٢]

المُستخلص

أن للاضداد الثنائية اهمية كبيرة كونها اساسا للتحليل والنقد الادبي للاساطير العالمية. تكمن مشكلة البحث في عدم استثمار هذه الاضداد الثنائية في التحليل الادبي لروايات حديثة مقتبسة عن اساطير عالمية فضلا عن عدم اتباع منهجية واضحة للتعرف على هذه الاضداد او حتى وجود تصنيف معتمد لها. اقترحت الباحثتان طريقة للتعرف على الاضداد الثنائية في العمل الادبي وتصنيفها حسب منهج واضح مع تطبيقها على رواية ***انجيل لوكي*** لكاتبتها جوان هارس كونها تستند على اساطير نوردية للتعرف على الاضداد الثنائية فيها وتصنيف هذه الاضداد الى ثلاثة انواع وهي وجود مقابل العدم والتواجد التكميلي واخيرا الاضداد الارتباطية. بعد تحليل الرواية بالتعرف على الاضداد وتصنيفها استنتجت الباحثتان اتباع هذا التصنيف يسهل عملية التعرف على الاضداد الثنائية كما انها تضع الناقد الادبي على الطريق الصحيح للتحليل جاعلا التحليل اكثر عمقا. من اهم التوصيات ان يتم اعتماد هذا التصنيف وتعميمه عند النقد الادبي للروايات المعاصرة المقتبسة من اساطير عالمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعويذة، القدرية، راغناروك، الاحرف الرونية، البنيوية، التحويل الشكلي، رهاب الاجانب

1. Introduction:

1.1. Strauss’s Binary opposites as A Structure of a Myth:

One of Levi-Strauss's greatest contributions is his interpretation of myth through its structure of binary opposites. (Bertens, 2005) That is, underneath language there exists a binary structure that resembles the brain itself. The human brain is a mere reflection of the world. Claude Levi Strauss, as a structural anthropologist, used many of linguistic theories to analyze different cultural phenomena, and one of the major linguists that he derived from was Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure originally formed the concept of binary oppositions in the study of language. Strauss adapted the concept and used it for analyzing the structure of many cultural processes like cooking, dressing, family, and myths. For us, to understand myths, it is essential to look for binary oppositions because they reflect the frame of mind of a certain culture or society, just like the mind organizes reality in pairs: male and female, good and evil, light and darkness, etc. It does not reflect individual thinking; it reflects an entire culture. Through understanding that binary opposites, one can understand the culture that presented it. (Telaumbanua, Sayuti, & Sari, 2024) According to Strauss, all cultural activities have structure, and through that structure meaning emerges. Binary opposition structure reflects not only the human mind but also reflects the

entire universe as well. (Gul, Farooq, & Ali, 2022). Therefore, all cultures can be analyzed through their binaries or opposites: male vs. female, good vs. bad, etc. Strauss believed that the way a certain culture resolves its opposites reflects how that culture conveys meaning. (Strauss, 1995) He also believed in the universality of the human mind, stating that although cultures differ, there is a universal, unconscious structure that they all share. (Klages, 2006)

1.2.The problem of the Research:

Binary oppositions serve as a powerful literary device reflecting ideologies through the structure of the human mind. They are also powerful in representing cultural constructions through words. In mythology, binary oppositions create themes and develop characterization. Although many researchers and literary critics applied the binary opposition structure to analyze different literary texts, very few applied it for literary analysis of modern representations of world mythology, namely Norse mythology. In addition to that, there are no standardized guidelines that facilitate conducting such analysis.

1.3. The aim of the Research:

The research aims to provide researchers and literary critics with guidelines for the identification, classification, and analysis of binary oppositions in modern representations of Norse mythology. ***The Gospel of Loki*** (2014) is a contemporary representation of Norse mythology selected by the researchers for analysis based on Strauss's binary opposition.

1.4. Review of Literature:

In two articles, one by Ahmadi et al (2013) and the other by Gong (2020), Levi Strauss's binary opposition structure is applied to infer deeper meaning from poems. Ahmadi et al (2013) analyzes Rum's Masnavi by identifying binary oppositions in the poem to conclude that these binaries convey not only meaning, but also theosophical concepts and create the desired effect on the reader. Furthermore, they conclude that Rumi's binaries are based on the bipolarity of the universe itself. (Ahmadi et al, 2013) On the other hand, Gong (2020) infers binary oppositions from Housman's poem to prove how these binaries emphasize meaning and show textual development. Gong concludes that analyzing these binaries gave deeper meaning and understanding of the literary work. (Gong, 2020)

Telaumbanua et al in their article "Binary Opposition between Characters against Myths in the Novel Begu Ganjang by Ferdiriva Hamzah" (2024) applied Levi Strauss's binary oppositions to analyze the novel that is based on Begu Canjang myth concentrating on binary oppositions among characters. The researchers classified characters based on the binary of central to refer to the protagonist and peripheral to refer to all other characters. They conclude that binary oppositions among characters creates disharmony among them based on three levels: conservation, kinship, education, and gender. (Telaumbanua et al, 2024)

In an article by Yeltekin and Gormez entitled "The Analysis of the Relationship Between East and West in Orhan Pamuk's ***White Castle*** Through Lévi-Strauss's Method of Binary Oppositions," the researchers

analyze this Turkish novel based on Levi Strauss's binary oppositions to conclude complementary opposites that enhanced the narrative experience and made the themes more understandable. (YELTEKİN & GÖRMEZ, 2025)

All these studies apply Strauss's structuralism to identify binaries, analyze their function as a literary device in a selected literary work, and conclude deeper analysis based on these binaries. However, the researcher notices that no studies offer a general classification for classifying binary oppositions. So, both researchers applied this three type binary opposition classification on two researches: Amish Tripathi's ***The Immortal's of Meluha*** as representation of Indian mythology and Choo's ***The Ghost Bride*** as representative of Chinese mythology. Furthermore, there are no studies that analyze the selected novel along with its mythology based on Strauss's binary oppositions.

1.5. Methodology:

After consulting many previous studies conducted on the classification of binary oppositions, the researchers proposed three types of binary oppositions as guidelines for literary analysis:

1) **Non - existence vs Existence Binary Oppositions:**

This mode of binary opposition is considered the most prominent type of binary opposition. In this type, two signs or words make sense only when they are in opposition to each other and the existence of one is determined by the absence of the other. Typical examples of this type of binary opposites are death vs. life, darkness vs. light, day vs. night, etc. (Ahmadi, Mostaali, Piri, & Bajelani, 2013)

2) **Coexistence Binary Oppositions:**

In this mode of binary apposition, one thing gives meaning to the other, making it more distinguish and understandable. For example, two entities sun vs. moon, different beings like man vs. woman, two parties like believers vs. nonbelievers, good vs. evil, etc. In this system of opposition, the essence of one thing is defined by its opposite, in other words, the knowledge of one entitles the knowledge of its opposite. (Gul, Farooq, & Ali, 2022)

3) **Association Binary Oppositions:**

Two things that are related to each other yet are associated with cultural associations. The two are not contradictory to each other; they are related to each other for structural and complementary purposes. This mode of binary opposition usually endows the opposition with value due to its various cultural, religious, and societal associations. These associations give value to oppositions, and this value creates a different level of literary meaning. (Gul, Farooq, & Ali, 2022)

1.6. Norse mythology:

Norse mythology is also called Scandinavian mythology and Nordic mythology, which refers to myths stemming from North Germanic people's religion. It started as oral tales of Norse religion centered in Northern Europe, starting from the Scandinavian Bronze Age till the end of the Viking Age. (Bowker, 2006) This religion was communicated through conversation having no unified text, and it is non-

doctrinal; that is, it does not indoctrinate the believer's life. On the contrary, its uniqueness lies in its myths that do not only justify but also teach and inspire. (Thorvald, 2024)

Unfortunately, for five hundred years these myths were not recorded in written form. It was not until an Icelandic historian, Snorri Sturluson, compiled and authored a great bulk of Norse mythology in two books, ***Poetic Edda*** and ***Prose Edda*** in 13th Century. Snorri was a politician, knight, and poet and his books were comprehensive manuals for poets writing about Germanic gods. He has other books like ***The Saga of The Volsungs***, which tells the legends of both gods and humans, and ***Heimskringla*** (***The Lives of The Norse Kings***) a historical document mixed with mythology (Mortensen, 2011)

The Norse cosmos is divided into nine worlds, with Asgard as the realm of the gods and goddesses and Midgard as the realm of humans. Through these nine worlds, a World Tree stretches connecting all worlds together, called Yggdrasil. In Asgard there are two groups of gods, the Aesir and the Vanir, making a large pantheon of gods and goddesses merged together collectively called Norse gods. The most famous in the Norse pantheon are the Aesir gods who include Odin, the principal god of the Norse pantheon; his wife, Frigg, the goddess of love and fate; his three sons, Thor, the god of thunder, and his wife, Sif, the goddess of plenty, Balder, god of light and blessings, and Hoder, the blind god. In addition to them, there are Bragi, the god of poetry, and his wife Idun, the healer, Heimdall, the watchful guardian, Tyr, the god of war, and Loki, the god of deception. The Vanir gods, on the other hand, include Njord, the god of sea; his twin son and daughter, Freyr, god of fertility, and Freyja, goddess of love and fertility. (Orchard, 1997) Aesir gods and goddesses differ from those of the Vanir, for all Aesir deities possess elemental forces and supernatural weapons, and are related to war while the Vanirs are mainly connected to agriculture, fertility, and magic. (Laine, 2017)

1.6. *The Gospil of Loki (2014)*

The Gospel of Loki is one of many novels by the British author Joanne Harris featuring Loki, the god of mischief, as the narrator. It retells many Norse myths from Loki's point of view. The novel starts with a foreword in which Loki tells the readers that he is going to explain to them the entire history of the gods, starting with the creation of the Norse cosmos till Ragnarok, from his point of view. The novel consists of thirty-nine myths distributed over four books; book one, entitled "Light," consists of ten myths revolving around the creation of the Nine Worlds and Yggdrasil, the foundation of Asgard, the house of the gods, the twelve gods of Norse mythology, the recruitment of Loki, and the six supernatural gifts. It also introduces key beliefs, namely the power of names, the use of runes, and cantrips. Book two, entitled "Shadow," consists of elven myths that revolve around the revenge of Loki on the gods and goddesses, his marriage and offspring, and his relationship with Odin. Book Three, "Sunset," consists of twelve myths that revolve around Loki killing three deities with one mischievous act, and as a result, all the gods and goddesses of Asgard started a war against him, tracking him in all Nine worlds, torturing his offspring, first imprisoning his werewolf son, Fenris, then killing his twins. Eventually, the gods succeed in catching and imprisoning Loki in Hel with a cobra spitting venom into his eyes till the end of days.

