

## Ragnarök: Identity Crisis and Gender Discourses Through Norse Mythology in Modern Society

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Ragnarök, a show on Netflix, is a representation of "a predetermined state or end." Everyone is trying to seek out who they are, yet nobody really knows. Due to problems with identity, perhaps all of the events of the Ragnarök will occur in this new, modern era. For this paper, we have selected Laurits and Isolde from this series. Their identity issues and conforming upbringing make them a unique character. My paper's aim is to explore how Norse mythology can interpret LGBTQ people in modern society; it is embroiling traditional histories and culminating in components that resonate with LGBTQ identities and experiences. Furthermore, this paper is exerting Norse mythology by Neil Gaiman, *The Gospel of Loki* by Joanne Harris, *Vouspos*, *Thrym* by poetic Edda and *Extraordinary Bodies* by Rosemarie Garland Thomson books as secondary books. The paper employs Norse mythology, gender discourses, comparative literature, queer theory, and interdisciplinary approaches. This paper focuses on the sub-heroes Isolde and Laurits Seier and their connection with Norwegian modern society.

**Keywords:** Gender Discourses, Gender and Sex, Identity Crisis, Modern Interpretation, Norse Mythology.

### Introduction:

'Representation is the organization of the perception of (actual bodily differences) into comprehensibility, a comprehensible that is always frail, coded, in other words, human. - (Dyer 03)

The Norse mythology has lingered for the world, displayed strangely present and immediate, while other, better-documented methods of credence felt as if they were part of the bygone, old things. Norse mythology has experienced a rejuvenescence in popular culture, significantly impacting the contemporary world in the neoteric years. Particularly noteworthy is Isolde's identity dilemma, which is intertwined with larger gender debates.

When Fjor saw Isolde and her friend Magne, he asked, "Are you recruiting new members for Greenpeace, or what?.. Then he said again, "You should watch into her; she's a bit of a fanatic (Ragnarök 1.1, 10: 12-10: 15)". Her peregrination gleams a battle for self-definition in a society that often burden with

rigid gender norms. Another main character is Laurites, he is not the protagonist, but he is kind of the main character from the second season. "I need to tell you something about last night...at Vidar's. Magne asked, what are you... In the middle of the conversation, he showed his power, then Magne asked him, You're one of them now? Of course not. I am just playing the game. We're still brothers, right? Laurits said. Magne said, prove it (Ragnarök 2.3, 20: 23-20: 26)" He has the freedom of speech and identity and expression as well; here the astonishing thing is that he is joining the deity of Norse mythology and Ragnarök as well (Ragnarök,1.6, 19: 22-19: 28). Containing components provides a nuanced portrayal of Laurits's procession, emphasizing the importance of embracing diverse identities. Through Laurites expression, language, and vagrant life, tell us in modern times so many things.

### Research Methodology:

The myths of a cool place with long, long winter nights and endless summer days, the myths of a people who did not entirely trust or even like their gods, though they respected and feared them—that is Norse mythology. “The pre-Christian culture bestowed women elevated positions because of goddess influences. At the present-day women can refer to point as instance these to support their mission to raise the circumstance of women within a patriarchal or orthodox society” (Hartsuyker 75). Isolde’s character is playing a significant role here. Isolde is not the only one girl here; Iman Reza is the other girl who is bisexual; she is a kind of stubborn girl. She doesn’t care about anybody like Hartsuyker told. In Norse mythology that is illustrated, the notion of queer or transgender and a follower of the

Northern tradition, establishing a community of queer and transgender practitioners (Kaldera 67). This paper argues with Kaldera’s point regarding these transgender or queer factors because already Loki is there in the mythology. Carol Christ has argued that “it is essential for religions to include images of women deity in order for women to affirm the ‘acceptability and holiness of their identities’” (62). The point is written only for those women who believe and trust them. In modern adaptation there are uncountable women who do not believe this myth. Norse mythology has to support the system, but it could not support the female principals. Norse mythology was only written about homosexuality for men to men, and that time, men were so powerful than women.

