



**THE MYTH OF LOKI REVISED IN THE GOSPEL OF LOKI AND LOKI:
WHERE MISCHIEF LIES**

Fatma DEMİRBAKAN

**Master's Thesis
Department of English Language and Literature
Advisor: Prof. Dr. Tatiana GOLBAN**

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**LOKİ'NİN MÜJDESİ VE LOKİ FESATLIĞIN KALBİNDE'DE LOKİ
MİTİNİN REVİZE EDİLMESİ**

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**Yüksek Lisans Tezi
İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı
Danışman: Prof. Dr. Tatiana GOLBAN**

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TEKİRDAĞ NAMIK KEMAL UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
MASTER'S THESIS

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T.C.
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İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI
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TEKİRDAĞ-2022
Her hakkı saklıdır.

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I vow that in all the stages of preparation of this Master's Thesis, I have been strictly abiding by the academic rules and scientific ethics and that I have provided reference for every citation I have directly or indirectly used and works I have benefitted from are comprised of those I have listed in my references and that I have behaved accordingly to the spelling dictionary the institute specified.

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TEZ ONAY FORMU



ÖZET

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Mitlerin yeniden yazımı Rönesans döneminden beri var olmaktadır ve günümüzde de hala popüler bir uygulamadır. Özellikle postmodernist anlamda yeniden yazım ötekiye, önemsenmeyene ve marjinalleştirilmiş söz hakkı tanımayı amaçlar. Bu yüzden tapılmayan tanrı ve Ragnarok diye bilinen kıyameti getiren, tanrıların arasındaki düşman olarak anılan Loki, çağdaş edebiyatta kahraman olma şansını bulur. Hilekar tanrı olarak bilinen Loki, hilekar adındaki evrensel bir figürün özelliklerini de bünyesinde bulundurur; dümen çevirir, kandırır, yalan söyler ve kaosu getirir, ancak, sadece kendi bencil ihtiyaçlarını düşünen ilkel bir karakter olmaktan uzaklaşarak, insan özellikleri kazanır. Loki kendi duygu ve düşüncelerini derinden ifade eder ve ikili karşıtlığa ve katı kategorizeleştirmeye karşı gelen bir toplumun kahramanı olur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Loki, hilekar, mitlerin yeniden yazımı, İskandinav mitolojisi, Loki'nin Müjdesi, Loki Fesatlığın Kalbinde

ABSTRACT

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Rewriting myths existed since Renaissance and it is still a popular practice today. Especially in a postmodernist sense, rewriting aims to give voice to the other, to the slighted, marginalised characters. Therefore Loki as the god who is not worshipped and as the villain among the gods who brings apocalypse known as Ragnarok, finds the opportunity to be a hero in the contemporary literature. Also known as the trickster god, Loki possesses the qualities of a universal figure that is the trickster; he plays tricks, he deceives and lies, he brings chaos, however, he gains more human characteristics and moves away from being a primitive character whose only goal is to satisfy his selfish needs. Loki has his own thoughts and feelings expressed in depth and he becomes the hero in a society where binary oppositions and strict categorisation is rejected.

Keywords: Loki, trickster, rewriting myths, Norse mythology, The Gospel of Loki, Loki: Where Mischief Lies.

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INTRODUCTION

The goal of this thesis is to explain myth, the trickster figure and to show how Loki was represented in the Norse mythology and rewritten in the contemporary literature as a trickster god. Loki is a fascinating character because of his liminal nature. Therefore he is chosen out of all the characters in Norse mythology to be rewritten. He is the slighted god that no one worships in the old Norse society but his ambiguity, his resistance to binary oppositions and easy classification, his queer personality and being the other earns him importance and makes him a hero in the current age and society. Societal norms and culture is fluid and ever changing. Therefore Loki finally finds his voice after centuries.

The first chapter tries to give a definition of the myth from various important writers who contributed to the study of myth even though myth cannot be limited to one specific definition. Therefore different takes on the myth are provided. Myth has a lot of function and can be many things. Myth can be the stories of the old heroes exaggerated and deified or they might be an endeavour to answer important questions such as how the world and humans were created. Myths can be viewed as sacred since it explains the creation of everything as Eliade claims. Myths also can carry psychological properties as they are universal and reside in every human mind. They can either be signs of a complex as Freud argues or they can be archetypes as Jung defends.

Important concepts like 'archetypes' which are intuitive similar patterns of human behaviour and spontaneous reactions residing in the collective unconscious; and 'mythemes' which are smallest meaningful elements that bear a mythical substance; are explained in depth. Collective unconscious is separated from the personal unconscious. Collective unconscious refers to an inherited collective experience whereas personal unconscious refers to repressed personal feelings and thoughts. Instincts and archetypes are divided from each other in order to clear any confusion between them. Archetypes that are important to individuation process such as ego, shadow, anima/animus and self as well as the process itself are explained briefly. Lévi-Strauss argues that the starting point of a myth is the need for order. He

refuses a distinction between a “primitive mind” and “scientific mind” because in his opinion the human mind is the same in every era. Where people use math and experiments to answer certain questions, imagination was used to give answers to the same questions in the early civilization. The method differs but the same curiosity and the questions prevail. Myth is similar to the language but they differ because myth needs a language to exist. However mythemes are likened to constituent units of a language like phonemes and morphemes but mythemes exist in the sentence level. The relations of these mythemes are important for producing meaning.

The first chapter also aims to explain the trickster figure. Just like myth, the trickster figure also resists being defined as he is an ambiguous character who exists out of the boundaries of binary oppositions. He is both either and neither. He is in between and gray. He contains contradictory qualities. Important names who worked with the trickster figure such as; Radin, Jung, Babcock-Abrahams, Hynes and the characteristics of the trickster they provide are presented. Radin, influenced by Jung presents the trickster as an archetype as well as Jung. According to him the trickster is the symbol of an archetypal process for development of humanity. Jung views the trickster as the shadow archetype. Kerényi presents the trickster as the bringer of disorder and chaos and functions as the experience of what is forbidden. Ricketts names the trickster as Trickster-transformer-culture-hero and makes a distinction between the trickster and the shaman. Lévi-Strauss mentions the trickster’s mediator role and how he possesses the qualities of the both sides of a binary opposition. Babcock-Abrahams presents the list of sixteen characteristics a trickster has whereas Hynes summarizes and adds to this list and creates his own list consisting of six characteristics. The concept of liminality is explained through its relation with the trickster as well queer theory.

The second chapter gives the summary of the Loki myth from the books that are related to this thesis; *Poetic Edda*, *Prose Edda*, *The Gospel of Loki*, *Loki: Where Mischief Lies*. Loki’s representation in each of the books are compared. The function of the rewritten Loki myth is explained and the reason why Loki was chosen is provided. The transition from the villain to the hero is interpreted. How Loki gains more human attributes as more literary inventions added to the myth is depicted.

Lastly, Loki is analysed as a trickster figure. Loki's characteristics are compared with the characteristics of a trickster figure provided in the first chapter. How compatible Loki with a trickster figure is studied and how each representation of Loki shows difference in their compatibility is described. Whether Loki is indeed a trickster figure or not, is determined. Loki's transition from a primitive being to a more human character is explained.



CHAPTER 1

1. THEORETICAL INFORMATION ON MYTH AND RELEVANT CONCEPTS

1.1 Providing Definition to Myth

Myths are series of stories consisting the deeds of the gods, the heroic acts, and the creation of the universe. Subsisting ever since the ancient times with its inexhaustible possibilities of meaning, many great thinkers of the past tried to define myth in various ways and many authors tried to recreate myths in different literary eras. Thus, there exists several definitions and uses of myth to analyse.

Euhemeristic definition presents the idea that all the stories about the gods and goddesses contained in the myths are in fact the stories of old heroes in history. Myth only retells these impressive narratives with a sacred light, hence ordinary humans with exceptional courage and benevolent achievements are deified.

Etiologically, myth answers the fundamental questions such as; how the universe came into being, how different species were created, what causes a thunder, why rainbow appears and what does it mean. This kind of myth is also called as “origin myth” which helped develop an understanding to what was unknown during ancient times. An example from Snorri Sturluson’s Prose Edda emerges at the moment of capturing Loki for his unavertable punishment: “Thor clutched at him and caught him, and but he slipped through his hand, until he had him fast by the tail, and it is for this reason that the salmon tapers towards the tail.” (Sturluson, 1966, 85). The situation explains why salmons have a different physical shape at their back than the other fishes.

Mircea Eliade also mentions the function of myth answering primal questions about the creation of everything and in presenting these essential realities about the beginning of times, that it gains sacrality, since reality is established through the irruption of the sacred which is achieved through relating the deeds of the gods in myths.

To tell how things came into existence is to explain them and at the same time indirectly to answer another question: Why did they come into existence? The why is always implied in the how-- for the simple reason that to tell how a

thing was born is to reveal an irruption of the sacred into the world, and the sacred is the ultimate cause of all real existence. (Eliade, 1968, 97).

Freud mainly uses myths in analysing dreams for they reveal all the repressed emotions and desires which are considered to be taboo and abhorred in society, in our unconsciousness and the symbols surfacing in the dreams are similar to those in myths. The images appearing in our dreams mostly reveal a kind of sexual complex which can be detected in famous myths such as Oedipus myth.

... the analysis of dreams has shown us that the unconscious makes use of a particular symbolism, especially for representing sexual complexes. This symbolism varies partly from individual to individual; but partly it is laid down in a typical form and seems to coincide with the symbolism which, as we suspect, underlies our myths and fairy tales. (Freud, 1976, 2223)

C. G. Jung points out the universality of the myth and how they reside in our collective unconscious. Jung defined it as collective because it differs from the personal psyche. His theories goes against the idea of “tabula rasa” completely, in explaining how we inherit deep in our unconscious archetypes such as ego, shadow, anima, animus, persona, which are detectable in various myths throughout time. The whole of humanity share these recurrent symbols. Identifying and coming in contact with these archetypes in our own psyche also creates the possibility of becoming our genuine self, becoming a whole through individuation process.

While the personal unconscious is made up essentially of contents which have at one time been conscious but which have disappeared from consciousness through having been forgotten or repressed, the contents of the collective unconscious have never been in consciousness, and therefore have never been individually acquired, but we owe their existence exclusively to heredity. (Jung, 1968, 42)

Lévi-Strauss views myths mainly as an attempt to create an order out of the disorderliness of the universe, as a system like a language. However his theories on myth are completely devoid of any sense of sacrality or spirituality unlike the previous studies; his focus being primarily on the scientific approach to identical structures composed of universal mind, universal invariables and smallest

unaltering meaningful units which are called “mythemes”. Owing to the transformative nature of the mythic thought, the task is to detect these transformations in order to interpret myths.

Gilbert Durand enhances most of these theories and claims that the meaning of the myth is not hidden in the symbols, archetypes or the structure alone but in the relationship of all these factors. Myth is the narrative that combines them together and revealing its own extensive meaning through this progress.

In other words, in the Nocturnal Order, especially its synthetic structures, archetypal or symbolic images are no longer self-sufficient in their intrinsic dynamism, but are linked to one another through extrinsic dynamism in the form of a narrative. This narrative - reflecting styles of history and dramatic structures - we call "myth". (Durand, 1999, 342)

As can be seen from above, it is really hard to define myth in one specific way because myth is really rich in its contents. Myth cannot be limited which is why defining it is a challenging task and there exists various definitions instead of a monolithic definition. Myth, first of all is a narration, containing tales about the origin of things, stories about deities and heroes. Since it employs symbolic properties, myth digresses from a clear meaning and leaves an open door to several interpretations. As myth relates the deeds of the gods and goddesses and gives accounts of how everything came into being, it gains a sacred value which makes a distinction between a myth and a fairytale or a legend. It is clear from historical records that these gods and goddesses were worshipped in the ancient times. Some of the contents of myth has no relationship with reality or any ties with the past but one of the interpretations is that myth might be retelling historical events with hyperbole and symbolic form.

Myth also indicates the signs of intellectual thinking process in what is so called the ‘primitive mind’. With the scientific advance, people made a distinction between themselves and the ‘savages’, thinking that they were so captivated by their instinctual desires and the striving conditions for survival, they lacked the ability to speculate intricately as the modern people do. Instead of experimenting and using scientific ways in order to acquire the “true” origins of the universe and everything

they could not understand, they created their own answers via imagination. They named this type of thinking “mythopoeic thought” which basically means “myth making”. Nevertheless, they embody as much desire to understand the universe, the culture and the society, as philosophers and scientists do. They satiated their curiosity with a thought provoking way which resulted in myths. This characteristic of the myth, gives it an explanatory value as they try to come up with answers to any kind of phenomenon that exists. Even though their method differs from science, in that they rely on the imaginative faculty and the perceptions whereas science relies on objectivity, calculations and experiments, their end goal is same in pursuing knowledge. Lévi-Strauss especially supports this idea: “It is probably one of the many conclusions of anthropological research that, notwithstanding the cultural differences between the several parts of mankind, the human mind is everywhere one and the same and that it has the same capacities.” (2001, 6-7)

1.2 The Notion of Archetype in Relation to Myth

The word archetype stems from a Greek word which is a combination of “first” and “type” . Archetype indicates a prototype of what is imitated or created after. However this word is usually associated with the Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung because of his revolutionary studies on the human psyche.

Jung was interested in archeology before decidedly becoming a psychologist. Therefore, it is not surprising that he recognizes similarities between different cultures and myths with no probability of contact. He finds traces of common human demeanor regardless of time and space. These resembling patterns of human behaviour and the spontaneous reactions to situations, which are intuitive and named as “archetypes” by Jung, paves the way to his theory of the “collective unconscious.” Jung claims that this tendency to act in a simulant way is the result of an inherited collective experience which are stored in a deeper level in our mind and is separated from the personal unconscious, for the latter contains personal emotions and experiences that are repressed or detached from the conscious.