Finally, Book Four, "Twilight," consists of six myths that revolve around Loki's escape from Hel through a dream, his role in Ragnarok, the Nine Realms war, the fall of Asgard, and finally the death of Norse gods and goddesses in Ragnarok, starting with Odin and ending with Loki. The novel ends with an epilogue in which Loki describes the aftermath of Ragnarok, followed by the prophecy of the Oracle, and hints that he will be resurrected hence he ends with "Let there be light." (Harris, 2014, p.214)

1.6.1. Classification of Binary Opposites in Harris's Modern Representation of Norse mythology[1]

1. 0 VS. 1 Existence Vs Non – Existence Binary Opposites

A. History Vs My-story

As mentioned in chapter three when discussing first-person narration technique within number one, Harris's main premise for writing about Norse mythology is to rewrite these myths from Loki's point of view.(Harris, 2014) Henceforth, the novel starts with a foreword building upon the creation of the nine worlds and the cosmos of Norse mythology. Then, this narrative is halted by Loki directly stopping the reader "Ok. Stop. Stop right there." (Harris, 2014, p.2) Loki skeptically asks the reader if this authorized version of creation is accepted. As an archetypal trickster, Loki tries to trick the reader into questioning the authorized version of history since its source, Odin, is questionable. The reader is well informed about Loki and how he is famous for being the father and mother of all lies; therefore, Loki does not try to state his innocence but questions the reliability of Odin himself. He wants the reader to know that Odin lies too; hence, his account of history should be deconstructed and questioned piece by piece before taking it for granted.

Loki, accordingly, offers an unauthorized version of events, a version that he calls "my version of events" (Harris, 2014, p.2) He makes very powerful logical premises starting from the creation myth addressing the modern reader. According to The Norse creation myth, there was nothing but Chaos and Order, and from these two a giant and a cow were created. The giant rubbed himself and from his sweat many giants were born. The cow licked the salt on the ice and gave birth to the first man, Buri. The sons of the giant and the grandsons of Buri fought each other until the giant and his offspring were killed, and from his body parts the world was made. Loki expresses his skepticism, declaring that this version is too convent, and vital details are left out deliberately, and, moreover, all the witnesses have disappeared except Odin. Because of this account Odin's version is considered the authorized version for he "is the only survivor of the war therefore he is the architect and chronicler of Elder Age" (Harris, 2014, p.6). Odin, being the only survivor does not necessarily make him trustworthy.

Loki proposes that this creation myth may be metaphorical, not literal. However, he warns the reader of voicing his skepticism because, although he is considered a god, he cannot question this authorized version; otherwise, he will be accused of heresy. He urges the reader not to stop questioning this version, and he stresses deconstructing the woven history to its basic form until one realizes that "History is

[1] See Table 1

nothing but spin and metaphor" (Harris, 2014, p.2). In other words, to deconstruct history, one should first not trust anyone or anything; second, history came from one single questionable text, the prophecy of the oracle. Third, history is written by the victors. Since Odin is the victor and the master of runes, he creates myths that history is derived from.

Loki strongly believes that history is based on myth, and what makes that history famous and acceptable is how the story is told and by whom. Odin sacrificed himself to gain the runes so as to write his own version of history; he envied the Vanir for having them and coveted them, believing that runes, if are used cunningly, can "ensure that their tribe lived forever in memory" (Harris, 2014, p.8). His version is accepted because he is a "master storyteller; keeper of runes; lord of poetry; scribe of the First and Last times." (Harris, 2014, p.3) Furthermore, "'Poetic license' was always the old man's middle name" (Harris, 2014, p.3) Consequently, Loki, to make his own history, concentrates on the power of words. Using the right words build worlds, anoints the writer as the king of these worlds or, even better, a god. Loki proposes a simple fact: writing history is actually making history. He believes that is exactly how religions and historians build their place in the world, not through actions but through poems and songs that are passed through generations written by scholars.

Loki places himself as a modern writer speculating and writing history, "Words can shatter faith; start a war; change the course of history. (Harris, 2014, p.6) He acknowledges the power of Christianity and how it influenced the history of Norse religion that has changed accordingly "Five hundred years later or so, a new religion with its new god came to supplant us, not through war, but through books and stories and words" (Harris, 2014, p.6).

Since Odin's version of history gives Loki an unflattering role, he rewrites history, taking the stage, stating that his version is as true as the official one, but he will call it mystery: "mystery – my story – let's start with me for a change" (Harris, 2014, p.3). Shockingly, instead of stating a new history to obliterate Odin's version, Loki gives the same version yet with critical analysis of who, how, by whom, and why. He starts building his story with the same characters acting out the same roles, ending the same way. Yet he delves into the depths of his personality as well as that of Odin, leaving the rest of the characters flat. This depth gives an entirely new perspective on history, thus changing its reception. First, he questions the logic behind the creation myth that will be tackled in detail as association binary female vs male; second, he takes the reader to his world of Chaos where he was born and how young, immature, and innocent formless fire he was when Odin, the old, wise, cunning, powerful god, came to recruit him.

In "Blood and Water," Loki is infatuated by Odin and accepts his brotherhood trusting Odin's oath. However, the reader feels empathy for Loki, sensing his first feeling of pain when receiving his broken twig tattoo, and we are told that Odin recruited him for his demonic nature and his chaotic behavior and how he considers him his a brother in trickery. The pain of that tattoo is so unbearable that Loki makes a mental note stating, "Never trust a brother" (Harris, 2014, p.20). Odin promises Loki, "Whatever your nature drives you to do, I promise that none of my people will ever lay violent hands on you. You'll be as close as a brother to me" (Harris, 2014, p.20). Immediately, we accompany Loki to Asgard, sensing his

first encounter with the gods and how alienated he feels in "Welcome and Hello," leaving Loki with a strong belief "Never trust a friend." (Harris, 2014, p.25) In fact, the mini-myths in Book One are called lessons, and with each lesson Loki gives a subtitle to the name of the myth that serves as a mini-theme as well as advices for the reader concentrating on not trusting a certain thing. In lesson one, he warns never to trust a ruminant, referring to the primordial cow; in two, a wise man, referring to Odin; in three, a brother, also referring to Odin; in four, a friend, also referring to Odin; in five, a labourer, referring to the builder; in six, a quadruped, referring to the builder's horse; in seven, a lover, referring to Thor; in eight, an artist, referring to the goldsmiths; in nine, an insect, referring to himself; and in ten, he sums up all his advices in one: "Basically, never trust anyone"(Harris, 2014, p.49). With each failure of trust, Loki shows a new perspective of historical mythical character or event.

Loki's characterization is determined from the very beginning as morally immature, having a demonic nature and chaotic behavior, and that is exactly why Odin recruits him: to use him to manipulate Order, brining an agent of Chaos. Hence, all following events of his trickery, mischievous behavior, and wrongdoings are seen in a different light. His aggressive reception in Odin's Hall, Heimdall's hostility and how he made him an enemy on his first day till the end of Worlds, and his mischievous deal with the builder that gave Asgard its fortress, and Loki his fame. But peaceful life does not suit his wild, chaotic nature, so he simply tells the reader that Odin should have known that Loki is not peaceful, "You don't bring Wildfire into your home and expect it to stay in the fireplace." (Harris, 2014, p.38) Loki, to take revenge on Thor, not only seduces his wife, Sif, the goddess of Grace and Plenty, but also cuts off her hair as a mark of victory. He declares showing no remorse: "So shoot me. I cut it off" (Harris, 2014, p.39). In his defense, he explains that he thought as a goddess she could grow it back or change Aspect, but unfortunately, her hair is not only her source of beauty, but also where her powers lie. When Thor attempts to punish him, he asks for Odin's help. Odin does not help him; instead, asks Loki to pay for what he has done or leave Asgard. Although Loki paid for his mistake by brining back magical hair for Sif as well as magical gifts for Odin, Thor, Njord, and Frey. Even then Odin does not support him; on the contrary, he allows Brokk to saw off his mouth and laughs at his pain. The rest of the events are Loki's revenge for being tricked by Odin and this gives new perspective for history.

Loki surrenders his version of history to fate, stating, "Well, that's history for you folks. Unfair, untrue and for most part written by folks who weren't even there." (Harris, 2014, p.153) Therefore, after the end of Ragnarok and the passage of five hundred years, Odin's history is recorded, and now it is Loki's turn to have his story seen from another perspective. Loki's version addresses the modern reader equipped with a different mindset, hoping that they will look objectively at his story since they are not involved in it.

B. Death Vs Immortality:

In most mythologies, gods are immortal, blessed with eternal youth, enjoy a long-lasting life, immune to sickness, old age, and death. A striking contrast in Norse mythology is that although Norse deities live for a very long time, enjoying youthful lives, they are not immortal; on the contrary, they are fragile, and

their deaths are inevitably predetermined. (Khatri, 2025) The novel flows naturally with the assumption that since all major characters are gods, they do not get sick nor are cursed with old age till the "Apples" myth. In "Apples," Thiassi, one of the Ice Folk and a warlord of the north, shapeshifts into an eagle, catches Loki, and tortures him in order to force him to bring Idun and her golden apples of immortality. In this myth, Harris explains to the reader that Idun is gifted magical apples that maintain the Norse pantheon's youth. These apples are not made by a divine creature; they are made by the dwarves, who are lesser creatures compared to the gods. Ivaldi, the goldsmith dwarf, made them with runes and glamour that provide the gods with everlasting youth. The apples act as a universal tonic; that is to say, they heal most illnesses and all lethal wounds. Loki, being an immortal creature, does not need these apples; therefore, he belittles the gods' continuous need for apples and compares it to cosmetics: "They work like cosmetics once you stop, you drop" (Harris, 2014, p.69).