Loki has power to change his gender. This is clear in his transformation into a mare bearing Sleipnir. Norse mythology drew people from many sexual backgrounds. According to prevailing Christian eloquence, LGBTQ people are heretics, sinners, and abominations to God. LGBTQ Christians in these integrated discourses that stressed the inclusiveness of racial, classed, and gendered groups typically trimmed by Christian authority, by contrast actively challenging accepted discourses. Emphasizing giving affirmation for underprivileged social groups, all of these discourses anchored this provision in specific scripture instances.

This perspective of social construction holds that gender is the cultural meaning that becomes somewhat linked to the sexed body. No, it is the war of the common people, not the LGBTQ people. Here under LGBTQ literature, everything has occurred because identity crises, gender discourses, and queer theory are all in that same literature, because they all have only one stigma about the gender binary system.

And here Laurits from Ragnarök is different, in Harris’s Loki has a different origin, different motives, and even looks different (Harris’s has red hair, for one thing). But their nature is same. The framework in which Loki’s Gospel is set is that of a straightforward retelling of almost each scene in which he appears in the sources, with little alteration made to the plots of the mythical retelling. Laurits is changing his gender; he has personality to understand human. And one more thing: this is a mythology, mythology can change; anywhere to any forms, so

characters can change easily. This paper included comparative literature because one subject is linked with another, like Norse mythology is linked with queer theory.

Then, Is Ragnarök a battle for LGBTQ people? Why have he and Isolde felt identity crises? Do gender and sex affect Norse mythology? How have these two figures emerged in gender discourse and lacked knowledge about the LGBTQ community in the modern world? My argument is that LGBTQ people exist in the modern adaptation on Norse mythology, if they came in front of everyone in Norwegian society, they try to adapt with them and survive but how people or society can see them, this is the main conflicting here. This intersection of ancient mythology and present issues underscore the enduring power of these stories to reflect and challenge our understanding of identity and gender.

### Main part:

There's no denying that Norse mythology was popular during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly in Scandinavia and Germany. This paper is associating to the web series, not part of the book. In the web series, it begins with natural disasters and culminates in the great battle between gods and giants. Edda was the last town in Norway to become Christian and to give up faith in the Norse God. "Primeval stories into a novelistic arc that probably begins with the genesis of the legendary nine worlds; delves into the exploits of the deities, dwarves, and giants; and culminates in Ragnarök, the twilight of the gods and the

rebirth of a new time and people, in Norse mythology".

Laurits was not evil; Loki is not either, though Laurits was avowedly not a violent for good. He is complicated. Magne is the primary protagonist in the web series Ragnarök; his brother is Laurits; by birth, he is a giant, and he is brazening with everyone. In the first episode of the first season, Isolde died because of Vidar, a giant and CEO of the Jutul industries. Isolde discovered several records against Jutul Industries over environmental issues. Vidar was held accountable for her mother's death, and Vidar can do anything for wiping out the whole people of Edda. Isolde has an identity crisis because she loves Saxa (Vidar's daughter), but Norse mythology did not support the relationship of a lesbian; that's why it hasn't been this type of thing (Hartsuyker 55). There is only one concept of homosexuality: a highly stressed man-to-man relationship. And no other relationship could be otherwise in old Norse mythology; there were many pieces of evidence that prove the existence of homosexuality or sexual perversion.