Archetypes are the constituents of the collective unconscious which govern our response to specific conditions and the actions we take. There is no denying the fact that archetypes and instincts seem pretty close, still, they are not the same thing. Jung

recognizes this affinity as well: “Consequently they (instincts) form very close analogies to the archetypes, so close, in fact, that there is good reason for supposing that the archetypes are the unconscious images of the instincts themselves, in other words, that they are *patterns of instinctual behaviour*.” (1968, 43-44) He refers to archetypes as the factor behind instinctual conducts rather than instincts themselves. Even though Jung calls archetypes “images of the instincts,” archetypes should not be confused with “images” or “symbols.” Archetypes present themselves through images and symbols, yet they are not to be defined with them as archetypes are the essence behind; just like how a painting of a beautiful duchess is not the duchess herself but just an image of her. This distinction should be made in order to prevent incorrect definition. However archetypes cannot be described fully because of the lack of direct access, since they are situated deep inside the collective unconscious. Therefore Jung refers to the instincts in order to explain archetypes as they are counterparts to each other. According to him, instincts are the physiological impetus whereas archetypes are the psychological impetus. Inasmuch as an archetype is transcendental, personal unconscious is insufficient to explicate but is able to attribute various representations through personal experience and perception.

Myth is what is projected to natural phenomena and occurrences in life from the inner psyche. Primitive man experiences life mainly through a psychic process, symbolising everything with the deeds of a hero or a god which are actually derived from his unconscious that is linked to the rest of humanity. The reason why myths show resemblances across cultures and different times is the archetypes expressed through various images and symbols. However, this expression does not directly occur with one symbol and meaning but is rather open to interpretation, for the meaning of an archetype is shaped and perceived by the personal experiences. A mother figure for example could be symbolised either by an angel like altruistic fairy or a bad witch who only seeks destruction. There is not one fixed image or a significance, yet the mother figure is ever present as the need for care and nurture is present in every human being. There are many archetypes but four of them are considered to be major as they are qualified to convey the story of the psyche and they have to be recognised on the

individual level in order to achieve the harmonised state. These four archetypes are called as ego, shadow, anima/animus and the self.

In order to become a whole, to become the genuine self, one must take the individuation process where one faces their own archetypes. These various archetypes demonstrates our various aspects. Ego, unlike other archetypes, is located in the consciousness. Ego is in the center where all the conscious perception, making decisions, taking actions happen. It is an archetype that contains all the features of ourselves that we are aware of. Ego also possesses a power to choose which attribute stays in conscious and which is repressed into unconscious. All that is denied by the ego, forms another archetype that is known as the shadow and it is the first step to becoming a whole because we have to acknowledge everything we despise about ourselves. These are the things that we do not wish to see in our character and keep covering them yet even though it is very hard, if one can manage to accept this side of themselves, the journey of individuation begins.

Anima/animus are the deepest part of the unconscious. Every human being carries within themselves both a feminine and a masculine part regardless of their gender. Yet, these parts are not equally represented in a person. One part generally shows a more dominant side in the character and by rule whichever part is left outside of the conscious, finds itself as an archetype in the deeper unconscious, effecting our imagination, impulses, reactions and moods. The feminine part is called as “anima” whereas the masculine part is called as “animus.” It is erroneous, however, to come to a conclusion considering someone’s sex. The archetype anima and animus is not dependent on biological sex of a person but with the gender role that they identify with. With the advancement of gender studies, and the liberty of expression; it is a generally known fact that a person does not necessarily possess the stereotypical features of the sex they are born with. Therefore a person who identifies as a man and carries more masculine properties, has the archetype anima, for they contain repressed or less dominant feminine features within their psyche. “What is not-I, not masculine, is most probably feminine, and because the not-I is felt as not belonging to me and therefore as outside me, the anima image is usually projected upon women.” (Jung, 1968, 27). The projection as well is not restricted to genders, rather focusing on the

restrained aspects therefore a feminine man can either project his archetype on a masculine man or a masculine woman considering his sexual orientation, as anima/animus are usually projected on our significant other.

The importance of these archetypes is to achieve yet another archetype called as “the self.” This archetype represents the highest state an individual can reach. It is the last stage of the individuation process where a person becomes whole. By accepting and coming to terms with the previous major archetypes that resides in our psyche, we achieve an inner harmony. The sole purpose is to attain unity. Self holds the self awareness at its peak. In order to find our authentic, genuine self, we must complete the process of individuation and reach to the complete wholeness represented by the self.

Another important name who uses the term archetype is Northrop Frye, however he claims that his work is distinct from that of Jung’s. He insists that he uses the archetype in “traditional” sense. Frye’s archetype strays further away from collective unconscious and the psychological aspect. According to him, it is a recurrent symbol or an image in literature to the point of being recognisable. Archetype functions to connect different literary pieces to each other in order to create a unified literary experience. Thus Frye aims to show that literature has a “total form” and tries to encourage an independent literary criticism by rejecting any psychological properties of an archetype, and reducing it to an only literary symbol or image. Even though Frye highly rejects the idea, his work still shows resemblances to the works of Jung.

1.3 The Concept of Mytheme

Claude Lévi-Strauss is a well known anthropologist. He contributes to the study of myth with his theories which are heavily influenced by linguistics. Meeting important names such as Roman Jakobson and Ferdinand De Saussure who are great linguists, shaped his ideas considerably and helped him conceive a total scientific approach to the matter. According to this approach, a myth is completely devoid of any kind of sacrality, spirituality or mysticism. Neither the word of god nor a psychological insight on human mind is the aim of a myth. The only meaning it

provides lies within the combination of variable and invariable elements which construct a timeless structure.

The need for order is the starting point of a myth. Universe as itself is chaotic and humans needed an order to comprehend it. In our present day, this is accomplished by science. Mathematic equations and experiments in laboratory can provide answers to so many mysteries of the world we live in. On the other hand, ancient people used myth to deliver answers. Scientifically a rainbow in the sky is the result of a reflected and refracted sunlight through the rain droplets, however in ancient Norse myth it was believed to be a portal opened to travel between worlds. Myth, as can be seen from the example, tries to classify natural elements and phenomenons in order to construct a structure out of a disordered universe. Lévi-Strauss states that: “Any classification is superior to chaos and even a classification at the level of sensible properties is a step towards rational ordering.” (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, 15)

Lévi-Strauss refuses the “primitive mind” and the “modern mind” distinction. He claims that the mind does not change overtime but is constant in every period. Comparing “magical thought” and the “scientific thought”, he discovers that there is a similarity in the mental process of generating an answer. Their difference however depends on the reliance on the imagination and the deficiency of it.

There is only one solution to the paradox, namely, that there are two distinct modes of scientific thought. These are certainly not a function of different stages of development of the human mind but rather of two strategic levels at which nature is accessible to scientific enquiry: one roughly adapted to that of perception and the imagination: the other at a remove from it. (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, 15)

Lévi-Strauss resembles the myth to a language, yet he points out that they are not completely the same because myth has to be told, language must be used to give existence to a myth. For the same reason, the characteristics of a myth should be situated above an ordinary linguistic properties.

These constituent units presuppose the constituent units present in language when analysed on other levels – namely, phonemes, morphemes, and sememes – but they, nevertheless, differ from the latter in the same way as the latter differ among themselves; they belong to a higher and more complex order. For this reason, we shall call them *gross constituent units*. (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, 210-211).

Mythemes which are presented as the “gross constituent units”, should be searched on the sentence levels. Thus, in order to find them, Lévi-Strauss urges us to dismember a myth into smallest sentences which contain the most basic elements related to the events. However these sentences on their own are not enough to reveal the essence, their relation with each other should be considered as well. “The true constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations but *bundles of such relations*, and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning.” (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, 211). Thus the meaning of a myth relies not on the mythemes separately but on their relations as well.

Lévi-Strauss draws attention to the diachronic and synchronic nature of a myth by comparing it to an orchestra score. The conductor has to read both melody which is diachronic and the harmony which is synchronic, in order to synchronize the variety of instruments that are being played to acquire a harmonious music. A myth as well as an orchestra score, combines the diachronic and the synchronic to achieve harmony and timelessness.

Lévi-Strauss uses Oedipus myth to explain how to analyse a myth both diachronically and synchronically. As mentioned before, the first step is to break down a myth into short sentences and then these sentences are grouped according to their similarity. Although these similar sentences are dispersed throughout the myth diachronically, the task is to gather them synchronically. Exemplified by Oedipus, we get four columns of sentences that bear similar properties and these sentences in their respective columns are connected to produce a meaning. The relation between each of these column’s meanings, reveals the essential meaning of the myth. The column one in Oedipus, with such sentences as Oedipus getting

married to his mother and Antigone burying her brother against the prohibition, shows the general theme of excessive blood relations. The second column generally carries the theme of disdaining the blood relations with examples like Oedipus killing his father and Eteocles killing his brother. While column three shows resistance against the autochthonous origins of humanity like slaying a dragon and beating Sphinx, column four on the other hand depicts perseverance of the autochthonous origins of humanity like Oedipus not being able to walk properly due to his swollen foot. The relations of the columns are clearly detectable as column two is the complete reverse of column one, and column four is the reverse of the column three. Therefore a binary opposition is discovered. Lévi-Strauss here presents the concept of mediator. A mediator is usually an ambiguous figure that contains the aspects of both sides of the opposition. This concept is especially witnessed in tricksters like Coyote or Loki.

Gilbert Durand focuses on building the structure of the imagination. His theories are in more depth than Lévi-Strauss' for it is highly interdisciplinary. Durand's theories are influenced by many thinkers such as Bachelard, Betcherev, Jung, Kant and Lévi-Strauss. As myths are highly dependent on the imagination, one of his main concerns is myth as well. In his own words, he defines myth as: "By myth we understand a dynamic system of symbols, archetypes and schemata which, under the impetus of a schema, tends to be composed into a story." (Durand, 1999, 62). He considers myth as the first rationalisation because archetypes are transformed into ideas and symbols are expressed with words through the myth's story making process and combining them together in its constitution.

Finally, the isotopy of schemata, archetypes and symbols in mythical systems and static constellations will make obvious the existence of certain well-defined and relatively stable normative protocols for imaginary representation, grouped around the original schemata. We shall call these "structures". (Durand, 1999, 63).

Although Durand uses the word "structure", his notion of structure differs from Lévi-Strauss. Since the word is ambiguous enough, it may allude to form as how Lévi-Strauss claims, however Durand focuses on the "transforming

dynamism” (Durand, 1999, 63) and builds his theory upon this meaning of the structure. “For the moment, we shall simply define structure as a transformable form, which acts as a motivating protocol for a whole grouping of images, and is itself able to be grouped in a more general structure that we call an *Order*.” (Durand, 1999, 63). He detects two Orders in imaginary, namely Diurnal Order and Nocturnal Order. Diurnal Order consists of schizomorphic structure whereas Nocturnal Order consists of two structures, namely synthetic structure and mystical structure.

Myth finds itself a place in the Nocturnal Order, especially in its synthetic structure as archetypes and symbols need to be linked through a narrative form. Here Durand aims to broaden Lévi-Strauss’ method of analysing myths. Still, there are some parts Durand rejects such as likening myth to a language, for Durand claims that myth is formed by thorough meanings rather than just synchronic and diachronic relations. Myth is much more than just its form, its essence lies in its symbolic meaning. Later, Lévi-Strauss clarifies that myth is above language, therefore “mythemes” should be situated on a higher basis as well. Durand provides his own theory of where these “mythemes” are situated: “This higher level is not exactly “that of the sentence” as Lévi-Strauss declares. In our view it is the symbolic - or rather, the archetypal - level based on the isotopy of symbols within structural constellations.” (Durand, 1999, 343). Lévi-Strauss himself admits that these mythemes are bundles of relations instead of separate relations, yet for Durand these are bundles of meanings rather than relations. In short, Durand disagrees with Lévi-Strauss’ form based theory because myth is not just made of form but consists of its own unique meanings. Imaginary is more concerned with the content. Therefore myth should not be reduced to its form only but all the archetypes, symbolic images and meanings should be considered in analysing it. For this reason Durand’s notion of structure is not to be confused with Lévi-Strauss’ mere form. What matters for Durand is the meaning whereas for Lévi-Strauss, it is the detached scientific analysis through form.

1.4 Various Descriptions of the Trickster Figure

Trickster figure is really hard to define and put into boundaries as his nature is highly ambiguous. He possesses contradictory qualities. He is both viewed as the culture hero and the harbinger of destruction, even apocalypse. He can be really clever and yet dumb enough to get himself into trouble. He embodies the divine, the human and the animal altogether. Even though he is generally presented as a male, he can easily shift in between sexes and become a female. Nothing about this figure is set with a sense of certainty and his qualities differ within the boundaries of the culture he belongs to, as he is a taboo breaker and will exhibit behaviours against the cultural norms. This leads to a difficulty in defining the trickster.

Paul Radin has the most influence on the subject of the trickster as his book *“The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology”* gives countless insight into this figure. The main focus of the book is Wakdjunkaga who is the Winnebago trickster. Radin is influenced by Carl Jung’s works as he also presents the trickster to be another archetype in the human unconscious. Jung even wrote an essay for Radin’s book as well as Karl Kerényi.