Loki kidnaps Idun along with her apple basket and hands her over to Thiassi. Ironically no one misses Idun, not even her husband, until old age starts to affect the gods. They all look awful; even Balder, the golden boy, looks less glamorous: "Wrinkles, hair loss, middle-aged spread, incontinence, forgetfulness, piles…you name it – and that was just the goddesses. Except for Your Humble Narrator, of course" (Harris, 2014, p.70). For Loki, this incident proveed to be one of his greatest acts of revenge, for it targets what the gods cherished the most: their vanity. He describes in detail how old age is lethal for a god, starting with Heimdall, who catches Loki and brings him to the Old Man. Odin without the apples looks even older, and Heimdall urges him to take an action against Loki, telling him "Let's kill him before we all forget why we brought him here" (Harris, 2014, p.70).

Although he causes the problem, he is the only one who manages to come up with a solution. He comes up with a plan and mockingly asks them not to die of old age while he is executing it. When Frejya doubts him, he tells her that he does not mind waiting for the others to solve the problem while she loses her hair and her teeth turn black. Once said, all the gods agreed to Loki's plan.

Then again, with the development of the plot, a new fact unveils: the gods can die, and the entire prophecy revolves around the inevitability of death. Loki does start the novel from the end, that is, after Ragnarok, and after the death of all gods and the creation of a new world. He reminds the reader that death is a natural consequence:

Everything dies – even worlds; even gods; even Your Humble Narrator. From the moment the Worlds came to life, Ragnarok, the End of All Things, was written into every living cell in runes more complex that any we know. Life and death in one package (Harris, 2014, p.8).

Loki first blames Odin for trying to live and for his continuous effort to build Worlds when he knows that he is going to die. He criticizes his attempts and undermines them comparing them to building castles in the sand waiting for the tide to drown them, yet Odin kept on building; for Loki, this is not faith but due to Odin's nature of never learning his lesson. Ironically, that is exactly what Loki does, although he knows how he is going to die, he chooses not to sit and wait for it; instead, he goes looking for it. A concept that takes us immediately to fate as a binary opposite of free will.

C. Fate Vs Free Will:

In Norse mythology, fate is predestined by the three Norns mentioned in number three, weaving the destiny and determining the fates of gods and mankind, making fate invaluable even for the gods themselves. (Zhang, 2005) In the novel, the prophecy told by the Oracle Mimir plays a vital role in shaping the fate of the entire Norse cosmos. It is because of this 'fateful prophecy' that Odin's character changes drastically from the confident, cunning, merry Allfather to the restless, isolated, suspicious, and guarded General. The change in his behaviour affected all the surrounding gods and started a chain reaction of prophetic nightmares for both his son and wife prophesying the death of Balder, Odin's son, and along with it the death of the entire Nine Worlds in an aftermath battle.

Fate, in the novel, is incarnated in the prophecy of the Oracle, which is considered the authorized version of history. The prophecy came in the form of thirty-six stanzas that, according to Loki, were delivered to all deities except him. The prophecy stated the role of Odin in creating the Nine Worlds and the birth of humanity. No one knows when Mimir's Head delivered the prophecy or how, but once it was delivered, Loki became under suspicion. Therefore, Loki needed to know how his fate is told in the prophecy by tempting Odin's ravens with cake in exchange for information. The ravens told Loki that Yggdrasil is shaking, making a quiver, and Loki does not understand the metaphor until Odin confronts him, furious that Loki dares to spy on him through his ravens telling him that the tree is losing some leaves; it does not mean it is dying. Moreover, Odin threatens to kill Loki but then realizes from Loki's reaction that he does not know the prophecy, so he smiles and says, "Knowledge doesn't bring happiness."(Harris, 2014, p.146)

In "Destiny," Loki grows restless, so he ventures into the well where Odin keeps Mimir's Head. The head is calcified, becoming a stone, while the expressions on the face are mobile. Although the head is waiting for Loki, it threatens to tell Odin, but Loki knows better; he knows that Mimir hates Odin for using him as a spy, causing him to lose his head, and then using him after his death as an Oracle preserved in runelight in a well. The oracle warns Loki that knowledge can be dangerous, but Loki is determined to be prepared. After hearing the prophecy Loki did not understand most of it at the time; some aspects are clear, others he understood too late, and even after Ragnarok. Loki describes it saying, "Prophecies tend to be incomplete, and Oracles have a habit of telling you things you only fully understand after the crisis is over" (Harris, 2014, p.149). The prophecy scares him, and he wants to stop it from happening, but, to his dismay, the Oracle simply says, "Loki, this is Destiney. I know it's hard. But Destiney has a habit of finding you wherever you hide. Sometimes it even meets you as you go running to avoid it" (Harris, 2014, p.150).

Unlike Loki, the gods of the Norse pantheon chose to use their free will to fulfil their fate. Instead of running away from their fate, they choose to embrace it; for example, both Odin and Thor know they will die in Ragnarok. Nevertheless, they fight with all their might, carving their names in runes for future generations to witness their strength, loyalty, and free will. When Loki lures Odin's crows to tell him how

Odin will act in response to the prophecy, the raven explains that Odin will set free will against determinism:

If we believe the oracle, Free will is merely an illusion, and all our actions were written in runes that were preordained from the beginning of time. But if we take matters into our own hands, then we can write our own runes, remake our own reality (Harris, 2014, p.198).

Consequently, Odin rides as The General, fully armed, and attempts to kill the werewolf that is fated to kill him, and Thor kills the World Snake that he is fated to die because of its venom. The two do die exactly as their fates foretell; however, their courage lives on as testament to their bravery in not escaping fate but in facing it willingly. According to Dr. Teodorico C. Pelino in his article entitled "Myths Across Civilizations: A Cross – Cultural Inquiry into Mythology, Folklore, and Literary Tradition," it is "this fatalistic yet brave approach to existence that distinguishes the Norse tradition." (Pelino, 2025. p.6) This understanding of fatalism is the base of a powerful Viking Age framework that encouraged what came to be known as 'heroic ethos,' which refers to how honorable and brave a person meets his fate in spite of his complete knowledge of his predetermined fate. (Peliño, 2025) Loki cannot understand this sense of fatalism and believes that Odin surely studied the Oracle's prophecy and prepared a safety net to evade it. To his shock, both of them fight with nobility mixed with melancholy, and although Loki mocks this attitude and makes fun of Thor's death, stating with the fall of Thor, "There goes free will,"(Harris, 2014, p.203) he admits that their attitude makes their death magnificent.

D. Stability Vs Change:

Stability stands for Order; therefore all characters of Order are agents of stability with Odin as its personification. From Chaos, Odin establishes stability by maintaining Order through building worlds, creating laws, and preserving history. Change, on the other hand, stands for Chaos; therefore, Loki defends it dearly, "Change isn't always comfortable, but it is a fact of life" (Harris, 2014, p.5).

The cycle of life in Norse mythology involves change, and that change, in addition to being a metaphor for the total destruction of the Norse Worlds, is also a metaphor for the rebirth of new worlds. Loki is the incarnation of change; he wants to retell history by starting with him, "Let's start with me for change,"(Harris, 2014, p.3) and aims to change history with his stories. He is fire, and in the creation myth, fire is the element that brings change and along with it, gives birth to life: "The world came into being through change, which is a servant of Chaos; and only through Change has it endured. Much like Your Humble Narrator, in fact; adapting to suit the circumstance" (Harris, 2014, p.6). Loki believes change is a synonym for revolution; therefore, he considers himself revolutionary.

Many characters in the novel act as agents of change, mostly those from Chaos; for instance, Lord Surt is the master of change, and Loki aspires to be an agent of change. Runes have the power to change the world, building, shaping, reshaping, conquering, and ruling the Nine Worlds. It is the change in Loki that moves the plot like a wrecking ball, for it took nine stitches to change his alliance with the gods; it changed his heart, and he managed to succeed in revenge by changing Aspect. Furthermore, the thirty-six

stanzas prophecy changed the worlds: "Change is the wheel on which the Worlds turn, and the time would come when gods would be dogs, howling as everything they had built came down in ruins around them. (Harris, 2014, p.52)

2. 1 vs 1 (Coexistence Binary Opposition):

A. Chaos Vs Order

In the novel, Chaos and Order are treated as settings, two worlds separated by Yggdrasil that coexist; therefore, the initial letter is capitalized. Loki, being the narrator, shows preference of Chaos over Order since he is a proud child of chaos. As is the case with most creation myths, the worlds are created from Chaos, but there is a clear-cut distinction in Norse mythology; Order coexisted with Chaos and they both gave birth to the worlds. Both Chaos and Order existed in their pure, uncorrupted form, where Order is immovable, frozen, and sterile and Chaos is uncontrolled, volatile, and destructive, making both worlds hostile to change. Therefore, a middle ground is required to create the perfect environment for change. Thus the fiery, creative Chaos initiated the change by melting the icy, sterile Order creating a lukewarm environment suitable for the birth of the ice giant Ymir and the milking cow Audhumla.

Loki gives the entire credit for creation to Chaos since it is its fiery element that initiated the change. It is the 'hotbed of creation,' as Loki puts it, since the sun and moon are forged from its fires, runes are its language charged with its power and energy, and the Vanir gods are descendants from Chaos living off leftovers of Lord Surt's glam. Moreover, Chaos, although having no rules, is ruled by the Dragon of Darkness, Lord Surt, and he is the personification of disorder. Loki describes him with awe as being jealous, all – consuming, pitiless, unreasonable; furthermore, he is "the Destroyer; Father of glam; Master of Change; the original wellspring of the Fire" (Harris, 2014, p.13).

It is in this world of Chaos that Loki is born and raised formless, innocent, hostile, free of thought and emotions, and acting according to instinct only. He describes himself saying, "I was wildfire incarnate; a true son of Chaos; happy and free." (Harris, 2014, p.13) He expresses his happiness when he was in Chaos, "blissfully free of all the rules of gods, mankind and physics." (Harris, 2014, p.13) It is this characterization that attracted Odin to Loki that he comes to him from River Dream and recruits him. Odin inhabited the world of Order after killing Ymir and many of his descendants, stealing from Chaos the sun and moon, the runes, the glam, and recruiting Loki. Lord Surt becomes officially Odin's archenemy, and for him, Loki is a traitor daring to leave Chaos and join Odin in Order.