As in the web series, Isolde is a lesbian; as reading of a Norse mythological book, "there is no existence of that". Eve Kosofsky Sedwick images, "disability (or gender or homosexuality) would then be recognised as structuring a wide range of thought, language, and perception that might not be explicitly articulated as disability" (22). A female member of the Norwegian Bifrost put it this way: "If you make a wrong choice, then you have to deal with the consequences right away, and then it is not God who is angry

at you; it is you who has made a wrong choice, and then you have to learn from it.” For Saxa, Fjor, and their mother (giant), who is the principal of the college, there are so many people who don’t say anything about their father. Magne and Laurits came to Edda for Vidar and his family (giants). It started when Magne’s friend Isolde, died. Isolde is just a metaphor for gender discourse in the modern adaptation of Ragnarök; there is no such character in the books or Norse mythology. Isolde and Laurits: these two characters have a gender discourse issue because they always find their sexual identity, and “the difference between a natural sex and a culturally constructed gender,” Foucault said about breaks down, and “the spread of biopower is intimately linked to the social scientific discourses on sex and sexuality that proliferated during this period.”

Loki drinks too much, and he cannot guard his words or his thoughts or his deeds when he drinks. As per the series, the Vidar family is in a dilemma. That’s why Vidar and his giant’s family wanted to wipe out Laurites, to know that he (Laurits) is a god too. After hearing this from his stepmother, Laurites initiated changing his group. The only controversial case when it comes to the worship of the deities of Loki, “the troublemaker and trickster of the Nordic pantheon Racial-religious people see him as the span of miscegenation (he is the child of a giant); others view him as a destructive force due to his role in the killing of Jens (Balder) and demise of the gods in Ragnarök”, (Schnurbein 09). But in the web series, Laurits said, “No no. Balder dies in the Old Saga. Hod,

the blind, strikes him with an arrow, and then the Ragnarök begins and then the world ends. Then Balder said, Laurits, that was then. Don’t be scared. We’ll be rewriting the history (Ragnarök, 3.5,12: 15-12.18)”. The story is as per the book, but in the web series, Magne’s thought that Trickster is someone else. In the modern adaptation, before the reincarnation of Jens (Balder), he was Laurits’s boyfriend. Laurits has had an identity crisis for this issue since his childhood. He has a stepfather, and he is from the gay or queer community; these two reasons are always in his head.

His mother said to him, I know you don’t recognize gender and sexuality in that sense, but anyway...that means Laurites is Loki (Ragnarök 2. 5, 22: 23-22: 24). When Wotan is reborn to Odin, Laurites just went with his brother to see Wotan (Odin) that time, Wotan (Odin) said, be aware of Loki; he is a giant. Then he immediately went to the nurse and said someone was asking for you in that room. He saw Wotan’s (Odin’s) blood in her tray and injected it into his blood. From that time on, he became a god (Ragnarök 2.3, 18: 20-18: 25)

In the series, the owner of the burger business couldn’t not see Laurits and Jens kissing each other in the proper perspective. He felt ashamed to watch this. Sometimes the Norse gods were really gender queer, folk. Loki, the known gender-bender of the Norse pantheon, is the deity of mischief from a Norseman perspective. Loki advises Thor (Magne) to dress as a bride and pretend to be Freya in order to enter the giant’s stronghold and retrieve his hammer (from Norse mythology); in modern adaptation, Norwegian

people do not take it in a positive way; perhaps they thought of disability of gender. From my argument, of course they exist in Norse mythology, as this paper mentions, burger shop's story. To hear all the stories, this paper critically examines that modern day's adaptation is more conservative than primitive age. Because now-a-days people are ashamed to show their feelings for a man or woman. Laurits's mother also talked to him about it like a taunt, and Isolde didn't tell anyone because she thought people would judge her so easily. Too many web series, like Ragnarök, are there, which depends on Loki, but Isolde and their identity crisis, gender discourses are totally new.

Myth is not the real story; myth is all about metaphor. LGBTQ community is as true as the real thing in modern adaptation. LGBTQ people face too many problems to live their lives beyond the primitive age; it will change gender, sex, and identities in modern society. Through the books of Neil Gaiman, Joanne M. Harris, another writer's books or journals, and the web series "Ragnarök", Norse mythology is reimagined to explore identity crises and gender discourses. These narratives not only revive ancient myths but also give a platform to discuss modern existential and societal issues.

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