The trickster figure exists in most of the myths from different places and cultures, and this fact combined with the influence of Carl Jung, led Radin to believe this figure to be the symbol of an archetypal process for development of humanity. Such a strong figure that it still exists to this day, represented by clowns. Radin defines the trickster as: “Trickster is at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes others and who is always duped himself.” (Radin, 1956, ix). The ambiguous and contradictory nature of the trickster is pretty clear. He is not limited by certain boundaries. Furthermore, except for working towards his own selfish desires, trickster does not consciously benefact to neither humans nor divinities unless there is something in it for himself. The trickster is moved by his impulses and he possesses no control over them. He cannot be described as either good or evil, he does not have moral or social values, in fact he is a big taboo breaker.

The appearance of the trickster is also ambiguous. His form is never fixed and he has shapeshifting qualities. Exaggerated body parts alludes to his

unsatisfiable greed. Radin mainly focuses on the Winnebago trickster, therefore he exemplifies Wakdjunkaga. This trickster has huge intestines and a penis that are wrapped around his body. During his journey, these parts shrink to the size of the human parts and he looks more like us. His image foreshadows that of humans and throughout the myth, his image gets closer to humans which indicates a mythic journey of becoming the self. Radin defends the idea that the trickster is a mythopoeic imagination shared with the rest of the humanity. According to him, the trickster signifies the humanity's struggle with themselves and with the world. Thus the concern is psychological. Trickster figure becomes much more comprehensible through the lens of psychology. "... as an attempt by man to solve his problems inward and outward, does the figure of Trickster become intelligible and meaningful." (Radin, 1956, x).

Jung's influence on Radin is great which is why he reserved a place for Jung to write an essay for his book. Jung explores the psychology of the trickster in this essay and concludes that the trickster is an archetype. According to him, the trickster figure possesses certain features that are present in various myths such as; his indulgence in causing problems under the name of pranks and jokes, his ability to shapeshift, his duality, and his ambiguous nature. He likens the trickster archetype to the psyche still dependent on the instincts mostly. "He is obviously a 'psychologem', an archetypal psychic structure of extreme antiquity. In his clearest manifestations he is a faithful reflection of an absolutely undifferentiated human consciousness, corresponding to a psyche that has hardly left the animal level." He refers to the trickster as a part of the collective shadow and explains why this myth, this figure is so consistent and still exists today: "The trickster is a collective shadow figure, an epitome of all the inferior traits of character in individuals. And since the individual shadow is never absent as a component of personality, the collective figure can construct itself out of it continually." (Radin, 1956, 209)

The trickster viewed as a primitive being, moved by his instincts thus he tends to perform some malicious jokes without thinking about the consequences. Yet, he is very cunning and intelligent at the same time because even though he is the one to cause the problem in the first place, he is also the only one to fix it in a

way that no one else thinks. He even acts to save others at times. He is all at once superior to men because he possesses super powers that allows him great advantage and inferior because he is unreasonable. It is usually hard to deem him either an enemy or a hero, and although he has male qualities, he can easily turn into female and even give birth which proves his ambiguous nature.

Karl Kerényi mostly focuses on finding similarities between the Winnebago trickster and tricksters from Greek mythology; Hermes, Prometheus and Epimetheus especially. Disorder is another part of life therefore Kerényi presents the trickster as a unifying figure for he brings disorder and chaos to a world of orders. He breaks taboos and disrupts law. By doing these, he also provides an opportunity to the audience to experience what is forbidden through witnessing the trickster committing those. “His (trickster) function in an archaic society, or rather the function of his mythology, of the tales told about him, is to add disorder to order and so make a whole, to render possible, within the fixed bounds of what is permitted, an experience of what is not permitted” (Radin, 1956, 185).

Mac Linscott Ricketts is another important name considering the trickster. He mainly presents the trickster as a culture bringer hero and a world transformer. He calls him as “trickster-transformer-culture hero” or “trickster-fixer” shortly. (Ricketts, 1966, 327). He sees this figure as problematic because he possesses contradictory roles.

Oftentimes he is the maker of the earth and/or he is the one who changes the chaotic myth-world into the ordered creation of today; he is the slayer of monsters, the thief of daylight, fire, water, and the like for the benefit of man; he is the teacher of cultural skills and customs; but he is also a prankster who is grossly erotic, insatiably hungry, inordinately vain, deceitful, and cunning toward friends as well as foes; a restless wanderer upon the face of the earth; and a blunderer who is often the victim of his own tricks and follies. (Ricketts, 1966, 327)

Ricketts criticizes Jung and Radin for focusing on one myth heavily and he declares that he does not share the psychological view on the trickster as they do. The reason for this criticism is because the Winnebago cycle is quite peculiar and

the opinions should have been based on a more usual myth instead. However Ricketts and Radin are more on the mutual ground concerning the nature of the trickster's journey representing the humans gaining consciousness.

Ricketts gives the example of stealing the fire and although this myth could allude to shamanistic properties, he makes distinction between the shaman and the trickster. Shaman usually relies on the spirits for help and he is humble and respectful before them whereas trickster only relies on his wit and views them as enemies, and as a challenge. Within this myth, Ricketts finds essential components of the trickster-transformer-culture hero. He is a trickster as he steals the fire with deceit, a culture hero as he delivers one of the most beneficial item to humanity and helps them develop their culture further thus and he is a transformer as his act makes an impact on the world and leads to a change. By accomplishing all these tasks on his own displays his disdain for how the shamans complete their tasks which disregards the potential of the human power. According to Ricketts, trickster represents the nature of man and his position in the universe.

Ricketts continues to give more examples of the trickster-fixer being beneficial to humanity although possessing human qualities himself. When a malicious supernatural being which is commonly a cannibal monster who eats humans emerges, shaman turns to the spirits again and beats the creature with their help but the trickster-fixer uses his own wit, either fooling the monster with a story that he gained his special powers through an ordeal which then the monster is willing to undergo only to be tricked or convincing him that he is a cannibal too and challenges him to a competition of vomiting. Trickster fulfils these tasks against his fears which proves that he is no divine being or a perfect hero but he contains weaknesses and fears just like people and still manages to succeed. Trickster-fixer makes the world habitable for humans through such labours.

Trickster does not hold back from parodying the shaman for he despises that the shaman needs a higher being to help him accomplish his tasks. The Coyote for example talks to his excrements just like how the shaman talks to spirits for guidance but obviously he does not respect them and just puts his excrements back.

He tries to fly with birds which indicates a spiritual flight but he is always doomed to fall. With that said, he also parodies the shaman by trying to acquire some abilities that is impossible for him to get. He sees another animal with unique talents of obtaining food and he tries to imitate them to no avail. In some other scenarios, he pleads to others to give him their powers such as juggling eyeballs like a bird yet once he gets it, he tends to abuse it which leads to losing it. Primarily this shows that even though possessing an admirable wit that can beat high supernatural beings, he still has limits. This alludes to the human state where if a person tries to do something which is impossible for them to do, they would only make a fool of themselves and end up being hurt. However trickster does not stop trying which shows that although very clever, he seems quite foolish at times. On a deeper level, there is yet again mockery towards shamans in this type of story. Shamans have superpowers that were bestowed upon them by spirits in animal form. Trickster mocks these incidents by trying to imitate animals and acquire powers that he does not possess. The function of these stories is to demonstrate how ridiculous a person would look like in such a situation like the trickster and alludes to the existing limits. However, him mocking the shamans is not an indication of an atheism, since the trickster accepts the existence of spirits and high beings. Only he does not cooperate with them and sees them as his enemy. He does not worship them.

Fundamental components of this figure are that he is a trickster who only relies on his wit and yet puts himself into foolish situations but never accepts defeat, he is a transformer who changes the world for the benefit of humans, he is a culture hero in that he is willing to steal important items against his fear which would enbroaden the culture of the humans. When all these components gathered together, the character emerged is in fact a human. Trickster-fixer is the prototype of people. Trickster is not a worshipped figure but his stories are as good as sacred for the value they carry. The acts of the trickster and what they uncover about the nature of man can be considered to be sacred because the experiences of the trickster bear self transcending attributes of the human mind. The essence of this transcendence is yearning for knowledge. People are not happy to just exist like animals, they become curious, ask questions, ponder on their existence, looking for meaning,

changing their environment and thus becoming the masters of their lives. Trickster does the exact same thing. According to Ricketts, trickster is very much a human, only more excessive.

The trickster may best be understood as the personification of all the traits of man raised to the highest degree. Man is sexual; the trickster is grossly erotic. Man is driven by hunger; the trickster will do anything to obtain a meal. Man is slow to learn from his mistakes; the trickster repeats the same blunders again and again. Man's lot is hard in this world, yet life has its pleasures and joys also; the trickster is continually being buffeted about, but he also has his fun and he always comes up laughing. (Ricketts, 1966, 347)

Laughter and humour plays an important part in the lives of people and the trickster is the embodiment of it. People actually laugh at themselves through laughing at trickster clowning around for he shows the limitations of humans and how foolish it is to try and cross them and how pointless it is to take life too seriously. He functions to be a relief to individuals from their failures with an undermining laughter. Trickster bears all the laughter from the people like a saviour until they start to laugh at themselves through him and be saved from their own failures and insecurities. For these reasons, Ricketts calls this viewpoint a "worldly religion" (Ricketts, 1966, 348). This religion recognizes the limits of the humans and humans should live their life with the power they have and at the same time should not take themselves too seriously to miss the fun in life. "The myths seem to say that human nature never changes, although it matures, and certain facts of life are immutable and must be accepted; but what man can do in his own power alone 'eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard.'" (Ricketts, 1966, 348)

Lévi-Strauss emphasizes the mediator role of a trickster. In more ways than one, myths seem to have distinct sides like the enemy and the hero, good and evil, black and white. This distinction between the concepts seems to be precise, leading to an enormous gap in the story. This void is usually filled with the trickster. The role is to get two sides closer and softening the sharp edges so the sense of greyness would be added. "Since his (trickster) mediating function occupies a position

halfway between two polar terms, he must retain something of that duality—namely an ambiguous and equivocal character.” (Strauss, 1963, 226)

Barbara Babcock-Abrahams views the trickster from a liminal or a marginal point of view. She creates a list of characteristics that the trickster figures generally seem to have more or less. First in the list is that the trickster is a boundary crosser. He is not limited by the boundaries and ignores them. He mostly inhabits thresholds or crossroads which are mostly between the social order and chaos. Often engages with obscene humour or coprophagia which can be viewed as funny, imaginative or destructive. He may show similarities with the characteristics of Trickster-Transformer-Culture Hero. Generally displays abnormality in mind or in physiology such as enlarged sexual traits. He possesses a tremendous sexual desire that usually does not end in procreativity. Trickster is an ambiguous character as he contains a shapeshifting ability and can acquire multiple forms. The sexual status of the trickster is undecided. He is affiliated with mirrors and generally his physical features are of two fold nature. “Follows the ‘principle of motley’ in dress” (Babcock-Abrahams, 1975, 159). He is indecisive about his outer appearance and may present himself as both old and young. He displays both animal and human characteristics. He is typically an antisocial character and does not have morals or acts inside the boundaries of moral laws. Although he wishes to have a sexual intercourse, the relationship he has with a feminine is mostly a motherly bond. He is located between dualisms such as good and evil, life and death ambiguously. He is given roles where an individual has a prestiged liberty from social norms. He expresses a breakdown with his behaviour concerning differentiation between reflection and reality. (Babcock-Abrahams, 1975, 160). Babcock-Abrahams generally draws attention to innate dualism of the trickster and this dualism expressing the paradox, confusion and ambiguity of customs.

William Hynes as well created a list which improves upon Babcock-Abrahams’ and brings into more features. After summarising the traits Babcock-Abrahams presents, and adding his own traits, he delivers in total six main characteristics of the trickster. Although not all tricksters certainly display all of these characteristics, they will usually have most of them. First on the list is that the

trickster is ambiguous, contradictory and multivalent. Although he embodies categories such as life and death, order and chaos, sacred and profane, culture and nature, which are binary oppositions, he is still not completely defined or limited by either side of these oppositions. Trickster is an outcast because he knows no boundaries. He does not abide by any limits and he impulsively crosses them. He does not reside in one specific location but he constantly travels different places including off limit ones. Hynes declares that the trickster can easily pull off the label of “masked disassembler of the cosmic order” (Hynes, 1997, 35) due to his polyvalent nature.

The second characteristic is pretty obvious because the tricksters occupation is to trick and deceive others as his name comes from these actions. Such impulses might arise from trickster being an unaware halfwit or a malicious plunderer and they can either result in a beneficial or a malignant outcome. However, trickster does not have full control over the tricks he plays as these actions gain their own momentum and sometimes they can even backfire thus trickster himself ends up being tricked.

The third one is that the trickster is a shapeshifter. Trickster not only changes his outer appearance but also his species and his biological sex. Shapeshifting may occur as a simple change of clothes but also as a change of his physical body completely. “The trickster is the master of metamorphosis.” (Hynes, 1997, 37).

Another characteristic is that the trickster is a “situation-inverter” (Hynes, 1997, 37). Trickster has the ability to reverse anything and anyone. Nothing is out of his reach. “There is no ‘too much’ for this figure. No order is too rooted, no taboo too sacred, no god too high, no profanity too scatological that it cannot be broached or inverted.” (Hynes, 1997, 37). A bad situation can become a good one and vice versa at the hands of the trickster. He also profanes what is sacred or held in high esteem by the society. If a belief is more sacred than it is more probable to be profaned by the trickster.

Trickster is the “messenger and imitator of the gods” (Hynes, 1997, 39). Usually the trickster is of ambiguous nature at birth, his heritage being unclear.