Odin needed Chaos to keep order untouchable, and since he is the ruler, there is a need for breaking some rules, so he recruits Loki saying, "I cannot be seen breaking my own rules I need someone from the inside to break them for me when necessary" (Harris, 2014, p.13). In return for Loki's chaotic expertise, Odin promises to make him a god. Odin feared perfect Order, believing that Order alone cannot survive because its laws are fixed too tightly, making them unable to bend; thus break easily under pressure. Harris refers to Order as ice as a negative metaphor: "Order is like ice that creeps, bringing life to a standstill."(Harris, 2014, p.17)

Accordingly, Loki moves to the world of Order always feeling nostalgic for his home, Chaos: "Chaos, the pure; Chaos, the wild; Chaos, the unpolluted."(Harris, 2014, p.13). Moreover, his nostalgia increases when he is not accepted within Order for, like Choas, Order is Xenophobic. Ironically, hostility comes from the descendants of Chaos that Loki calls 'mixed races' namely the Vanir and Heimdall in particular. Loki's first reception by the gods was defiance and prejudice against his chaotic, demonic nature:

I'd thought that I knew prejudice, but this lot redefined it. I could see them itching to spill some of my demon blood, even though it ran through the veins of a dozen or more of them. Heimdall himself was one of them – a bastard child of the primal Fire – but could see he wasn't about to celebrate our kinship (Harris, 2014, p.23).

Loki never changes his chaotic nature; on the contrary, every time he does a trick, he justifies it as being part of his nature to misbehave. He cannot resist a wager no matter how dangerous it is; he is unforgiving and has an insatiable hunger for revenge and an uncontrollable urge to destroy. Whenever an evil opportunity arises, he feels the chaos in him leap up to greet it. In the beginning, Odin enjoyed Loki's trickery and considered it a building block for survival. At that time Order and Chaos acted not as two opposing forces but as Loki describes, "One single cosmic force too vast for us to comprehend" (Harris, 2014, p.8).

Odin trespassed on the borders of Chaos not only by stealing the sun, moon, runes and glam but also by feeding off the prophecy from Yggdrasil's well. Taking such powerful elements from Chaos places great responsibility on Odin. He has to consistently maintain Order, loyalty, honor, truth, and good faith, burdening him with the weight of this responsibility. Eventually, responsibility gives birth to fear, and fear brings along with it violence, and with violence comes Chaos. For a long time Odin's spear and Thor's hammer stabilized the balance between Chaos and Order, but the prophecy of the Oracle changed and shifted this balance. The prophecy clearly states that in Ragnarok, the ultimate fight between Chaos and Order, Chaos will triumph.

The prophecy terrified Loki since he betrayed Chaos, and to redeem himself, he needed a grand jester to regain his place, and that meant total destruction of Order. Nevertheless, Loki tells the reader that he is enjoying the world of Order because it is a perfect place to practise his mischiefs, "I realized that one of the things I enjoyed most was challenging Order and breaking rule – and how in the Worlds could I do that if there was no Order to challenge?" (Harris, 2014, p.189) But the war is coming, and he has to pick a side, so he decides to choose Chaos. He grows restless whenever Order prevails, and sometimes he feels that Chaos is sleeping while Order is firmly in command. So he does his best to invoke Chaos, revenging himself on the gods, setting them against each other and causing Odin to abandon him, for at the verge of war, the Old Man needed Order more than Chaos.

Loki allies himself with Gullveig – Heid, a child of Chaos herself, and together they lead armies of Chaos against Order. First they unleash the wolves who devour the sun and moon depriving people of light. Living in total darkness made people turn to fire and worship it as their new light, adapting every evil nature associated with fire, and Loki is astonished at how innately corrupt people are:

People tend to blame Chaos whenever anything goes wrong, but in fact most of the time Chaos doesn't need to intervene. The Folk don't need any help when it comes to massacring each other. You name it, they did it – murder; rape; the sacrifice of infants – all the time blaming the sunless sky, when the darkness was already there, in their hearts (Harris, 2014, p.196).

In Ragnarok, Order was defeated and Chaos triumphed, while the folks who fought the war perished as collateral damage. Loki enjoys every minute of this chaotic war, and in most fights he assumes his Wildfire Aspect. There is carnage, fear, death, and delirium, but Loki feels it as purity, a purity that makes him feel free and nostalgic for Chaos "It had been such a long time since I'd experienced the thrill of unbridled destruction, untrammeled by conscience, fear or guilt or any of those other feelings which Odin had corrupted me."(Harris, 2014, p.204) After the fall of Asgard and death of many, Loki is swept away by Lord Surt while destroying the last living things on plain Ida, "The pendulum of Chaos swinging back like a headsman axe to cut us down like a field of grain. Oh it was epic."(Harris, 2014, p.195) Loki blames Odin for undermining Chaos and not fully understanding its scale and grandeur that enable it to destroy Order and then recreate New Age of Order and enlightenment.

B. Angrboda/ Gullveig – Heid Vs Sigyn:

In Norse mythology there are two types of women, the erotic and the chaste, as well as two types of mothers: the erotic and the nurturing. Female sexuality is viewed negatively, and even worse, an erotic female is considered "dangerous and potentially destructive" (Linke, 1989, p.240). It is typical of Loki, the mediator between binary opposites, to have two different types of women to accommodate his needs. The nurturing chaste female type, represented by Sigyn, and the erotic and destructive women are represented by Gullveig – Heid, the erotic female and Angrboda, the erotic female and mother.

Believing marriage will calm and tame Loki, Frigg suggests Sigyn as a wife, a suggestion that Odin obliges Loki to obey. Sigyn is Freyja's handmaid; she is specially taken by Loki from first sight and is portrayed as his only supporter no matter how mischievous he is. He notices how she anticipates his actions and enjoys how he manages to save the day. However, Loki is not satisfied with her because she is a motherly type. Domestic life and a motherly wife make him seek the love of a very bad woman. It took him two demonic women to balance Sigyn's personality, for after a month of living with Sigyn, eating homemade cakes, and listening to her view of life, he describes his sexual dissatisfaction with frustration:

Sleeping with Sigyn (lights out, of course, and veiling her charms beneath an assortment of almost impenetrable flannel nightdresses), was enough to confirm my initial belief that Frigg was wrong and that what I really needed was the love of a very bad woman (Harris, 2014, p.86).

He starts to search for another woman and admits his quest is not a romantic one. At first, he looks for Gullveig – Heid but fails to find her and comes across Angrboda instead. In the dark forest of Ironwood, he meets Angrboda, a mad, bad, and dangerous giantess witch. For him, she is alluring with her dark skin, long hair, wearing a ring on every finger and toe, red – ember eyes, and charged with sexual energy. His

relationship with her is purely physical, taking up different Aspects, both human and animal. They enjoyed hunting and destroying till Loki reached exhaustion. Loki admits, "Exhaustion got the better of me. Angie's tastes ran into violence, and every inch in me was sore. Not that I was complaining but I needed time to recover. (Harris, 2014, p.86) Loki manages to keep both women in his life and addresses the reader directly asking him not to condemn his faithlessness:

All in all, with Angie's help, I think I managed to cope pretty well. I lived in Asgard most of the time, and when domesticity became too much for me, I fled to my mistress in Ironwood. The concept of monogamy was not unknown to me, of course, but like pain, lutes, and poetry, I just didn't see the point (Harris, 2014, p.87).

The result of his demonic union with Angie is three monstrous children, all playing a pivotal role in Ragnarok: Fenris, the werewolf who kills Odin; Jormungand, the World Serpent who kills Thor; and Hel, who receives most of the slain in battle. After his adventures with Angrboda he always comes back to Sigyn, who receives him with open arms. She gave birth to twin boys who look exactly like their father. They occupied most of her time, and Loki was happy until Odin killed them to punish Loki. Loki admits that Sigyn is always forgiving and loving, and she is the only one who stands with him during the entire time of his punishment, holding a bowl so that the snake does not spit its venom into Loki's eye. Regrettably, even then Loki thinks she is the most boring woman he has ever known and categorizes her in his introduction of characters as "Possibly the most annoying woman in the whole of the Nine Worlds" (Harris, 2014, p.1).

The second bad woman that Loki comes across is Gullveig – Heid, a sorceress descendant from the Vanir. She is a mistress of runes, and Loki is fascinated by her beauty clothed in gold from head to toe, flowing hair, and ring on every finger and toe. "She was the very glow and incarnation of Desire – and when she walked into the room, even Odin wanted her."(Harris, 2014, p.9) Since greed is in her nature, she wanted to teach Odin the runes for a price; his response was throwing her in fire not once but thrice. Being a child of fire, she did not burn but vowed revenge and so she did. She is Loki's first choice after feeling abandoned by Odin, raising Chaos and truculence all over the Nine Worlds.

In "Heidi," Loki explains how starstruck he is with the legendary mistress of runes whom he tried in vain to find. She is his "new shiny demon companion" (Harris, 2014, p.186) :

Then there was Heidi – alluring, and with a demon's ability to take on any Aspect she (or I) most desired. Now she was golden from head to foot; a ring on every finger; eyes like those of a lynx and hair like waterfalls and rainbows. Tattooed all over in runes of gold, from her fingertips to the soles of her feet, sleek and lithe and wild and perverse and, like Angie of Iron-wood, curiously attracted to men with red hair. (Harris, 2014, p.187)

He felt satisfied, for next to the golden queen, he was the king. She plans a comprehensive revenge and uses Loki to execute it. Finding him wandering in dreams, she catches him and recruits him. First she frees him from his punishment, kills his wife, gratifies his every need, sends him on a ship to destroy Asgard, and then hands him over to Lord Surt as a scapegoat. Unfortunately, the moment he realizes he is

manipulated, it is too late for him to leave. He can only run across the burning bridge to his fate, and that is what he literally does, crossing the burning Bifrost Bridge to destroy Mimir's Head for allowing Heidi to use him. Sigyn and her twins are killed, while both bad, chaotic, and demonic women lives on, earning their place in the new world after Ragnarok.

C. Dream Vs Reality

Dreams are pivotal in Norse mythology since they are believed to be prophetic messages from the gods as well as means of communication, foretelling the future, and clues to characters' fate. (Crocker, 2018) In the novel, there is a river called River Dream that separates Chaos from Death, and it plays an integral part not just as setting, but as a personification of dreams mingled with nightmares. We are introduced to the River Dream first as the place where all the dark creatures of Norse mythology are released and where Mimir's Head is kept. Odin rules Order from the One Sea to River Dream; however, he cannot control the River. Loki used to watch Odin through Dream, and so did Odin; therefore, when Odin approaches Loki and asks if he is real, Loki thinks to himself that everything is real on some level, for Dream is the sibling of Chaos, and Chaos is very much real. Glam and runes exist in Dream in their purest form, and since it runs alongside Death, people often dream of the dead. Loki believes that the dead too dream of the living, and some use these dreams to predict the future.

Loki never mentions this River again while living his reality to the full, but once the prophecy foretells the death of Balder, he rekindles his interest in Dream. One of the first signs of Ragnarok is the prophetic dreams that both Balder and his mother start to have, seeing Balder dead in Hel. Loki makes it his reality to fulfil this dream, and kills Balder a matter that haunts Loki, causing him to see horrible nightmares of snakes devouring him whole. Escaping the wrath of the gods does not succeed because they find him and catch him through Dream. Ironically, they punish him by tying him in the Cauldron of Rivers at the source of River Dream.

His punishment is so severe that he has to escape the pain by dreaming. Dreaming sustains his mental health because dreams, from his place, are in their purest form: volatile, and ephemeral. Although he starts dreaming to escape his current reality, he manages to find another reality through Dream. He can see the dreams of all living creatures, and he is so close to their dreams that he can smell, touch, and feel their smallest features. Henceforth, in "Dream," he plans to escape through dreams, by finding a dreamer, and he gives search a theme: a slave always dreams of being a master. He acknowledges that Dream is a dangerous element that is subject to dangerous forces, and since he is too close to the source, these dreams can be lethal and destroy his mind.

Loki classifies dreams into two types: the dream that takes you in completely and the lucid dream in which you are aware you are traveling between two worlds. He carefully seeks a suitable dreamer from the second type of dreaming, the lucid type. Lucid type dreamers usually have strong minds and are imaginative. In the beginning he enters dreams with features of things he is deprived of, like freedom, food, hot baths, and comfortable beds; sometimes he enters dreams that suddenly become violent where

gods die and chaos erupts, burning the Nine Worlds. Then he finds the perfect dream, a familiar landscape, and to test the identity of the dreamer, he adds some detail to the dream, waiting for the dreamer to take the bait.

It is not easy to identify the identity of the dreamer, male or female, human or other creature, because the structure of dreams is complex and difficult as well as the dreamer usually assuming different Aspects. Loki enters each dream assuming a different Aspect till a dreamer spots Loki, a young girl sitting on a beach building Asgard on sand in perfect detail, then waiting for the tide to destroy it entirely. Loki immediately identifies the dreamer as Gullveig – Heid and tries to escape the dream; unfortunately he cannot shapeshift nor leave simply because the dreamer is always in control of her dream, and if she chooses to wake up, Loki will simply dissolve along with her dream. She offers to free him in return for leading her army against Asgard during Ragnarok. Loki accepts, and he is released from dream to his new reality.

Gullveig- Heid raises her entire army from River Dream; for years she has been in and out of Dream recruiting and assembling an army from people's fear, tears, and hate. For her, human dreams are a pure reservoir of power, and she uses it to the full. Loki is terrified by her ability to subjugate masses of fighters through Dream; she is as Loki describes, "the most powerful manipulator of dreams that the world had ever known."(Harris, 2014, p.188) These masses waited in Dream, and are all summoned during Ragnarok ending the war in favor of Chaos.

The dead souls that are called the slain in Norse mythology are taken to different places, some to Hel, some to Chaos, but Loki is taken to Netherworld, the antechamber of Chaos where Dream rules in its darkest form and where "every nightmare is played out."(Harris, 2014, P.212) His cell is built from his deepest fears and is guarded by a demon snake. Typical of Loki, he dreams of rebirth and hopes to be the one that brings light to the new world, uttering his last words in Dream:

Let there be light
Let there be light
Let there be…(Harris, 2014, p.214)

3. 1 VS 2 (Associations Binary Opposition)

A. Male Vs Female

Norse mythology offers a gender-related cultural framework that defines femininity and masculinity for many historical periods that followed. Historians have provided an image about The Viking age, for example, as being patriarchal; therefore, men were expected to be strong and muscular, display warrior traits, and, above all, honorable. Women, on the other hand, should be beautiful, fertile, and show good qualities of maintaining a house. Although Norse mythology gave exceptional roles to exceptional women, like some goddesses that have superpowers, women who practice seidor, and those with heroic achievements like the Valkyrie, the distribution of oppositions is rather complex between the two genders. (Linke, 1989)

Loki sets the reader's mind regarding gender roles in ancient Norse mythology through telling two myths, "Fire and Ice" and "Aesir and Vanir." In "Fire and Ice" Loki retells the Norse creation myth from his point of view, adding, editing and removing specific details to suit the modern reader. He concentrates on the metaphoric use of words to represent the worlds of fire represented by Chaos and ruled by Surt and ice represented by Order that is ruled by no one. Fire initiated life by piercing ice. Since there is a great lack of references concerning the beginning of life in Germanic and Scandinavian texts, anthropologists turned to Norse mythology as primary sources for understanding and analyzing this belief system. Levi Strauss is one of those anthropologists who set a list of metaphors referring to gender derived directly from this creation myth. Fire stands for male, as does Surt with his burning sword, along with all adjectives used for describing the world of Chaos namely light, hot, and dry. Ice, on the other hand, stands for female, as does darkness, cold, and wet. (Linke, 1989) Loki does not stray away from these metaphors and keeps true to the creation myth as an analog for sexual union. However, it is vital to note that unlike other mythologies that give males the major role in creation, Norse mythology shows that both male and female are equal in the creation process.

In "Aesir and Vanir," Loki tells the myth of Gullveig – Heid and how the Vanir send her to Odin as an envoy to teach him runes and how he is insulted by her presence. He concentrates on how the Aesir are patriarchal and how they never give women great authority. This is evident in the Norse pantheon for no female goddess stands out compared to other male gods. The Vanir and the Ice Folk are described as being matriarchal; therefore, Gullveig – Heid, Freyja, and Skadi are the only female figures that show strength of characters, the first two being from the Vanir while the last one is from the Ice Folk.

In the novel, the majority of female characters show two typical types of women as mentioned in Loki's women, with Skadi as an exception. Masculinity, however, is typically represented by Thor with his brutal Viking strength and iconic hammer. Loki shows how significant brutal power is through the stealing of Thor's hammer. According to "The Bridesmaid myth," Thrym, one of the chiefs of Ice Folk, steals Thor's hammer and demands the goddess of Desire, Freyja, in return. He gives the gods eight days to deliver the goddess as a bride in exchange for the hammer. So Loki suggests tricking Thrym by dressing Thor up as a bride while he becomes his bridesmaid. Thor despises degrading himself to a female level, let alone dressing up as a bride. He is so protective of his masculinity, and his quest for his stolen Mjolnir is symbolic of his stolen manhood, for "masculinity is prized attribute of Thor." (Wolf, 2020, p.109). Loki, on the other hand, dresses as a handmaid with delight, having no need to be seen as masculine, not threatened by costumes and definitely seeming immune to shame. (Wolf, 2020)

The groom holds a grand wedding with a banqueting hall populated with Ice Folk gathered for the grand feast and with a lot of mead that is enough for an army of drinkers. Thor is invited to eat; unfortunately, Thor has a healthy appetite, and since he is angry, he eats eight salmons, a whole roast ox, and all the little delicacies laid in front of him. Such appetite is a negative trait in women but a strength point in men; therefore, Thrym is astonished "She likes to eat, doesn't she? How does she keep her figure?" to which Loki answers, "For eight days she's been on strict fast, she was worried about fitting into her wedding

dress."(Harris, 2014, p.94) Thrym lunges for his bride and manages to peek under the veil and is bewildered seeing Thor's eyes, "They're so fierc- they burn like embers!"(Harris, 2014, p.95) Loki tries to reassure Thrym that the bride is just anxious about her wedding night, "Oh, but my mistress hasn't slept for eight nights."(Harris, 2014, p.95) The groom, overjoyed with his bride's anticipation, places Thor's hammer on the bride's lap, and Thor's reaction is as fast as thunder. The moment Thor gets his hammer back, he regains his manhood brutally and savagely. He flings off his disguise, unveils his full Aspect, and kills each and every single man, woman, and even dogs that are in the hall. "Within five minutes the hall of Thrym was piled with broken corpses….Men, women, servants, dogs. All fell beneath Mjolnir."(Harris, 2014, p.96)

Opposed to the muscular male figure, Loki places himself as a lithe male figure with masculinity that not only matches Thor's but perhaps surpasses it. He chooses to have a lithe body in a society that worships muscular figures to offer a change in perspective. He describes Thor as "a muscle – bound oaf with more beard than brain."(Harris, 2014, p.27) He sometimes describes him with envy because he is loved by all; then he assumes that this admiration is because people are not threatened by his intelligence. He tells the reader that "I was the opposite: no muscles, but too damn smart, and the Folk mistrusted me."(Harris, 2014, p.97) He succeeds in sweeping away all the ladies from the muscular type and hitting Thor where it hurts most by cuckolding him by tempting his wife and taking her hair as a trophy.

Although Loki shapeshifts to all types of creatures, both male and female, as will be discussed in the next binary, he remains proud of his lithe physique in spite of all the prejudice he faces because of it:

There are races that hate each other on sight…and though I didn't know much of the Worlds, I guessed that the straightforward, muscular type would be the natural enemy of the lithe and devious type who thinks with his head and not his fists. (Harris, 2014, p.23)

B. Hugin VS Munin:

In Norse mythology, Odin has two supernatural ravens named Hugging and Muninn that travel the entire Nine Worlds every day with the break of dawn, collecting information and delivering it to Odin at dinner time. In most representations of Odin, these two ravens are seen perching on his shoulders with their beaks in his ears. Therefore, he is referred to as the raven – god in some myths. (Cottrell, 2006) These two ravens are personifications of Odin's intellect in bird form, granting him wisdom, with Hugging representing thought and Muninn representing memory. (Sayers, 2022) They are not a contrasting binary but coexisting and complementary, with one dependent on the other. Hugging represents the present thinking state of Odin, while Muninn represents his collective history, past experiences, and recollections. Together they represent Odin's wisdom and consciousness in combining the past with the future, mental activity, and mental storage. (Sayers, 2022)

In the novel, the ravens are called Hugin and Munin and Loki pays great attention to these ravens and follows their trail while scouting the Worlds for gossip and news. Odin uses them to spy on Loki, and Loki baits them to know what is on Odin's mind. He reminds the reader that since they are Odin's

companions, they are not ordinary birds; they are trained to carry his thoughts anywhere in the Nine Worlds. Hugging is male and Munin is female; they looked like twins except for a white streak in Munin's hair. They are part of his power through which he can see everything; therefore, Loki notices that the ravens are spying on him, so in order to understand why, he follows their trail. The ravens first scout Hel, so Loki visits Hel and learns that Balder and his mother are having nightmares about death. Second, they visit Ironwood and he learns that they judged Fenris as a threat and accordingly, he should be neutralized.