Having both human and divine properties, trickster can easily pass the border between the sacred and the profane and this allows him to bring important things from the divine realm to humans. He is associated with both life and death. He can at times be the messenger of death. He not only brings death but also essential gifts to humans which would develop their culture. Usually he has to break taboos or a divine law to bring those to humanity. For example, Prometheus steals the fire from gods and gives it to people. This not only benefits the humanity in terms of culture but also helps them evade the punishment since it is not them who are stealing from the gods. Therefore the divine rules stay untouched by the people and yet they acquire something important that they are not meant to possess. Trickster's special place between the divine and the human makes him an important cultural transformer. However his status is more unstable in the divine realm as he constantly tries to imitate the gods or extort their power.

The last characteristic is that the trickster is a "sacred and lewd bricoleur" (Hynes, 1997, 42). Hynes refers to the word in the sense that Lévi-Strauss uses. "The bricoleur is a tinker or fix-it person, noted for his ingenuity in transforming anything at hand in order to form a creative solution." (Hynes, 1997, 42). Trickster is both sacred and lewd at the same time. He can find lewd in the sacred and vice versa or even a new life from both of them.

Trickster's actions is a reaffirmation of the social norms according to Hynes. He claims that the trickster confirms the rules by breaking them. The misdeeds of the trickster functions as a depiction of what follows if someone breaks the social laws. Such actions verify the social order and procures a reason as to how and why this order was founded. However, another function is to reevaluate the existing order and lead to change through criticism and satire. Thus the trickster provides a new perception of the world, prevents the monoculturality and substantiates the arbitrariness of the social norms.

An important aspect of a trickster is liminality. Victor Turner defines liminality and threshold people as resisting classification, thus being ambiguous in nature. "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between

the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial.” (Turner, 1991, 95). Such figures are in-between and their personality, behaviour and overall nature are ambiguous. The ambiguity is usually stated symbolically within the boundaries of the culture it belongs and these symbols depict a transition. “Thus liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon.” (Turner, 1991, 95). Since trickster is also of ambiguous nature, and not limited by the boundaries of the social norms he belongs to, liminality is also associated with the trickster. It is the trickster’s liminality that provides him with the opportunity to break taboos and cross boundaries which leads him to become a culture hero.

Liminality is a mix of “lowliness and sacredness” (Turner, 1991, 95). This coincides with one of the traits Hynes presents which is sacred and lewd bricoleur. “These attributes of sexlessness and anonymity are highly characteristic of liminality.” (Turner, 1991, 102). Although trickster is not sexless, he is able to switch between sexes very easily. He presents himself as a male however he does not only change his bodily appearance but also assumes the role of a female completely as he is able to give birth to a child in his female form. He embraces his femininity completely and he never shows hesitation when it comes to changing his sex. Therefore the trickster is genderfluid which draws attention to another theory that is important for the purpose of this study. It is called the Queer Theory.

Queer theory is a new theory that is still in the process of development. The terms ‘queer’ and ‘queer theory’ were used academically for the first time in 1991 by Teresa De Lauretis in her ‘Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities’. Many of the theorists are against limiting the theory so they abstain from giving a precise definition or specific methods in order to keep the theory more fluid and to provide the possibility of progress. Mainly the aim is to challenge the established idea of ‘heteronormativity’ and the binary gender system. For centuries, heterosexuality was considered as the normal, natural, superior way of having relationships whereas any other kind of sexuality was made deviant and rejected, therefore, were not provided with the same rights of especially marriage and adoption to those they deem abnormal. Some people face the possibility of misidentification against the

assumption that everyone is heterosexual and their gender are the same with the sex they are assigned at birth. Queer theorists refuses such norms and categorisation, instead they promote inclusivity.

Foucault with his 'History of Sexuality' has been a pioneer to the queer theory. What was considered to be a sin, was medicalised and given the name 'homosexual' in 1869, becoming a psychological abnormality to be treated. This process led to what Foucault calls 'reverse discourse' because even though this identity was constructed to oppress, control, exclude and categorise people with the same-sex desire, they were able to find their own community and support each other under this label.

it also made possible the formation of a 'reverse' discourse: homosexuality began to speak in its own behalf, to demand that its legitimacy or 'naturalness' be acknowledged, often in the same vocabulary, using the same categories by which it was medically disqualified. (Foucault, 1978, 101)

Sex and gender are separate from each other as a result of departure from biological determination. The misassumption of a person's gender is decided with the sex they are born with, thus put down. Sex refers to the biological features of a person such as hormones, genitals and chromosomes whereas gender refers to a social construction of identity, behaviour, and role. Sex seems to be stable when gender is unstable, nevertheless, Judith Butler disagrees with this notion. According to their theory, sex is unstable as well and it is not completely unconnected to gender because:

When the constructed status of gender is theorised as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one. (Butler, 1999, 10).

The concepts associated with gender such as colours, professions, clothes, hairstyles change over time, just like how pink represented boys in the past and now in the present time, it is mostly recognised as a feminine colour. Culture as well as different time periods, produces different features which proves that gender identity

is unstable. Through performing these concepts repeatedly, the gender identity is formed. Therefore according to Butler, gender is performative and this act provides gender's existence. "... gender proves to be performative— that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed." (Butler, 1999, 33).

The trickster possesses gender fluid properties as he can switch between masculinity and femininity quite easily like a liquid. He not only changes his gender but also his biological sex too. Although he presents himself as a male generally, he assumes the role of femininity without hesitation and willingly. Gender fluid people have a dynamic gender identity which means that it changes over time. This change might happen in the span of a couple of hours or days or months or even years. Every gender fluid person's experience is unique to them. Gender fluid is a very new term and therefore there are still debates on it.

Sexual orientation is a sexual, emotional and romantic attraction to other people. There are many different sexual orientations yet for centuries it is assumed that everyone is heterosexual by default even though other sexualities existed and performed. Even today this misassumption exists which led to 'coming out' culture. The reason for that is the societal norm that heterosexual is the normal and other sexualities are the deviant, making heterosexuality superior to others. Even though considered to be a sin or a psychological defect in the past, other sexualities started to gain more recognition and freedom of expression at the present time. People are way more free to experience their sexual attraction. Heterosexuality is the attraction to the opposite sex and homosexuality is the attraction to the same sex. Bisexuality and pansexuality have some overlapping features but they are two distinct sexualities. Bisexuality is not restricted to only male and female, it also includes non binary too but it does not necessarily mean all genders. Pansexuality on the other hand, is an attraction to all genders. Their claim is that they do not focus on the gender as much as they focus on the personality. The trickster is pansexual in that he does not have a clear preference. He can even have intercourse with other species after becoming that species with his shapeshifting abilities.

These attributes of the trickster defies the social expectations and pushes him to otherness. Since trickster does not mind to become a female and even give birth, he is considered to be a disgrace in a patriarchal society. His liminality, gender fluidity, pansexuality earns him the role of the Other in the age and society he belongs to. The other is a person who does not belong to the majority, out of the norm. Since these individuals perceived as lacking fundamental characteristics according to the social norms, they are viewed as inferior.



CHAPTER 2

2. THE ANALYSIS OF LOKI AS THE TRICKSTER FIGURE IN THE NORSE MYTHOLOGY AND THE CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

2.1 The Comparison of Loki's Representations in The Eddas, The Gospel of Loki and Loki: Where Mischief Lies

Loki is undoubtedly a trickster figure as he is well known to be a trickster god. Loki is a deceiver, trick player, bringer of chaos and destruction, both friend and the enemy of the gods and a troublemaker. In this chapter, Loki's characteristics which overlap with that of the trickster figure will be compared in four different writings. Loki plays an important role in Norse mythology as is shown in the Eddas and he is the main character of the two other books to be analysed; The Gospel of Loki and Loki: Where Mischief Lies.

Poetic Edda is an anonymous poem collection of approximately thirty nine poems and two sections originating from Codex Regius which is an important manuscript as the source of Norse mythology. The first section of the poems narrates the tales about the Aesir and their heroism whereas the second section is more concerned with the human heroes. Loki first appears in Völuspá which is The Vala's Prophecy. The prophecy which explains the creation of everything, the gods, the dwarves, the people and the end of all in Ragnarok. The first mention of Loki shows him as a monstrous figure tied up under a venomous snake, his wife Sigyn beside him trying to protect him from the venom. Loki is prophesied to bring the end of everything, the apocalypse, Ragnarok. Even though the first impression of Loki is bad, presented as a villain; throughout the myth, Loki appears to be ambiguous, neither completely good nor evil.

Loki's presence is important in two poems which are Lay of Thrym and Lokasenna. Upon losing his hammer, Thor asks help from Loki to regain it. Thor trusts Loki enough to talk about this incident when no one else knows. Loki borrows the falcon cloak which would turn him into a bird from Freyja to sneak into Jötunheim. Loki talks to Thrym about the hammer and the latter agrees to turn it back only if he can have Freyja as his wife. Freyja refuses to be his bride therefore Aesir has to come up with another plan. Heimdall suggests Thor to be dressed as a

bride but he refuses to comply with this plan until Loki reminds him of the dangers awaiting the Aesir unless they acquire the hammer, thus Thor is forced to agree. Loki also disguises himself as a woman to assist Thor. Thor is unable to behave like a woman and Loki makes up for Thor by the clever answers he gives to Thrym whenever he suspects if that person is truly Freyja. Finally after feast, Thrym orders for Mjöltnir to be brought, as soon as Thor grabs his hammer, he slays all the giants and giantesses including Thrym.

This poem shows that contrary to the first image of Loki who is captured and waiting to lead an army of the dead at Ragnarok as the enemy of the Aesir, Loki is trusted enough to be confided in one of Thor's biggest secrets, which if known would be quite detrimental not only to Thor himself but to all of the gods and goddesses as he is the protector of Asgard and the bright warrior hero. Thor consults Loki first and mentions that he lost his hammer to him to seek his aid. Loki's problem solver characteristic is obviously well established in the Norse myth. Secondly Loki is more than willing to assume the role of a woman unlike hypermasculine Thor and he even covers for him which again shows his trickster nature where he changes his sex like it is nothing. Loki plays a prominent role in this poem with his quick wit and willingness to be a woman which saves both Thor and all of the Aesir from a big trouble.

The poem Lokasenna is especially important because this is the event that leads to Loki being captured and imprisoned under a venomous snake which is a sign of Ragnarok. Loki attacks the Aesir verbally for no absolute reason and propounds some scandalous information about the deities at the feast hosted by the sea god Aegir. He first slays one of Aegir's servants who was praised during the feast. Feast hall is considered to be a place where no act of violence is permitted, a kind of sacred sanctuary. Loki breaks this law by slaying Fimafeng during a feast with the gods and goddesses. After this action, the god of poetry Bragi refuses Loki to sit with them to which Loki responds to by reminding Odin of their oaths and the fact that they are blood brothers, thus earning himself a seat. He then targets the deities for insults and for scandalous claims that are not proved to be either true or false. However considering Loki's deceiving nature, they are regarded as lies told

to cast aspersions on Aesir. Loki accuses goddesses to be whores and with fidelity and the gods with cowardice. Upon hearing Odin saying that Loki lived like a woman, milking cows and giving birth, Loki also accuses Odin with behaving like a woman and casting spells like a witch. He then claims that he is the reason Balder is dead. Finally Thor arrives and threatens Loki who then flees only to be captured and punished.

The innerworld of Loki is unknown therefore his motives in such an attack is not understood. However trickster is a chaos bringer by nature and does mischief for mischief sake. His words regarding the gods and goddesses are unreliable as they do not have any proof but surely Loki brings the mighty low with his accusations. "Loki undermines the status quo by speaking the truth, a truth that only one outside the establishment can utter." (Krause-Loner, 2003, 36). Capturing Loki is a sign of Ragnarok as he waits the day he will rise with the army of dead against the gods and goddesses. Here Loki is represented as the enemy of the Aesir, the villain of the myth, but Loki is not a simple villain, he is the creator of a new order by breaking the old one. Loki is neither loved nor worshipped because he is not a steady, strong, muscular hero the people expect their gods to be. Loki is cunning and he is needed where pure strength cannot solve a problem. Loki is a necessary figure in this myth. He not only saves Aesir from trouble, sometimes from the ones he causes but also brings the possibility of a new order.

Prose Edda is another very important source for Norse mythology, written around the thirteenth century in Iceland. Unlike the Poetic Edda, the source of Prose Edda is not anonymous as Snorri Sturluson wrote it. Prose Edda consists three sections namely Gylfaginning, Skáldskaparmál and Háttatal. Sturluson was Christian therefore the influence of Christianity can be detected in his work, especially in Loki being represented more like a devil figure. The first appearance of Loki is in the Gylfaginning section, narrating the origin and the family of Loki. He is described as a mischief maker, trick player, deceiver, father of lies and a disgrace. His father is Fárbaúti and his mother is Laufey. Loki's name is not announced with the name of his father like other gods and goddesses and instead usually announced with his mothers name, Loki son of Laufey. Loki is handsome

on the outside but evil on the inside. He is very cunning and often brings trouble to the Aesir. He has two sons from his wife Sigyn named Nari and Narfi yet they are not his only children. Loki has three other kids from the giantess Angrboda, who play an important role at the twilight of the gods Ragnarok. Jörmungandr the Midgard serpent is cast into the sea but so big that it enwraps the whole world and bite its own tail, destined to fight with Thor and kill him with his venom during Ragnarok. Corpse like looking Hel is given the reign of the dead who died of old age and sickness rather than those who died in a fight. Fenris the wolf who is said to kill Odin at Ragnarok is captured by the gods and binded with a very strong fetter till the end of days.