In "Cake," Loki tracks the ravens and bribes them with Sigyn's homemade cakes. Hugin is the largest of the pair, while Munin's speech is clearer, and Loki manages to learn from them that Yggdrasil is shaking from its roots. Odin is furious with Loki and threatens to kill him if he comes near his raven again. Then Loki starts playing with fate by killing Balder, insulting all the gods, and running away, hiding and changing Aspect. The ravens are able to track and find him delivering Odin's threat; if Loki does not surrender, Odin will kill his twin boys.

Finally, the ravens come to his tent during Ragnarok in human form, and Loki is happy that "Odin's Spirit and Odin's mind, finally wanting to make a deal."(Harris, 2014, p.196) The ravens seem alert, and Loki is delighted, but he is surprised that Odin asks Loki to surrender and avert the prophecy, assuring him that Gullveig – Heid planed the entire prophecy while Mimir was still alive in the Vanir camp. Since she is a seeress, she told Mimir that Odin is going to sacrifice him, and together they plotted Odin's fall through Loki, but if Loki surrenders Odin will take him back, while Lord Surt will never take him back. Loki does not surrender out of pride, and he is ready to be used, manipulated, betrayed, and even die in the battle rather than admit that Odin is right.

C. True Nature VS ShapeShifting:

Shapeshifting is the ability to physically change into an animal, another person, or even an inanimate object. Although shapeshifting occurs in all mythologies, not all shapeshifters are equal, for some are heroic, some are villains, and others are cursed. The shapeshifter is determined through his choice of animal thus is judged according to that animal's attributes. (Adkins, 2023)

In the novel, the Aesir gods are incapable of shapeshifting and can only change their true Aspect by increasing their physical size to its full potential. Odin and Thor, on different occasions, change into their full Aspects to raise terror in the hearts of their enemies, especially during the capture of Loki and during Ragnarok. Their full Aspects usually include them wearing majestic armor, holding their magical weapons, and being accompanied by their supernatural animals. The Vanir, as well as the Ice Folk and Giants, are all able to shapeshift because they mastered runes and cantrips. However, in the novel, we see from the Vanir gods only Freyja shapeshifting from a maiden into a crone and Heimdall into his hawk Aspect to catch and kill Loki. The Ice Folk allied themselves with Gullveig – Heid, who gave them the power of runes and thus are able to shapeshift. Thiassi shapeshifts into an eagle Aspect to catch Loki and ask for Idun and her apples of immortality in return, while Thrym shapeshifts into an eagle Aspect to steal

Thor's hammer. They both shapeshift to disguise their true Aspect, but Loki uses his glam and cantrips to reveal them. Skadi changes into her snow wolf Aspect to catch Loki. The giants at Utgard Hall shapeshift, but Loki cannot reveal their true Aspect because the entire Hall is filled with polished shield, so whenever he casts a cantrip, it reflects on the shields.

The two women Loki gets involved with are master shapeshifters, the sorceress Gullveig – Heid and the giantess Angrboda. Loki is mainly attracted to their shapeshifting ability. Although in original Norse mythology Odin is a master shapeshifter, in the novel only Loki is portrayed as the ultimate shapeshifter, born shapeless and formless Wildfire, but assuming the shape of a lithe young red-headed man.

Loki's first shapeshifting adventure may come as a shock to a reader unfamiliar with Loki, for not only does he assume the shape of an animal, but also he takes up the shape of a female horse as well. In the "Pony and Trap" myth, in order to save the gods from the builder who wants goddess Freyja and the shields of the sun and moon in return for building a great wall for Asgard with the aid of his magnificent horse, Loki shapeshifts into a mare to attract the builder's horse. The horse, Svadilfari, is exceptionally strong and is the main reason behind the builder's speedy building. So, in order to delay the builder, Loki shapeshifts into a mare, and as Loki describes himself, "a very pretty mare…her mane was long, her flanks were smooth, her eyes were bright and inviting."(Harris, 2014, p.36) The horse is not able to resist the mare, so he shakes himself free and joins the pretty mare galloping across the plain. Not only does he transform into a female animal, he mothers the famous eight – legged Sleipnir.

Then again, Loki shapeshifts into a fly to disturb the goldsmiths aiming to corrupt their work to win a wager. He also shapeshifts into a flea and hides in Freyja's cleavage to spy on her and gain leverage to take revenge from her. Again, he shapeshifts into hawk Aspect to kidnap Idun and give her to Thiassi. Changing into his hawk Aspect is Loki's most frequent transformation, mainly to escape Sigyn and domestic life and also once to set a trap to take revenge from Thor. It is one of his most frequent Aspects after Wildfire. Finally, he shapeshifts into a salmon to escape the wrath of the gods after Balder's death.

Loki shapeshifts into Wildfire whenever he feels threatened or alienated from the popular crowd. During Ragnarok, Loki continuously shapeshifts Aspects between his human Aspect and Wildfire. Unfortunately, in his final stand, Heimdall prevented him from shapeshifting into Wildfire using all water and ice cantrips, a matter that enabled Heimdall to catch Loki and throw him from a considerable height into the burning battlefield of Ida, making him an easy catch for the Dragon of Darkness, Lord Surt, to snap him.

A considerable number of studies are conducted concerning Loki's shapeshifting ability, concentrating on what he shapeshifts into and why. Most of these studies focus on Loki's gender fluidity, or flexible masculinity; others condemn him for androgyny, bisexuality, homosexuality, and even bestiality. Since he is from Chaos, an archetypal trickster figure, he enjoys breaking boundaries on three main levels: physical, social, and moral, making him a typical revolutionary character. In an article entitled "The Liminality of Loki," Allison Wolf identifies Loki as a threshold individual that is a liminal entity that is between positions defined by law and costume. (Wolf, 2020) Loki changes his physical shape to

symbolize the theme of deception and the hypocrisy of society in myths like “Apples,” in which Loki shapeshifts to save Idun, whom he kidnaps in the first place. (Wolf, 2020)

Although Loki shapeshifts to various genera in the animal kingdom to serve specific purposes, his metamorphosis is condemned as bestiality. In an article “The Flexible Masculinity of Loki,” Armann Jakobsson states the clear link between shapeshifting and bestiality is not only enjoying sexual adventures, but procreating “transgressive apocalyptic children.”(Jakobsson, 2020, P.20) Furthermore, his bestiality can be grouped with homosexuality or androgyny, especially in the case of shapeshifting into a mare mothering a colt.

In another article that questions Loki’s gender binarism, he is analyzed according to gender theory as gaining the advantages of heterosexuality, yet the fact that he is referred to with male pronouns in the original myth as well as in all adaptations establishes him as gender fluid. (Laureando, 2022) Many researchers believe Loki to be a mediator between two binary notions of sex, that he is neither male nor female and is proud of having the best of the two sexes. (Kachuba, 2023)

However, these terms are misleading and do not match Loki’s character simply because adapting a certain gender serves a greater purpose; since the horse that needs to be distracted is male, he had to be a female. He becomes an old woman to deceive Frigg because it is easier to trust an old woman than an old man. (Jakobsson, 2020) Wolf believes that Loki’s switch between sexes enabled Odin to gain his majestic horse and Thor his hammer. (Wolf, 2020)

Final note on Loki’s shapeshifting quality: it is essential to understand that his shapeshifting is an expression of his personality; therefore, although it might seem to be an advantage to the gods most of the time, it also caused vital events that led to the complete destruction of the Nine Worlds. Loki shapeshifts into an old woman who refuses to weep for Balder, and by this disguise he becomes a strong activist of change, first by causing Balder’s death and second by forcing him to stay dead by not weeping. His disguise ignites the Norse apocalypse. (Wolf, 2020) Furthermore, his apocalyptic progeny that resulted from two master shapeshifters caused the fall of the Norse gods.

D. Runes Vs Cantrips

Runes are the equivalent to Alphabets, but the Norse treated them with reverence mixed with fear. The word ‘rune’ in Old Norse means ‘secret’ or ‘mystery’; hence, they were, and still are, associated with magic, deviation and prophecy. Although the history of this system is highly debated, scholars agree that runes were used for identification, commemoration, protection, and divination. (knight, 2000) They believed that these runes have magical powers, they are signs of ownership, and were discovered by Odin as the main source of his divinity. Therefore, sorcery was considered divine, and it is an art practised by Odin, the Vanir deities of nature, and the dwarfs.(Cotterell, 2006) (Scott, 2018) With the spread of Christianity, runes were banned because they were considered ‘demonic’ and ‘letters of the devil’. (Farnell, 2019) However, runes resurfaced again during the Nazi period and were used in logos throughout Germany, namely Hitler’s (Sig) rune, meaning victory. In British literature, runes were

evident as well, like in J.R.R. Tolkien's ***The Hobbit*** (1954), in which runes were used in maps. Yet, the strongest revival of runes came in the mid-1980s with the spread of the revival of pagan religions, among which Norse runes are the most popular. (Farnell, 2019)

Runes are considered the oldest form of writing in Europe, and mythology plays an integral role in understanding them. It is important to note that the fear of using runes in writing delayed the recording of Norse mythology; therefore, although the writing is the oldest, the mythology is considered the most recent compared to other European mythology simply because it is an oral tradition and was not recorded until later on. According to the Norse creation myth, Odin hanged himself from Yggdrasil, the World Tree, for nine days and nights without food and drink and bleeding, sacrificing an eye to receive the wisdom of the runes. Upon having the runes, Odin gained power over all things ever since. Odin bestowed these runes on the other gods and goddesses in his pantheon. Therefore, each rune contains meaning derived from a specific deity. (Farnell, 2019) Odin allowed humans to use runes as a means for communication with the divine, seeking blessings and warnings and for casting curses. (Farnell, 2019)

In the novel, Loki stresses the magical aspect of the runes, specifying the sixteen letters of the Elder Script to refer to Elder Futhark. It is important to know that the Elder Futhark consists of twenty – four runes, while Younger Futhark consists of sixteen. Harris uses fourteen out of twenty-four in the novel to show binary oppositions in characterization and theme. However, we will focus only on those closely related to Loki.