Loki has another child named Sleipnir the eight legged steed that he begot when he changed his form to that of a mare which shows the capabilities of his shapeshifting ability where he not only changes his species but also his sex. Unlike other children, Sleipnir has a better fate because he is given to Odin as a gift and carries him throughout the worlds. This event takes place during the building of the walls of Asgard. A man visits the Aesir and offers to build them a citadel strong enough to keep giants and giantesses out but for the price of Freyja, the sun and the moon. Gods and goddesses consider the offer yet the price seems to be higher than they would like to pay therefore they give the man the deadline of completing the citadel in one winter and with no help from any man. He can only receive the payment if he can complete it under such conditions. He agrees to their terms and asks only of the help of his stallion Svadilfari. This wish is granted with Loki's advice however the help of his stallion is what the man only needs for he almost finishes the citadel three days before the agreed terms. Aesir gathers to blame Loki and threaten him with violence if he cannot solve this problem. Loki's cunning intelligence comes to his aid and he changes his form to a mare to seduce the stallion away from work. As a result the man cannot complete the citadel and he shows his true form of a giant with rage but Thor deals with him quickly.

Loki is willing to do anything necessary to get things done albeit turning into a mare and getting pregnant in order to save his life, which shows a great contrast with the rest of Aesir who believes in honour and honesty. However there

is no denial of Loki's contributions to the golden age of Asgard. He fills an important gap with his talents. Aesir counters a threat with a straightforward manner, openly attacking with a muscle power whereas Loki relies on his intelligence and counters with a cunning way. Where Aesir fears to go back on their word, Loki finds a way to work around this promise and prevents gods and goddesses from losing Freyja, the sun and the moon. Still, this puts Loki in a difficult position because his trickery nature is despised. Just like how Ulysses is in the lowest circle of the Inferno, Loki is doomed to be perceived as a villain according to the values in medieval era. Ulysses also does not hesitate to deceive and lie in order to win the war as the Trojan horse was his idea. As a result he is thrown to hell even though his idea was what led to victory.

Loki accompanies Thor on one of his journeys to Jötunheim and that is where they meet with the giant king Útgarda-Loki. He wishes to protect his people against the wrath of Thor so he starts to test them. Loki enters into an eating contest with someone called Logi who is actually a wildfire so whereas Loki eats all the meat before him, wildfire devours them with bones and everything. Even though Loki loses the competition, this shows the great, grossly appetite the Loki has which belongs to his trickster nature. Thor is also tested thrice and fails but only under an illusion. The tests they both enter are not what they seem. Logi for example is a wildfire or the cat Thor tries to lift is not a usual cat but in fact Jörmungandr the Midgard serpent itself. Upon learning this, Thor decides to attack but before he can manage, Útgarda-Loki and the castle disappears.

Loki is responsible for the death of Baldr in the Prose Edda. Baldr starts seeing nightmares about his death and his mother Frigg starts to feel concerned about her son therefore she starts to obtain oaths from anything that can harm Baldr to not hurt him except for one plant Frigg considers to be very young to give oath which is mistletoe. Loki disguised as a woman and asked Frigg if everything gave an oath to which Frigg gives the answer no and even telling the name of the one plant she did not get an oath from carelessly. After receiving the oaths, gods and goddesses decide to test the oaths and they start to throw these various things to see if Baldr will be harmed and the result is satisfactory because Baldr is untouched by

everything except for one dart made with mistletoe that was handed to the blind brother of Baldr by Loki. This dart, aimed by Loki through hand of Hödr kills Baldr. Aesir falls into desperation and grief.

Frigg immediately sends someone to Hel to bring Baldr back but it is no easy task, for Hel provides a condition for the return of Baldr. He can only return if everyone weeps for Baldr. “If all things in the world, quick and dead, weep for him, then he shall go back to the Aesir; but he shall remain with Hel if any gainsay it or will not weep.” (?). Frigg once more works for the safety of his son and asks from everyone and everything to weep for Baldr. One giantess named Thökk who lives alone in a cave refuses to weep thus preventing Baldr from returning. Later Aesir thinks that the giantess was in fact Loki and the search for Loki begins. He hides in a mountain where he can see everything so that he can escape easily if the gods find him and come to take him. He spends his days knitting the very first net in existence which also shows his culture hero aspect. As soon as he sees the gods approaching, he throws the net to the fire then he jumps into the river in the form of a salmon. Gods come into the house and see the remnants of the net. Kvasir begins to knit one himself after it to use and the gods eventually capture Loki with the net. Loki again faces the same punishment as in the Poetic Edda, being binded under a venomous snake till Ragnarok.

It is prophesied that Baldr is to die just as Ragnarok will come. Frigg, out of love for her son tries to prevent this fate, the natural cycle of life. She tries to prevent death itself however Loki preserves the natural order of things through chaos, through making the prophecy happen by both killing Baldr and then leading army during Ragnarok. As an agent of chaos and change, Loki is against stability and immortality. “Disorder belongs to the totality of life, and the spirit of this disorder is the trickster.” (Radin, 1956, 185). Through the change he brings, a new order flourishes and Baldr reborns. Although his motives unknown to other gods and goddesses as well as people, his role in the Norse myth is highly important.

Loki can be seen in various myths from *Skáldskaparmál* section. The first myth in this section is the kidnapping of Idunn. Loki, Odin and Hoenir journeys far

away from Asgard. During their journey they get hungry and select one of the oxens in a herd to cook but it does not cook no matter how hard they try. An eagle from the top of the tree above them claims that the oxen will not be cooked unless they share it with him. As soon as they agree, the eagle takes the best parts of the oxen to himself which angers Loki since he has an appetite hard to satisfy. He tries to hit the eagle with a pole but the eagle catches the pole and Loki with it, flying low enough for Loki to hit on trees and stones along the way. The eagle turns out to be giant Thjazi and he says that he will only release Loki if he promises to bring Idunn and her apples to him. Loki agrees and deceives Idunn saying he found apples that she should compare hers with. Thjazi captures Idunn and her apples in his eagle form and kidnaps her. Loki's own selfish desires puts all the Aesir into trouble as the loss of Idunn and her apples have great consequences over them.

Aesir starts to age without Idunn and her apples of youth. As soon as it is discovered that Loki was the last person to be seen leaving Asgard with Idunn, they quickly capture Loki and threaten him to fix this issue. As his trickster nature commands, Loki puts himself and others into trouble and then tries to solve the same problem he causes since he is the most qualified to solve it with his cunning intelligence. Loki agrees to save Idunn, this time to save his life once again. He borrows Freyja's falcon cloak to fly into Jötunheim undetected. After finding Idunn and realising the giant to be absent for the time being, he turns Idunn into a small nut to carry her back to Asgard. Once Thjazi is back and realizes Idunn gone, he immediately takes his eagle form to chase after her. Aesir waits ready for the arrival of Loki and Idunn but when they see Thjazi chasing them, they light a fire right after Loki enters the citadel. Thjazi catches fire and falls down and then the gods kill him.

Thjazi's daughter Skadi seeks revenge after learning the death of her father at the hands of Aesir and sets out to Asgard. In order to come to an agreement with her, Aesir suggested that Skadi chooses a husband for herself among them, however by only looking at their feet. Skadi hopes for Baldr when she chooses the fairest feet but they belong to the sea god Njörd. She protests that the Aesir must make her laugh as well believing that to be an impossible task. Loki then tries to make her

laugh by tying one end of a cord to the beard of a goat and the other end to his penis, thus whenever one pulls the other yelps in pain which ends up making Skadi laugh against her will. "... (tricksters) are frequently involved in scatological and coprophagous episodes which may be creative, destructive, or simply amusing." (Babcock-Abrahams, 1975, 159). Loki's perverted sense of humour saves the day, his wit proving itself once again.

Just for the sake of mischievousness, Loki cuts the hair of Thor's wife, Sif. Once Thor learns about this, he threatens Loki with smashing his bones. In order to get away with this mischief, Loki swears to get a golden hair which can also grow to be crafted for her. He convinces the dwarves to create such a hair along with Odin's spear Gungnir and Frey's foldable, pocket size ship. Not contented with these, Loki decides to wager with the dwarf Brokkr's brother Sindri that he cannot create three items worth more than he already has. The price Loki has to pay, if he loses, is his head. Loki becomes anxious while he watches them work and decides to distract them from the work in the form of a fly. Loki tries to bite Brokkr but only succeeds on the creation of the last item. He bites Brokkr on the eyelids causing Mjölfnir's handle being short. The hammer alongside with a golden boar and a golden arm ring which gives birth to eight more rings which is called Draupnir are presented to the gods and goddesses and they judge Brokkr and Sindri to be the winner thanks to Mjölfnir being incredibly valuable for the protection of Asgard at the hands of Thor. Dwarves ask for the head of Loki but he cunningly evades the terrible outcome by claiming that he only wagered his head and not his neck. The dwarf knowing he cannot cut off Loki's head, instead stitches his mouth shut. This scene is a very vivid example of one of the characteristics Radin provides. "... he (trickster) who dupes others and who is always duped himself." (Radin, 1956, ix).

Again the greed Loki has, puts him into trouble and again he manages to save himself from a terrible outcome with his intelligence. The creation of many important items such as Thor's hammer and Odin's Gungnir shows the culture hero side of the Loki. Even though it is not him who creates such items, he causes them to be created.

Loki was neither worshipped nor loved by the Norse society. In medieval age honesty and honour are the most important values and Loki's deceits and lies earns him an infamous reputation. The myths are no longer viewed as sacred, yet the fascination never ended and in this process of fascination over centuries, some of the elements or the character representations bound to change in order to adapt to the culture and society it is viewed and rewritten. During our age and time people view Loki as a hero, as someone to admire because intelligence is valued more than pure muscle strength and because Loki is a queer character. In the light of such popularity, *The Gospel of Loki* retells the Norse mythology through the eyes of the trickster god himself. Now Loki is the main character, the hero of the story. Loki's inner world is revealed in this book and instead of an agent of pure chaos, a more humane character is to be detected in this book. The slighted god is in fact very vulnerable and relatable. He is the representation of the marginal, the other and the queer.

The Gospel of Loki is the Norse myth rewritten through the eyes of Loki. Written in 2014, the author is highly influenced by rewriting myths which aim to replace grand narratives with mini narratives and give voice to the marginalised, the other. Rewriting simply means to write the old text in a new way.

In the context of Postmodernist literature, the term Rewriting takes on a rather different purpose, which is to defy the original text, to give voice to the silenced by rewriting, writing back to the canon, to deconstruct master narrative and to present it in a new light to encourage the readers to question what is offered them as truth. (Aydın, 2017, 1).

Rewriting usually has hints of pastiche and parody and in this book it can be detected through the language of Loki. The purpose of the parody is to ridicule the so called universal truth and deconstruct it. Loki in the original myths is made the other to represent what is left out from the dominant ideology and in *The Gospel of Loki*, he ridicules these ideologies and the accepted truths. Loki is chosen as the main character because; "He is a mischief-maker whose code of behaviour and deeds are not considered acceptable in terms of what is seen as normative." (Aydın, 2017, 38). By telling his own side of the story, he presents new truths. Odin for

example is considered to be the representative of the good and mighty but Loki shows the manipulative, selfish side of Odin. He brings the mighty low. The marginalised Loki finds his own voice in this book.

Both order and chaos exist in the world and whereas Odin is from order, Loki is from chaos. They are both connected to each other like the two sides of a coin throughout the book. Odin's thirst for knowledge is so great that this desire reaches out to Loki from the pure chaos and brings him to this world. This scene resembles how Dr. Faustus conjures Mephistopheles with his calling for him with his words to learn more, to satisfy his desires only to end up in flames that Loki will bring and start the hell named Ragnarok. However it is not Odin alone who desires more knowledge, it is Loki's desire that answers back to Odin's call. Loki's curiosity strips him off from his real nature which is pure chaos and puts him in a physical body. With using his name, Odin tries to have a control over Loki, to tame his unknown chaotic nature. As a wise god, Odin realizes that he needs chaos and disorder to maintain the order he constructs therefore he tries to subdue something fearful and ambiguous to his desire. Loki knows that he cannot go back to his old self, to pure chaos anymore as leaving is strictly forbidden and he needs Odin to live in this new world, Odin on the other hand needs someone to do the dirty work. Odin gives him one of the runes he keeps for himself which is the wildfire, his glam passing to him. Now that Loki bears the mark of Odin on himself like branded, he definitely cannot go back and Odin is aware of it. "We are brothers in blood," said Odin. "Or brothers in glam if you prefer." (Harris, 2015, 25). Odin in fact tricks Loki to stay in his world and once Loki realizes it he says: "Then that makes us brothers in trickery" (Harris, 2015, 25). Both Odin and Loki are tricksters, manipulating, deceiving and using others for their own gain if necessary. Only they differ in one representing order and the other representing chaos. So Loki starts to tell his story after he joins Odin and "By re-telling these stories, Loki explains that he made all these mistakes, but his motives were not evil." (Aydın, 2017, 43).

Odin takes Loki to Asgard but instead of a heart warming welcome, Loki has to deal with discrimination which leaves a huge psychological pressure on Loki till he rises with a dead army at Ragnarok. Loki's motives are never presented in

Poetic Edda and Prose Edda but in *The Gospel of Loki*, Loki's inner thoughts are revealed by Loki himself. Ever since from the beginning, Loki is made the other, the deviant by the other gods and goddesses. This discrimination gets only worse after the Aesir witnesses what Loki is capable of through different troubles he ends up solving which many of them are caused by him mostly. He is willing to change both his species and sex and have an intercourse with a horse in order to prevent the giant in disguise from finishing building the walls. Heimdall is especially repulsed over seeing the eight legged horse Loki gives birth to. "The Watchman gave me a sour look. 'You're revolting, d'you know that? You seriously gave *birth* to that thing?'" (Harris, 2015, 49). Loki never gets along with either Heimdall or Baldr ever since the beginning. Heimdall always treats him like an enemy who can attack any minute and keeps his eye on him all the time. Baldr on the other hand is hated by Loki because he is everything Loki wants to be in their society; loved and popular because Loki is an outsider amongst them and he feels deep down that it will never change, he will never be like Baldr so he grows a hatred towards him out of his jealousy which will lead to Baldr's death which leads the Ragnarok. Loki is seen as a villain for this reason but in fact he is treated as a villain from the beginning because "Every community and every culture aggrandize its own values by creating an 'other' who lacks these values." (Aydın, 2017, 45) and Loki is made the other because he is from chaos, and he is unstable.

Loki is a very mischievous character and he seems to do things without a reason just for mischiefs sake, however *The Gospel of Loki* provides reasons to the actions Loki commits. In the original Norse myth, there is no reason for Loki to cut off Sif's hair but in this contemporary book we see that Loki wishes to take revenge from Thor for treating him badly during the incident with the building of Asgard's citadel. "All right. I confess. I was angry. Thor had treated me roughly over that business with Asgard's wall, and I might have been looking for a chance to pay him back in some way." (Harris, 2015, 51). Loki is wounded for the treatment he receives from the gods and goddesses and very humanly he wishes to get back to them. Making Loki more human, shedding light over his thoughts and reasons make him more relatable and easy to sympathise with.

Loki wins the dwarves over with flattery to create not only Sif's golden hair but also two more special gifts for Odin and Frey. He offers them fame instead of payment. On his way out, Brokk cuts his way. Brokk is very ambitious and he wants the fame of being the best instead of his rival Dvalin therefore he is the one to suggest the wager. Loki both for the clouded judgement and greed for more precious items accepts it. Still, Loki becomes anxious to watch Brokk so in order to not lose the wager he turns into fly to bite him. Although the hammers handle being short, it is accepted as the best of the gifts. Loki with fear of the consequences plead to Odin but he refuses to comply. "A bet's a bet. You lost. It's out of my hands" (Harris, 2015, 68). Odin refuses to save Loki and leaves him to his own devices even though he claims them to be blood brothers. Loki only has his intelligence to rely on and he saves himself through trickery although because of this he gets his mouth stitched. This is especially a cruel scene for Loki for all the gods and goddesses laugh at Loki whenever he yelps in pain while getting his mouth stitched. No one interferes or tries to save him but laughs at him. Loki suffers both physical and emotional pain. He becomes duped but this tortures him more than anything, filling him with desire for revenge. "But much as it hurt, it didn't hurt as much as did their laughter. Yes, they *laughed*, my so-called friends; they laughed as I struggled and whimpered, and no one moved a finger to help, not even Odin, who had sworn to treat me like a brother..." (Harris, 2015, 70). After this moment, Loki thinks of getting revenge and holds the gods and goddesses responsible for Ragnarok because they push Loki out, making him the other, denying him the sense of belonging to a community. "I would never be one of them. I knew that now. I was alone. I would always be alone. I'd learnt my lesson for good, this time." (Harris, 2015, 71).

Loki only gets to feel the sense of belonging once when he has his twin sons Vali and Narvi. Even though he makes up excuses to leave the house as much as he can, he cannot deny the fact that something has changed for him. He starts to think about revenge less and less. To be able to belong and has his own kin affects him dearly. One day he witnesses his kids playing and he feels happy watching them.

“... as I looked at my sons from afar and thought: Perhaps this was what I was missing. Perhaps I belong here after all...” (Harris, 2015, 122).

The Gospel of Loki has a mix of myths from both Poetic Edda and Prose Edda concerning Loki. However there are changes to the stories as to give emphasis on different matters. For example, in the Lay of Thrym from Poetic Edda, Thor consults to Loki upon losing his hammer however in this book a council is gathered and Thor blames Loki with stealing it before anything else. This event further emphasizes the estrangement of Loki among the Aesir and the lack of trust from gods and goddesses. Loki still saves them from trouble but his problem causing personality overshadows that aspect of him. Loki’s inner world on the other hand gives us a different insight into Asgard and the powers of the Æsir. Loki claims that Odin’s kingdom is not as strong as it seems and the way the mighty god Thor so easily gets his hammer stolen, is very supportive of this claim. “Odin’s empire was built on bluff and the knowledge that no one dared to strike, but our enemies were like wolves around a bonfire: at bay, but let them scent blood, just once, and they’d be on us before we knew it.” (Harris, 2015, 124).

Odin is almost like a father figure for Loki. He is an unreliable narrator so he does not outright admit to caring about what Odin says about him but from his reactions, it is easily detected. Before leaving to talk to Thrym, Odin pleads Loki to be careful and Loki is incredibly happy hearing it because this is the first time Odin shows interest in Loki’s safety. Loki tries to prove himself to Odin therefore his compliments means a lot to him. He feels flattered to hear Odin worried for him and he decides to do his best. “I’ll admit, I felt rather flattered; Odin had put his trust in me and I was looking forward to showing him what I was capable of.” (Harris, 2015, 124). Such sentiments are absent in both Poetic Edda and Prose Edda.

To further emphasize Loki’s problem solving ability and cunning intelligence, Loki instead of Heimdall suggests Thor to disguise himself as the bride. Thor refuses to do this but they do not have any another option to proceed with. Thor is a hypermasculine character, a big muscly man who is good at fighting. Even though he wears the disguise of a woman, he cannot assume the role

completely which arises suspicion from Thrym. Yet they cannot let their covers unfold before they get the hammer and therefore Loki who also disguised himself as a woman, closes the gaps Thor leaves, by giving reasonable replies with his quick wit. Loki on the other hand, has a more feminine look. He does not need a veil to cover his face as he does not have a beard like Thor. Even Thrym finds Loki in a woman disguise very pretty. “If the mistress is half as pretty as the maid, I think my luck is in tonight.” (Harris, 2015, 128). Loki replies to that flirtatiously and giggling.

The encounter with the Útgarda-Loki plays an important role in *The Gospel Of Loki* for it shows the vulnerability of the gods. Especially Loki since he is beaten in his own game. Loki, Thor and his new servants go to a journey together and they meet with a giant who is the giant king Útgarda-Loki in disguise, wanting to see how much of a threat Thor truly is so he tests him and the others with illusions. First of all Thor strikes the giant three times because he feels insecure about how giant is so big and he almost humiliated Thor about being a small size in front of his new followers. Thor tries to prove that he is a mighty god with capabilities, a strong hero by hitting the giant but he fails to harm him all of the three times but of course it is an illusion because Thor is actually hitting a mountain instead of the giant without knowing it.

Loki is surprised to hear Loki in the giant kings name and the fact that he is not the only trickster. Giant mentions the place of the castle to the group but at the same time advises them not to go. At first they plan to return home until they realise the disappointment in the faces of their new followers, expecting much more from their gods. This is such a huge blow on Thor because no matter how strong you are, if you cannot prove it and gain popularity, if there is no one to worship, how much of a god he can be. The Prose Edda shows that Thor is determined to go there himself, he never thinks of going back home but *The Gospel Of Loki* reveals the insecurities of the gods have and how fragile their reputations are.

As soon as they enter the castle, all the giants start laughing at them for how tiny they look in comparison which only humiliates and angers Thor more. More

tests begin in the castle and they keep on failing. Loki realises then the disappointment in the faces of their new followers and he realizes that they seem like nothing more than extremely powerful humans rather than gods. He feels the crushing expectations that they need to meet as gods for the first time and that leaves him even more vulnerable. “I began to see that celebrity wasn’t all hot girls and free beer. It’s also the curse of expectation – and the bitterness of falling short.” (Harris, 2015, 156). He is suddenly reminded of his sons and he thinks how unbearable it would be to see disappointment in their eyes. When Útgarda-Loki explains the true nature of things the young followers are impressed once again. Even though both Loki and Thor wish that this story would stay as a secret, it spreads and actually does more credit to Thor’s reputation whereas it damages Loki’s. He is laughed at by many because although he is famous as a trickster he was tricked. Loki’s fear comes true and his sons become disappointed in him thus Loki loses the very last and the only sense of belonging he has with his own kin, leading to even more ferocious revenge thoughts forming in Loki’s head.

Loki as the bringer of chaos, bringer of change, kills Baldr to preserve the natural cycle and to bring a new order. However, in *The Gospel of Loki*, he has reasons to kill Baldr. Such literary innovations makes Loki more human and a bit distant from the random, unpredictable trickster figure. Loki has a growing grudge against Baldr because he is everything Loki wants to be; popular and loved. Loki is the other, never belonging with the rest of the Aesir. He is always alienated. Especially after meeting with the giant king and his reputation being damaged to the point even his sons are disappointed in him, Loki is even more lonely. He becomes the laughing stock after being tricked even though he is the trickster god. This throws Loki into a very bad mood and seeing what he desires and what he can never attain in Baldr, he cannot bear it. Loki is anxious about the traces of a prophecy so he sneakily pays a visit to the head of Mímir and learns his role in the terrible prophecy and realizes why Odin was lately suspicious of him and turned secretive. This terrifies him so he looks for a way to secure himself. He asks for a protection from his daughter Hel, the goddess of the dead in exchange for Baldr because she is in love with Baldr and wants him for herself.

Frigg does not take an oath from mistletoe because she considers it young in the Prose Edda but in *The Gospel of Loki*, it is Loki who prevents Frigg from taking an oath from it. Loki's trickery and grudge is more dominant in this book so he tricks Frigg into leaving the mistletoe by distracting her with a snake so he can turn it into a weapon that can kill Baldr later on. Loki waits for the celebration of Baldr's invincibility where gods and goddesses throw weapons at him. Loki sneaks up on Baldr's blind brother Hödr and hands him the arrow he made with the mistletoe for him to throw at Baldr. When the mistletoe hits Baldr, he collapses and dies immediately. The grief-stricken gods and goddesses kill Hödr in their frenzy. Frigg tries to bring her son back but Hel has a condition and that is everything should weep for Baldr. Loki in the disguise of an old woman refuses to weep, pointing out the unfairness. "But this seems quite unfair to me. Why should Balder's death be any more important than mine?" (Harris, 2015, 221). Loki has selfish motivations behind killing Baldr but the unfairness he mentions is true. Frigg talks about conquering death but only for his son and it is against the natural cycle of life.

After refusing to weep for the Baldr and making sure he stays dead, Loki is still unsatisfied and restless and he takes his frustration out on the gods and goddesses assembled for a feast. He insults and accuses the gods but not as grimly and heavy as in Poetic Edda like incest or adultery. He merely offends them by calling names and saying they are stupid. It gets serious when Baldr's death and Hödr's murder is mentioned. Thor is present during the event and threatens Loki several times. Later Loki decides to leave the party and once sobers up he realizes that his actions will have consequences. Therefore he decides to run away and hide. Aesir chases after him and finds his hiding place. Loki tries to escape in the form of a fish but this time instead of the net he makes himself, he is caught with a special net to suppress his powers. Once he is captured, he is binded and Skadi especially leaves the venomous snake above him as a way of getting her revenge for her father. He must stay there till Ragnarok. Neither in Poetic Edda nor in Prose Edda, it is mentioned how Loki escapes from there. In this adaptation he is saved by Gullveig who is depicted as the true mastermind behind the Ragnarok. She wishes Loki to lead the army of the dead for her. Loki is a bringer of new order through chaos and

he is the bringer of the apocalypse in the both Eddas however in *The Gospel of Loki*, the apocalypse is not his doing. The real villain is Gullveig and Loki helps to get his personal revenge and because he feels he belongs with the villains. Loki receives a new name – Loki the Light Bringer – and receives the respect he always desires. So he leads the army of the dead, the death of all the gods and goddesses. Loki is not the true villain with evil qualities but he possesses more human traits and he simply wishes to belong somewhere and be part of a community, therefore he changes the authorised version through retelling the stories.

Through rewriting, representations offered as unchallengeable truths can be rejected, proven faulty, and deconstructed. Characters who have formerly been portrayed to be evil/outsider/villainous can now take their turn to redefine their identity and reshape the way they are perceived. (Aydın, 2017, 50).

Marvel's influence on the popular culture is undeniable. Marvel changes Loki from the bringer of chaos and apocalypse to an anti hero you can sympathise with. He is a misunderstood character who only tries to be loved and to belong. *Loki: Where Mischief Lies* is a book belonging to the Marvel universe. Telling the earlier days of Loki, shows exactly why Loki decides to defy everything and become a mischievous prankster he is in the universe. His struggles of being the slighted child who is not intended for throne and his mistakes are constantly held against him, make the reader sympathise with him. This is Loki's story of becoming an anti hero.

Loki: Where Mischief Lies is more full of literary inventions and emphasis on Loki's queer personality. Even his outer appearance indicates his queerness. Even tho he is a male, he wears stereotypically known as feminine clothes such as tunic, knee high boots with heels and he paints his nails black. Loki is no longer Odin's blood brother but his son and brother of Thor. Loki put Odin on the place of a father and seeked his approval in *The Gospel of Loki*, however in this book, Odin is truly Loki's father. Ever since the beginning of the book, the two brothers are compared a lot. Thor is the brilliant blonde hero with a muscly stature and Loki is dark haired, thin and very clever. Thor is represented as slow witted whereas Loki

is too intelligent. Thor cannot even separate the two words confidence and competence from each other and Loki has to correct him. However it is Thor who is most likely to be the king between them as he is very strong and talented in fighting. Loki on the other hand is talented in sorcery but Odin forbids him to practice it and instead wants him to learn how to use weapons and fight. As a child, Loki extinguishes all the lamps at once in the castle and expects his father to be proud with him but instead Odin is enraged and sends him to his room. His mother later comes to talk to him and tells him that it is better if Loki does not use his power and focus on becoming a warrior. Loki cannot be compared with Thor regarding fighting with strength and he does not understand the reason behind why his nature is denied to him. He can obviously do much more than Thor with his magic if he was allowed but “No one wanted a sorcerer for a king. The kings of Asgard were warriors. They wore their golden hair long and their armor polished and their scars from battle casually on display like ostentatious accessories.” (Lee, 2019, 17). Because of what he is, Loki knows that he will never be the king and yet he cannot stop wishing it.