The primal source of runes is fire from the center of Chaos, and every time one of the deities used their stolen rune, the world of Chaos shakes in rage. The runes' danger lies in their function; they are used for shapeshifting, casting a spell on an enemy, writing a story, and carving a name on a trunk of a tree. Loki concentrates on the fact that simply writing a story with a rune is as dangerous as shapeshifting or casting spells. Furthermore, the world of Chaos itself revolts from such uses of runes, a matter that makes Loki curious to know those creatures who dare to use runes so carelessly: "Chaos shivered in outrage and I grew increasingly curious. Who were these people, whose influence I could feel across the Worlds? How was it that I could sense them, and did they even know I was there?" (Harris, 2014, p.14)

Since Loki is Wildfire, three runes are used against him. The Logr rune means water, river, and waterfalls.(Thorvald, 2024) This rune is used twice against Loki, once by Heimdall, and he finds himself painfully quenched. The second time by Gjalp, one of Geirrod's plain daughters, causing the river to swell and sweep him along with Thor. The Hagall is an ice rune used thrice: once by Loki when fighting Thiassi, second to represent Hel drawing the initials of her name and that of Balder as Bjarkan, and third and last by Heimdall to knock Loki sideways on the battlefield. Isa meaning ice is Skadi's rune that she wears on her arm. Isa rune symbolizes challenges, introspection, destruction, and clarity. (Thorvald, 2024) It is the same rune that Heimdall uses to yank Loki out of his fiery Aspect and it is a fast rune that Loki fears the most. It is important to notice that Logr, Hagall, and Isa are ice and water runes; therefore, they are used mostly against Loki.

In “Blood and Water,” Harris dedicates the entire story to Loki’s rune, Kaen. As it seems, Odin knows Loki and has been watching him in Dream, so he approaches him armed with runes and glam, and Loki is mesmerized, “I could see it in the colours swirling all around him and by the signature he left, as a unique as a fingerprint.” (Harris, 2014, p.14) Odin calls Loki using his full name, tempting him to leave Chaos and become a god next to him in the pantheon. Loki breaks the norms and leaves Chaos to meet Odin, taking the shape of a human. Odin persuades him to join his camp to rule the worlds and gives him the rune Kaen, which is Wildfire that suits Loki’s demonic nature perfectly. Loki, as part of his history story, describes in detail how Odin tricks him out of Chaos by leaving his mark of allegiance on Loki’s arm, depriving him of the chance to go back to Chaos. Loki’s reception of his rune is painful, and it is his first experience with physical pain, and it took so much of Odin’s power that his colours faded. The rune is like a violet tattoo in the shape of a broken twig, and Odin considers it a badge of loyalty, making Loki Odin’s brother in blood or glam. Loki refuses this invasion of his physical form, stating that he does not need this badge: “They’re just some of the letters that make up the language of Chaos. I don’t need runes to do what I do. I can tap Chaos at the source.”(Harris, 2014, p.19) To Loki’s disappointment, he learns that he cannot tap Chaos at the source in human form nor outside the worlds of Dream and Chaos, henceforth, he has to work for it.

Kaen rune is the key to Loki’s characterization, for he is literally Wildfire incarnated, “Wildfire is hard to control: volatile; unpredictable. I’m not making excuses or anything, but it’s in my nature to be troublesome.”(Harris, 2014, p.15) Kaen rune, also called Kennaz, symbolizes creativity, inspiration, vision, and improvement. (Thorvald, 2024) He first uses the rune as a tangible cantrip in “Hello and Welcome” against Heimdall’s rune, Madr. Madr, also called Mannaz, symbolizes humanity, self, individuality, society, and human friendship.(Thorvald, 2024) The gods refuse Loki’s inclusion within their pantheon due to his crooked nature; furthermore, in Chaos, he is considered a traitor for leaving. Accordingly, Heimdall calls him a crooked rune, “Treachery’s a crooked rune that never flies straight, or hits the mark.”(Harris, 2014, p.22)

Loki instantly challenges his own crooked rune against Heimdall’s straight rune. Heimdall is the incarnation of straightforwardness portrayed as a ‘flashy type’ always wearing golden armour to match his teeth, and Loki frequently refers to him as Goldie. Loki describes him as being “pompous, rude and arrogant. His rune was Madr, straight as a die; boxy and pedestrian.”(Harris, 2014, p.22)

Loki challenges Heimdall in an archery contest to prove that crooked is better than straight since Heimdall is the best shot in Asgard; that is why he is called Hawkeye. After the red-rose signature of Madr hit the bullseye twice from different distances, it was Loki’s turn. Loki turns the target around, making it impossible to aim at. Heimdall cannot shoot and declares that no one can shoot at the bullseye because it is impossible. Loki summons Kaen describing it as “a fiery rune, a quick rune, a shapeshifting, clever, crooked rune,”(Harris, 2014, p.24) and sends it in a curve, striking the bullseye from behind in a trick shot. This trick shot grants Loki acceptance among the gods and makes him an enemy as well.

Loki uses Kaen rune while saving Idun from Thiassi as well as two other runes, Hagall and Thuris. Hagall, also called Hagalaz, symbolizes hail, hailstorm, crisis, overcoming wrath and obstacles, being tested, and radical change.(Thorvald, 2024) Heimdall uses this rune during his final stand with Loki. While Loki is trying to get rid of Mimir's Head, Heimdall strikes him from behind with Hagall; to escape him, Loki shapeshifts into his Wildfire Aspect preventing Heimdall from taking hold of him. Heimdall tries different runes to immobilize Loki; however, Loki sears him with fire and flame while Heimdall struggles to take hold of his fiery Aspect. Finally, Heimdall uses Isa to freeze Loki in place, yanking him from his fiery Aspect to his human form, then sacrificing himself to kill Loki by jumping into the burning battlefield:

I felt something snap inside me, like a little bone. … They say you know instinctively whenever you break a bone, and in the same way I knew that what I'd just felt was the rune Kaen, giving up the last of its glam, revered by a violent psychic blow.(Harris, 2014, p.210)

1.7. Conclusions :

Although binary oppositions are powerful devices for literary criticism, they become more powerful through classification. The proposed three types of classification facilitates the literary critic's ability to detect opposites in a given literary text as well as analyze them more in a more comprehensive method. In our case, these three types enabled the researchers to accurately place all binary oppositions within a specific mode. Being in that mode fostered the literary analysis of the binary oppositions providing wider and deeper range of literary elements and devices. We have applied these same guidelines on two other mythological representation one Indian and the other Chinese and came up with the same depth of literary criticism. Henceforth, it can be concluded that the proposed three types offer guidelines for the identification, classification, and analysis of binary oppositions in modern representations of Norse mythology. The researchers recommend applying this classification on other mythological representations for identification and analysis of binary oppositions in literary texts.

Table (1)

Binary opposites in The Gospel of Loki (2014)

Binary type	Oppositions	Literary element
Existence Vs. Nonexistence 0 vs. 1	**History Vs. My-story**	**Setting :** Chaos Vs. Order **Characterization :** Odin vs. Loki as creators of history **Themes :** history is written by victors History is a spin and metaphor History is cyclic and repeats itself The power of the written word
	Immortality Vs.	**Setting :** Chaos (Immortal beings) Vs. Order (mortal beings) **Characterization:** All mortal gods Vs. Loki the immortal all creatures of Chaos

	Death	**Themes :** Death is inevitable The cyclic nature of Norse cosmos birth – destruction – rebirth
	Fate Vs. Free will	**Characterization:** **Free will characters :** all Aesir gods/ Gullveig - Heid **Fateful characters:** The three Norns/ Mimir's head/Loki **Themes :** no one can escape his/ her Destiny Determinism against fatalism Heroic ethos
	Stability Vs. Change	**Setting :** Chaos (change) Vs. Order (stability) **Characterization :** Agents of change Vs. Agents of stability **Agents of change (**Lord Surt/ Loki/ Gullveig – Heid) **Agents of stability** (Odin and all Asgardian gods) **Theme :** cyclic nature of the Norse cosmos
Coexistence 1 vs 1	**Order Vs. Chaos**	**Stetting**: Chaos Vs. Order **Characterization:** **Chaos:** Lord Surt/ Loki/ Gullveigh – Heid/ the Vanir gods & goddesses/ creatures classified as 'others' **Order:** The Aesir gods and goddesses **Themes:** nature vs nurture/ Xenophobic/ trickster/ **Symbolism:** fire/light-bringer/ change/ Asgard/ **Irony:** Odin agent of order seeks chaos for change, **Personification:** Lord Surt & Loki as Chaos
	Angrboda & Gullveig – Heid Vs. Sign	**Characterization:** erotic vs chaste Loki's women: erotic female Gullveigh-Heid/ erotic mother Angrboda vs chaste female and nurturing mother Sign. **Theme:** shape-shifting/ Chaos vs Order/ the power of runes **Symbolism:** demonic union produces exotic progeny
	Dream vs Reality	**Setting:** The river Dream **Characterization:** Gullveigh-Heid as manipulator and subjugator, Loki as the manipulated and all dreamers as the subjected. **Theme:** threshold existence, prophetic dreams, subjection through fear **Irony:** nightmares of snakes **Imagery:** describing dreams and dreamers/ the army **Personification:** dreams comes alive/ snakes
Associations 1 vs 2	**Male vs Female**	**Characterization:** masculinity vs femininity/ liminality/ Patriarchal (the Aesir) Matriarchal (the Vanir and the Ice folk) **Theme:** creation myth **Symbolism:** Chaos and order/ **Metaphor:** ice, darkness, hot, light, sexual union, Thor's hammer **Imagery:** creation myth
	Hugin VS Munin	**Metaphor:** Hugin (thinking state) & Munin (collective history) **Symbolism:** Hugin (thought) & Munin (Memory)

		Personification: Odin's intellect in bird form
	True Aspect VS Shape-shifting	**Characterization:** shapeshifters vs normal characters **Theme:** the power of magic and runes, gender fluidity, flexible masculinity, androgyny, bisexuality, homosexuality, bestiality. **Imagery:** Loki's hawk Aspect, Mare Aspect & Wildfire, **Symbolism:** the animals Loki chooses to shapeshifts into Magical armour and weapons/
	Runes vs Cantrips	**Characterization:** rune for each deity while Chaos characters are workers with runes, mistress of runes, **Theme:** pursuit of knowledge/ **Motif:** frequently used throughout the novel **Symbolism:** Loki uses Kaen rune to win over Heimdal/ Hagall, Isa, and Logr runes are frequently used against Loki and causes his capture **Personification:** Loki's rune Wildfire & Heimal's rune Madr

Works Cited

Abrams, M. H. (2005). *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (6th ed.). New York: harcourt Brace College Publishers. Retrieved 1 13, 2025

Adkins, C. D. (2023). Carnivore Incarnate: Wicked Wolves and Noble Bears in Norse Tales of Shape-Shifting. *Preternature Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural, 1*(12), 1-16. doi:10.5325/preternature.12.1.0001

Ahmadi, A., Mostaali, M. N., Piri, F., & Bajelani, M. R. (2013, July). Binary Oppositions in the Structure of Masnavi Stories. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research, 4*(4), 724-730. doi:DOI: 10.4304/jltr.4.4.724-730

Atkins, L. T. (2016, April). A Structural Study of Myth in Neil Gaiman's Adult Novels and Graphic Compositions: Relating Claude Lévi-Strauss to Contemporary Fiction. *Thesis*. Pennsylvania , United States of America : University of Pennsylvania .

Bertens, H. (2005). *Literary Theory : The Basics* . New York: Routledge . Retrieved 1 13, 2025, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Literary_Theory/zYn4uiNCIj8C?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=classification+of+binary+opposites+in+literature&pg=PA62&printsec=frontcover

Bowker, J. (2006). *World Religions: Great Faiths Explored and Explianed.* New York: Dorling Kindersley.

Chakraborty, A. (2021, October). Numbers of Ancient Hinduism. *International Journal of Sceintific Research in Multidisciplinary Studies, 7*(10), 16-17. Retrieved 8 17, 2015, from https://www.isroset.org/pub_paper/IJSRMS/3-ISROSET-IJSRMS-06701.pdf

Clayton, M. (2018). *Hindu Mythology: A Captivating Guide to Hindu Myths, Hindu Gods, and Hindu Goddesses.* CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Crocker, C. (2018). The discourse of dreams in medieval saga writing. *Scandia: Journal of Medieval Norse Studies, 1*(1), 69-96. Retrieved 6 28, 2026, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343615570_The_discourse_of_dreams_in_medieval_saga_writing

Cuddon, J. A. (2012). *A Dictionary of Literary Terms & Literary Theory.* New York : Wiley Blackwell . Retrieved 1 13, 2025, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/A_Dictionary_of_Literary_Terms_and_Liter/XaEYNBoNoNkC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=glossary+of+literary+terms%2Bmyth&pg=PT560&printsec=frontcover

Farnell, K. (2019). *Reading the Runes: A Beginner's Guide* . Canada : Hampton Road Publishing Company Inc. . Retrieved 5 6, 2026, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Reading_the_Runes/CslaDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=guide%2Brunes&printsec=frontcover

Feisner, E. A. (2006). *Color : How to Use Colour in Art and Design.* London: Laurence King. Retrieved 8 17, 2025, from

https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Colour/uw0JRpdKQ6MC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=blue+color+symbolism+in+hinduism&pg=PA125&printsec=frontcover

Gong, F. (2020, January). The Binary Opposition of the Themes in Housman's"Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries". *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research, 435*, 315-316. doi:10.2991/assehr.k.200428.068

Gul, N., Farooq, A., & Ali, A. (2022, June). Saussure's Concept of Binary Oppositions: Looking Through the Lens of the Holy Qur'an. *Al-azhaar, 8*(1), 111 - 116. doi:10.46896/alazhr.v8i01.355

Jakobsson, Á. (2020). The Flexible Maculinity of Loki. *Limes. Studia i materiały z dziejów Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej (czasopismo archiwalne)*, 16-27. Retrieved 7 4, 2026, from https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=The+Flexible+Masculinity+of+Loki&hl=en&as_sdt=0,5

Jansen, E. R. (Ed.). (1993). *The Book Of Hindu Imagery : Gods, Manifestations and Their Meaning* . Netherlands: Binkey Kok Publications. Retrieved 8 16, 2025, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/The_Book_of_Hindu_Imagery/1iASyoae8cMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=sun+symbolism%2Bhinduism&pg=PA52&printsec=frontcover

Kachuba, J. B. (2023). Societal Déjà Vu — Gender-Bender Shapeshifting as a Cultural Mirror. *Journal of Scientific Exploration, 37*(1), 1-4. doi:10.31275/20232889

Khatri, A. (2025). *Mythology Facts.* Publifye AS. Retrieved 7 3, 026, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Mythology_Facts/8GhJEQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=norse+gods+are+not+immortal&pg=PT20&printsec=frontcover

knight, S. (2000). *Little Giant Encyclopedia: Runes* . New York: STERLING. Retrieved 5 6, 2026, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Runes_Little_Giant_Encyclopedia/pKCFOW3-sHMC?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=encyclopedia%2Brunes&printsec=frontcover

Kudrya-Marais, E. V., & Olalere, F. E. (2022, March). The Spiritual Language of Colour: A Case Study of Colour Symbolism in Hindu Community in South Africa. *Pharos Journal of Theology, 103*, 1-15. doi:10.46222/pharosjot.10321

Laine, O. (2017). *Norse Mythology: The Heroes, Gods, Sagas, Beliefs And Rituals of Nordic Mythology* . CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Laureando, A. M. (2022). Loki's Gender Fluidity and Bisexuality in Norse Mythology and in Modern Adaptations. *Thesis*, 15. Università degli Studi di Padova. Retrieved 7 5, 2026, from https://thesis.unipd.it/retrieve/fa373957-0103-4549-a738-196796a63402/Martinelli_Alice_tesi_completa.pdf

Linke, U. (1989). Women, Androgynes, and Models of Creation in Norse Mythology. *The Journal of Psychohistory*, 240. Retrieved 7 3, 2026, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232552726_Women_androgynes_and_models_of_creation_in_Norse_mythology

Mortensen, K. (2011). *A Handbook of Norse Mythology* . New York: Dover Publication, Inc. .

Orchard, A. (1997). *Dictionary of Norse Myth and Legends* . Cassell.

Peliño, T. J. (2025). Myths Across Civilizations: A Cross – Cultural Inquiry into Mythology, Folklore, and Literary Tradition. 1-23. Retrieved 7 4, 2026, from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/397869413_Myths_Across_Civilizations_A_Cross-Cultural_Inquiry_into_Mythology_Folklore_and_Literary_Traditions

Pumphrey, N. (2018). *The Mythology Book : Big Ideas Simply Explained* . London : Penguin Random House .

Reed, A. (2024). *Numerology : A Comprehensive Guide to The Power of Numbers* . Rivercat Books LLC. Retrieved 5 23, 25, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Numerology/bsEpEQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=chinese+numerology&pg=PT24&printsec=frontcover

Sayers, W. (2022). THE MYTHOLOGICAL NORSE RAVENS HUGINN AND MUNINN: INTERROGATORS OF THE NEWLY SLAIN. *Studia Linguistica Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis, 2*(139), 143–155. doi: 10.4467/20834624SL.22.008.15632

Scott, A. (2018). *Norse Mythology.* Charles River Editors .

Sharma, K. (2022). *Waking Hindu.* Bangalore: HSRA. Retrieved 8 17, 2025, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Waking_Hindu/MkzmDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=orange+color%2Bhinduism&pg=PA47&printsec=frontcover

Taşdelen, E. (2025). Louise Glück's "A Myth of Innocence" and the Myth of Persephone:. *Istanbul Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Dergisi, 45*(1), 240-261. doi:https://doi.org/10.26650/SJ.2025.45.1.0763

Telaumbanua, E. A., Sayuti, S. A., & Sari, S. A. (2024). Binary Opposition between Characters against Myths in theNovel Begu Ganjang by Ferdiriva Hamzah. *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (EAJMR), 3*(11), 5269 - 5284. doi:https://doi.org/10.55927/eajmr.v3i11.11850

Thorvald, B. (2024). *The North Mythology Bible:* . Independently published.

Tripathi, A. (2019). *Ram Chandra Series: Raavan Enemy of Aryavatra.* Chennai : Westland Publications Private Limited . Retrieved 8 16, 2025, from file:///C:/Users/Dell/Desktop/raavan-enemy-of-aryavarta.pdf

Vijay Karthic, R. (2024). Crafting a Divine Realm: An Analysis of World-Building Techniques in Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy. *Educational Administration Theory and Practice journal, 30*(5), 15095-15099. doi:10.53555/kuey.v30i5.8321

Wellman, B. (2023). *Indian Mythology: an Enthralling Overview of Myths, Gods, and Goddesses From India.* Billy Wellman.

Wolf, A. (2020). The Liminality of Loki. *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies, 27*, 106-113. doi:10.29173/scancan179

Yanko, X. (2016). *RUNES: An introductory guide to the Elder FUTHARK*. USA: Lulu Publishing Co. . Retrieved 6 24, 2016, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/RUNES_An_introductory_guide_to_the_Elder/yWR0DQAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=Eihwaz+rune&pg=PA13&printsec=frontcover

YELTEKİN, E. O., & GÖRMEZ, A. (2025). The Analysis of the Relationshi p Between East and West in Orhan Pamuk's Whıte CastleThrough Lévi-Strauss's Method of Bi nary Opposition. *EUROASIA JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES, 12*(14), 65-74. doi:http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17009570

Zhang, M. L. (2005). *Destiny and You: An Intertwined Journey*. XSpurts.Com. Retrieved 6 28, 2026, from https://www.google.iq/books/edition/Destiny_and_You/CCDREAAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=norse+mythology%2Bfate&pg=PT33&printsec=frontcover

Zou, X. (2023, 6 8). Myth Theory and Structuralism - A Study of Levi - Strauss's Mythological Research from Myth and Meaning. *Social Science Humanities and Sustainability Research, 4*(3), 106 - 110. doi:10.22158/sshsr.v4n3p106