Amora is an important character in the story. She is a very powerful sorceress and Loki has a crush on her. She is to be the royal sorceress one day. She teaches Loki magic secretly when it is forbidden for him to practice it. Loki in return, tries to impress Amora with his powers therefore comes up with ideas on how to use his powers, mostly on pranks. For example he comes up with the plan of changing the tiles' colour to pink to impress her with a bold idea but Amora actually wants to execute this idea. Here Amora and Loki is separated from each other because she is very brave and fearless whereas Loki is afraid of Odin most of the time. Loki admires Amora for her courage, he wants to be like her.

During the feast, Odin looks at the Godseye mirror to see the future and he sees Loki leading an army of the living dead. He is terrified of the image and he leaves the hall immediately to discuss this. Odin is anxious about what Loki is capable of. Loki tries to learn what his father saw so he shifts his form to that of a young servant girl and tries to eavesdrop but refuse to have any refreshments. Loki has to come up with another plan and he enchants one of the glasses to be able to

hear what is being talked. Thor catches up with Loki and he starts to listen to Odin as well. They both hear what Odin saw except for the name of the son that is supposed to be leading Ragnarok. Thor and Loki, both tense, have an argument right after hearing this fact and Thor shouts that he will be on the right side when Ragnarok comes. It is pretty clear how everyone first thinks of Loki when it comes to treachery. Loki is an outsider in this book too. He is Odin's son and Thor's brother but he is not accepted as the future king, his powers are denied and he is estranged. Even his own family suspects him and expects the worst from him which makes us sympathise with him.

Loki is determined to find out the identity of who is going to lead the army of the living dead. He plans to break into where the Godseye mirror is kept and see for himself with the help of Amora. However her powers are not enough to make the godseye mirror work clearly, therefore Loki decides to give his own power to the mirror to see but it only ends up breaking the mirror. After seeing it broken, Loki realizes just how powerful he is for the first time and he is surprised. "*I was powerful enough to destroy the Godseye mirror.* The thought flickered through him before he could stop it. It should have horrified him. It didn't. It thrilled him. *I am powerful.*" (Lee, 2019, 50). Odin is also shocked and afraid to hear Loki breaking the mirror. Amora protects Loki and says she is the one to break it. Odin is relieved to hear this and turns his anger on her completely. She is banished to Midgard where there is no magic. This punishment is one of the worst for someone who has magical powers because the lack of magic feels like a slow and cruel death.

After the mirror is broken, Loki's mother comes to his room. Loki has an outburst asking his mother why his father is preventing him from studying magic against all the benefits and admits to hearing them talk about the vision of him in Ragnarok. She answers his questions by saying that Odin is trying to protect Loki from the corrupting power of the magic. However how true is that is questionable for it was obvious Odin is scared of Loki's powers. Loki's mother also has magical powers so she offers to teach Loki how to control his magic. It is interesting how besides Loki, the only magic wielders are his mother, Karnilla and Amora, all women. The powers he possesses, therefore can be considered of feminine nature

as well. The magic wielders are usually in a position of assisting the king rather than becoming the king itself and their powers are limited to the desires of the king.

Loki spends his days working and studying hard to prove himself better. He and Thor get assigned to a duty. Magic amplifier Norn stones are stolen and both princes must go and talk to the Ice Elves about the situation. Loki having studied the customs and culture of the Ice Elves, tries to act according to their customs but on the other hand Thor is as carefree as ever. Still, Thor is welcomed well even though his actions contradict with the Ice Elves' customs. Loki is alienated once again as they welcome him coldly even though he is trying to do his best. The stones are talked during the dinner and the Ice Elves are against Asgard keeping all the stones to themselves. Thor is angry but Loki has an idea to humiliate them and proving they are not worthy of safekeeping the stones but his plan backfires. They are both captured while trying to enter the center of the palace, Prism. Odin is disappointed and Thor quickly admits it was Loki's idea. Loki is even more alienated at this point. Thor quickly gives away the mistake of his brother even though he agreed to go along with it. Loki has no support from either his father or brother. Loki keeps being disappointed and being slighted all the time that his inner world shows his insecurities and his desire to prove himself, to belong, to be loved and trusted by his family. These aspects make him more human and relatable. He is far from the unpredictable, random trickster.

Loki pleads for a chance to prove himself worthy of the crown. He says he does not wish to sit back and wait while Thor is searching for the stones and proving himself time and again. He accuses his father with not giving him enough chances. To that Odin replies with giving him an assignment on earth. Loki is sceptical about accepting it since he does not like Midgard but then this is the chance Odin is giving him so he has to take it. There are mysterious deaths in London which are associated with magic and Odin asks Loki to help the SHARP society and figure out the cause of the deaths. Before leaving for Midgard, Loki thinks himself above the humans but as the story progresses, Loki shows growth and becomes fond of humans as he continues to spend time with them.

Once he is in Midgard, he is knocked out and put in a box by one of the members of the SHARP society. He does not understand the kind of welcome he receives because surely they must be expecting him, then why do they treat him like this. Being in a box also signifies a change, the state of being in the belly of the whale. "The idea that the passage of the magical threshold is a transit into a sphere of rebirth is symbolized in the worldwide womb image of the belly of the whale." (Campbell, 2004, 83). This alludes to a change in the hero. Coming to earth and the experiences he is about to live here, indicates a change since he is brought to the SHARP society in a box. He tries to fight back as soon as he wakes up but he finds his magic suppressed. SHARP society is being incredibly cautious with Loki and he does not know the reason for it. He feels once again as an outsider for he knows if it was Odin who were to come to Midgard or Thor, they would not have been treated the same way. Even on a far planet than his home and the one he deems below Asgard, he is treated as an outsider. Loki wants to go back home but Odin is not willing to take him back until he solves the issue in the earth so Heimdall does not open Bifrost for him. He has no option but to take care of this problem first.

Both Loki and Theo go to the morgue to investigate the dead bodies. They come across protesters who claim the dead not dead but merely sleeping and they are against them being put into graves because they would die buried under the earth. Loki hears one of the spectators calling dead as the living dead and that startles Loki because in the prophecy he was told to lead an army of the living dead. All these people have no cause of death. Something magical is happening for sure. Loki is intrigued and decides to stay on Midgard to further investigate this weird phenomenon. When they get news about another body found, they all go together to investigate and when Loki touches one of the bodies there, he comes alive for a second. The group swiftly taken out of the crime scene after this incident. Loki does not know what made the body move exactly but they are certain something magical is going on.

The group gets together to drink and Mrs. Sharp becomes a little drunk. She starts to talk about Theo and his past, how he was arrested for indecency because he is gay and someone broke his leg for the same reason. Loki relates to Theo

greatly. He discovers they are both the outsiders in their community, the other, the deviant and the only reason is because they are who they are.

Loki didn't know what to say. He knew what it was to be cast out and unwanted and taunted for the fabric you were stitched from. To want to find strength and pride in the things that made you you in spite of the world telling you that you should hide them. It was a particular kind of dissonance that was hard to understand until your ears rang with it. (Lee, 2019, 143).

Loki cannot comprehend why someone's sexual preference considered to be a crime or why women do not have certain rights or why there is a gender distinction. Once he hears the name Enchantress, he gets excited because he immediately thinks of Amora and in order to hide his excitement, he claims that he likes the name and would like to take it for himself. The members of the SHARP society are surprised to hear that as there is a gender distinction between the enchanter and the enchantress, they find it odd that Loki chooses a feminine word for himself. However this distinction does not make any difference for Loki. The same kind of conversation happens when a man tells Loki that he looks like a witch, he thanks the man but the guy is surprised and he says that witches are girls to which Loki replies as: "Does that make it a less of a compliment?" (Lee, 2019, 149).

Loki investigates the Enchantress and finds out that she is Amora. He is incredibly happy to find her but the problem is, he learns that all the living dead were connected to her. Her magic starts to perish after she was banished to earth and she tried to find a way to stop that. The only way she has, is to drain humans from their essence so she can preserve a little magic. Loki wants Amora to stop killing people and informs her that the SHARP society is looking for her. He promises her that he will find her a place she can hide and preserve her own magic without having to steal anyone's soul. He decides to find a plan to deceive SHARP society in order to protect her and even though Amora is sceptical about this plan, she decides to go along with it.

Theo follows Loki to the place where the Enchantress is. Loki, upon leaving Amora, sees him at the bar and sits beside him. Even though Loki has an attraction to Amora from before, he views Theo's face and finds it admirable.

Theo's eyes darted sideways to him. He truly had an unbelievable number of freckles. Loki had never seen anything like it. It might have looked garish on another man, but somehow it just made Theo's face more interesting. A starry sky that could be studied for years and still there would be constellations left unnamed." (Lee, 2019, 166).

Loki does not realise it but he starts to have an attraction towards Theo as well. This emphasizes Loki's queer personality. He is pansexual, attracted to people regardless of their gender. He even finds it weird that earth has taboos regarding sex and same sex attraction considered to be a crime.

Theo and Loki returns to Theo's home and they have an intimate and important conversation. Theo explains his past in an outburst. With what he says, Loki becomes the hope for Theo. He becomes the hope for the queer community. "On Asgard, we don't have such a limited view of sex. Or love, for that matter. There are no rules about who can be with whom. Certainly no one is arrested for it." (Lee, 2019, 171). Considering Loki wearing high heeled boots that is regarded as feminine shoes and no one makes a remark about it in Asgard and no record of an arrest for homosexuality, what Loki says is probably true. Women also have equal rights in Asgard which shows that as a community they are much more developed than the Victorian era earth.

Theo starts to question Loki about his preferences and his gender identity. Loki says that he is equally interested in either of the genders and as for his gender identity he claims that he exists as both. Loki is definitely bisexual but considering his openness to everything it would be better to assume he is pansexual. As for his gender identity, it would be non-binary or genderqueer as he claims to be both man and woman, his attire represents this aspect of him as well. In fact Loki should be referred to as they but since he is referred to as he in the book, he/his pronouns are used for him in this study as well. Theo is both surprised and happy to hear all these.

He asks Loki if he would take him to Asgard because it is the land of his dreams, if he can be free and not judged to be himself. Theo even gets really emotional about it and tears start to form in his eyes with the knowledge that such a place exists. The most important thing for Theo is to be himself freely. However Loki is not too keen to take Theo there, he says that Theo would not like it to be the only human there. Loki does not want Theo to be an outsider like himself, slighted, made other when he is looking to be free and himself. Loki is afraid for Theo to receive the same kind of treatment he has. He is afraid that Theo would feel lonely and that he would not be able to be himself freely as he imagines. Loki tries to protect him in his own way, not wanting him to be disappointed and suffer.

Loki visits Amora again. She shows him how she performs her tricks as the famous medium of London and after that, they share their first kiss together. Yet he cannot stop thinking about Theo and tries to impress him by using small magic to see his surprised face.

In spite of himself, Loki was starting to enjoy being around Theo. In Asgard, he always preferred his own company to that of anyone else, aside from Amora, and he had hardly expected that a human, of all creatures, would be the one to snare him. But Theo had a quick wit, laughed at his own jokes, read too many books, and knew too much about everything. He chewed loudly but ate slowly, wore his hats low so that his curly hair was smashed into his eyes, and didn't like walking on the outside of the pavement where the carriages passed. Loki wasn't sure why he didn't mind any of these things. (Lee, 2019, 182-183).

He starts to become fond of not only Theo but all the members of the SHARP society. Mrs. S talks about her life before her husband died in the service of the Odin and Loki feels pain to hear it because in his opinion the work they do here in earth does not matter to Odin as they think it does. According to Loki, Mr. Sharp died for nothing but he cannot find it in himself to say this to Mrs. S because he is afraid of hurting her. Loki cares about them in his own way.

Loki finally initiates his plan regarding Amora. In order to save her, he lies to the SHARP society, to the people he cares but in his mind he believes that he

cares about Amora more and that she will not hurt anymore people. “All semblances of truth and falsity are subject to his rapid alchemy. His lying, cheating, tricking, and deceiving may derive from the trickster being simply an unconscious numbskull, or, at other times, from being a malicious spoiler.” (Hynes & Doty, 1997, 35). Here Loki unravels his deceiving nature but in his mind it is for the good of everyone, he does not maliciously deceive people to gain a selfish benefit, in fact he wishes the deaths to stop. Even though the reason is that Odin would surely learn about Amora and kill her this time, he is also concerned of the fact that she is stealing souls to have a magical essence. When he first hears this, he is shocked and he wishes Amora to stop. Therefore even though his reasoning may seem selfish, he wants Amora to stop stealing essence for the sake of humans as well. He finds it wrong. So he tells the society that these deaths are caused by a magical epidemic and the source of this epidemic is Amora unintentionally. The virus started with her and now spreading through the corpses so they must be taken out of London and be buried properly to prevent more deaths. He claims that Amora is unaware of the situation and that she must be talked to. Therefore the whole society pays her a visit. Amora shows great talent in acting, crying in front of the society members to show that she is innocent and she promises to do anything necessary to help them. The next step in the plan is to convince the families to consent to the autopsy so the bodies can be buried. For that, they plan to have Amora do her medium trick to contact the spirit of one of the living dead and request to be buried in order to pass to the other world.

There is one person who is against this séance because she believes those humans to be alive still and that this is a con supported by the police to get rid of the bodies. Rachel Bowman clearly states to Loki that she is onto their scheme and she is against it. Loki acts natural and aloof but Rachel Bowman later on interrupts the séance in front of the audience and accuses Amora to be a fraud and a liar. She yells that Amora has no power and this inflicts a wound on Amora’s pride. She is enraged about Rachel and defies her openly, about to strike even but Loki stops her. Still she cannot let this insult go and she sneaks out of the club to find Rachel and she steals her essence out of anger and to prove herself mighty. Loki finds Amora

with the body of Rachel and he goes furious. She not only broke their promise but also risked their plan. Loki cannot bear that their promise meant nothing to her, that she could so easily disregard it. He quickly throws the body to the Thames but he is both angry and disappointed. Loki feels he is done with Amora but she provokes him by saying that he should read the book Theo is reading and that Loki will come back to her after that.

Three days later Mrs. S comes with the news that consent for autopsy was granted and it was confirmed the bodies were dead so they can have them buried finally. The society is relieved at the news but Loki is tense. Then Theo shows another news to Loki, that of Rachel Bowman's death but Loki plays the ignorant. Loki's mind is occupied with something else and he wishes to talk to Thor to ask for his help. What he asks for is not revealed in the book yet. Loki is curious about what Amora meant. What is in the book? He cannot help himself and goes to Theo's apartment.

He finds a book named *Tales from the North* which contains tales about Asgard. He checks what is written about him and he sees his name as "*Loki, The Trickster. God of Chaos.*" (Lee, 2019, 214). He keeps on reading and he sees words associated with him such as; manipulative, the father of lies, murderer, villain. Loki is baffled to see all these and he questions everything himself. Is he to become a villain? Is this his destiny? What is the point of trying to be the good guy if he is to end up as a villain in the end? Right at that moment when Loki is having an existential crisis, Theo comes in. Loki is heartbroken. Theo feels guilty and he tries to explain that he wanted to tell but Loki feels very vulnerable so he lashes out:

"Tell me what?" Loki said. "That before I even arrived, you all had made up your minds about me? You had decided I was not to be trusted, that I was slippery and cruel and wily, because of a lot of old stories you had read about me? How disappointed you must have been when it was me who showed up instead of my brother with sunshine spurting out of his ass. I'm sure this book"—he flung the volume onto the ground between them—"has some very flattering things to say about him. Because he's the hero, isn't he? He was always going to be the hero. And I'm not. I could descend from the heavens

surrounded in angelic light and give everyone in your realm cheese sandwiches and a unicorn, and you would all still know me only as the villain from the stories.” (Lee, 2019, 215).

This is such a painful moment for Loki. He trusted these people, he was growing fond of them, he even had an attraction towards Theo without realising and to know the truth that they knew him as nothing but a villain all along hurts him so much. He feels trapped in this fate where he is the villain, the bringer of an apocalypse and never the hero. Loki feels that everything he does is pointless, that no matter what he does, he will not be able to change his future. He feels like he does not have any choice. Everything was set for him already. He cannot change it even though he does not want to be the bad guy. He is doomed to be the villain. Loki is utterly disappointed and with rage he goes back to Amora. He thinks that his anger is justified. His pain makes the reader sympathise with him. He is much more humane with all the emotions he is feeling than just a trickster who deceives and plays pranks maliciously. Loki has feelings so deep in the *Loki: Where Mischief Lies*. He feels everything vividly, he is not devoid of emotions. He is not just an agent of chaos, a universal figure which makes change possible. He is a living and breathing character with his own reasons, own thoughts and feelings. He is not driven by primal instincts with no control but he is a character who can feel and act on his emotions.

Loki goes to Amora immediately and shows her the Norn stones that Odin and Thor been looking for. Loki admits to stealing them but does not want to tell why because feeling that he was not given enough chance to prove himself, he felt like he should create the opportunity and stole the stones only to pretend to find them heroically later on. He does not wish to say that he did it in the hopes of his father noticing his powers and be proud with him, consider him worthy of the crown. He instead asks Amora what to do with them together. She suggests conquering Asgard. Once Loki asks how, Amora reminds him of the prophecy, Loki leading an army of the living dead. They decide to raise all the living dead that are being carried to a graveyard on train.

They have to place runes on the bodies to wake them up altogether once the train is running. Therefore they both try to sneak into the morgue before the bodies are placed on the train. Loki changes form to that of Mrs. S to fool Gem and when he asks if Theo is ok, Loki becomes anxious and asks what is wrong with Theo to which Gem answers by saying “*affair of the heart*” (Lee, 2019, 225). Loki is moved to hear this and he wishes to go to Theo’s apartment to ask what is this affair of the heart but he already knows it. He knows that Theo is in love with him and he knows he loves him too. He wants to hear Theo say it but then he decides against it. Loki cannot help but ask Gem what he thinks of Loki and he is surprised and moved to hear positive opinions. Gem lets them in after their little conversation but he recognizes he is not Mrs. S from the fact that Loki forgot the wedding ring she is still wearing. After they enter the morgue, Gem informs the real Mrs. S. She comes to talk to Loki because she is genuinely worried about him. She says to Loki that there is always a choice that he can change things if he wishes to but Loki announces that he will become what everyone thinks of him. While they are talking, Amora sneaks up on her to kill. Loki for a moment thinks about warning her but it is too late. She attacks and kills Mrs. S with a dagger, instead of choosing to drain her essence. Even if she did not see herself as a killer before, now there was no doubt that she was a murderer and Loki feels just as responsible for her death because he just let it happen instead of interfering.

The next morning they try to get into the train but Theo is prepared to do anything to prevent that from happening. He causes a scene to make the police arrest Loki but he finds a way to escape and tries to get on the train by hiding in one of the coffins. The imagery of the box shows itself here once again, indicating a change. Loki is a character who shows growth throughout the story. He is constantly changing with every experience and new information. He is becoming more and more himself with the choices he makes. He was not sure of what to do, what he wanted and who he was but from the moment he exits the box, he is changed and he made his decision. He decides to rebel against his fate, he wants to break this evil cycle by changing through his decisions and he chooses to not follow Amora but beat her and their evil plan. He is no longer indecisive.

Once both Loki and Amora find each other in the train, the confrontation happens. Loki admits that he figured out Amora's plans and that she was gonna betray him. Loki says that the throne of Asgard is her aim and he is the only real threat before that as he is a sorcerer. So she plans to take the stones and kill Loki right then and there. Loki of course refuses to give the stones. First Amora plays the fool but then decides to drop her mask and asks Loki why he did not reveal her as the murderer and come to arrest her.

“Because I plan to do that myself,” he replied. “Odin wants the Norn Stones returned to Asgard and I’m sure he’ll be thrilled to see you in prison as well—you are their thief, after all; at least that’s what I’ll tell him. And you’re the murderer the SHARP Society was looking to eliminate. All wrapped up in one little treasonous package. Let’s see Thor do that in a single trip to Midgard.” (Lee, 2019, 240).

Loki sees this event as his chance to finally prove himself. He will be the hero finally and prove he is worthy of the throne. They start fighting immediately. Even though Amora is not at her full power, Loki seems at disadvantage and simultaneously Amora tries to play with Loki's mind by trying to belittle him and using his insecurities against him. Their fight end up fruitless because Loki does not have the Norn stones on him and Amora decides to wake the dead by using her own power reserve. She wakes a car full of them and orders them to take Loki and throw him to the back, where Loki sees Theo hiding.

Loki tells everything to Theo, how he stole the Norn stones and now Amora wants them to use them against Asgard. Theo is both angry at Loki for lying to them about her and the murders and at the same time wishes to support Loki. He wants him to defy what is written about him, rebel against his destiny and write new stories. He says the exact same thing Mrs. S says: There is always a choice. A very emotional exchange happens between Theo and Loki as they both express how they wish they could make their own world want them. Then Theo kisses Loki on the lips. After the kiss, Loki reaches into Theo's pocket and takes back the Norn stones he hid there. Theo is surprised to see them out of his pocket and asks why. Loki tells him that he trusts him. Loki is finally able to bond with someone enough to

trust him. Loki asks Theo's help but only on one condition that Loki must take him to Asgard after this is over. Theo is at first sceptical about this promise but Loki asks him to believe him this time and then they try to stop Amora together.

Amora captures Theo to threaten Loki while they were trying to reach to the human compartment but turns out it is only an illusion. Loki is in fact Theo and Theo is Loki. Loki strikes back immediately and after the hit, Amora starts to visibly shrink and age, the essence of the people she stole wearing out. Amora is now beaten but Loki is left with a train full of living dead army. He throws Theo to the compartment where the people are, going back on his word. He does not take Theo with him to Asgard. He can clearly see the hurtful, disappointed face of Theo and it pains him but he does not want Theo to be unhappy. He does not want him to be an outsider, the other just like himself in Asgard. He does not want him to be lonely as the only human there. Loki tries to protect Theo in his own way.

It appears that Loki asked the help of Thor regarding the living dead army before. Like he says, he worked things out long before he gets on the train. Both he and Thor knows how the scene look, just like the vision Odin saw in the Godseye mirror and for a moment Loki considers. He has the Norn stones and he has the army but no, he makes his choice. He decides not to be the villain in the stories. He changes his fate. He lets Thor kill all the living dead and looking at him, he thinks: "His brother was protecting him from his own army. It crystalized in that moment the difference between them. He would never be his brother, and his brother was the hero. So where did that leave him? What did that leave him?" (Lee, 2019, 253). He looks at the stones he holds and he releases a big magic that shatters the earth and the opening swallows all the dead.

Loki does not realise at first but the real power lies in changing one's fate, in making decisions. By choosing to save Midgard and Asgard, by defying his ill fate and changing it, he stops the apocalypse he is supposed to bring and becomes the hero. Loki is no longer the evil villain who brings the end of everything but a hero who is strong enough to change his own destiny.

A major confrontation happens between Odin and Loki after he enters Asgard with the living dead army. Odin accuses Loki with treason but Loki holds his head high and answers with complete honesty. Odin states that he is disappointed in Loki but to that he answers with:

I have done terrible things, but you let me be nothing but those things. Tell me, Father, do you think me evil? Do you think me monstrous?" He spread his arms. "Did you need a villain and I was available? Someone to make Thor look prettier than he is so that when you give him the throne, everyone will be willing to overlook the thousands he's slaughtered in the name of peace and Asgard? (Lee, 2019, 256).

Loki fights the urge in him to step back when his father yells and stands his ground. He realizes the real power there; it does not omit from a magical artifact but comes from within. The real power is the power of defiance. "*This*, he thought, and he almost glanced at the Norn Stones discarded on the steps. *This is power.*" (Lee, 2019, 256). Here we see the trickster relying on his wit and his own strength instead of any other outer force such as Norn stones. He feels like the real power is something he already possesses. This shows the comparison with the shaman where shaman relies on the spirits or artifacts and trickster unlike him relies on his own intelligence. Here Loki realizes the real power in him as the trickster and he sees the Norn stones as unnecessary.

But there is this crucial difference between the trickster-hero of the myth and the shaman: the former relies on his own strength alone, on his own innate powers of mind and body; while the shaman employs the aid of other spirits who assist him in doing what he could not do with his own strength. (Ricketts, 1966, 335)

Odin states that he will announce Thor as the heir to the throne. Loki is disappointed to learn that his father never saw him as the heir to the crown all this time. When Odin asks if he accepts this, Loki asks if there is another choice and Odin says the same thing Mrs. S and Theo said; There is always a choice. Loki chooses to defy everything and be the witch. He chooses to be the trickster god. He feels that there is nothing left for him now. He made his choice but that did not

affect Odin's decision. He never intended Loki to be on the throne. Therefore Loki decides to only care about himself and do things for his own gains. He becomes the trickster god truly.

He would never be king. He'd never be his brother. He'd never be a hero. He would never be Theo, cast aside and still strong without being brittle. He'd never be Amora either. He had proved that when he'd tried to stop their army.

What else was left?

He could be the witch. He could be the villain. He could be the trickster, the schemer, the self-serving God of Chaos, prove the mythology books right. Prove them all right in what they had all thought, that he was rotten from the start. He would serve no man but himself, no heart but his own.

That would be his choice. (Lee, 2019, 257).

He decides to be the witch. Witch does not only refer to an evil female magic wielder as thought to be in the medieval times, instead the witch is a symbol of rebelliousness against the status quo, against the dominant authority. Being a witch is an empowering act. The label witch was given to women who do not act according to the norms of their time and showed freedom from the social customs.

A witch was identified through her visible rejection of a society's moral code and her actions against commonly held standards for women; promiscuity was perhaps the most dangerous and subversive activity for women to engage in during the witch-hunts, as the most common attribute in the portrayals of witches is their exaggerated sexuality, and perhaps more dangerously their power over male-sexuality. (Spoto, 2010, 58).

The fear for witches mostly resulted from the fear of the dominant gender hierarchy being undermined by the women free from this hierarchy. Odin's fear of Loki's powers result from the possibility of the order he created being overthrown by him since he sees a vision of the apocalypse Ragnarok led by Loki.

There is a difference between the sorcerer and the witch. Sorcerer, first of all is a male who is in the boundaries of law and customs and usually using his knowledge to preserve such norms whereas the witches undermine it. "... the witch

was representative of a female power that disturbs predominant societal norms.” (Spoto, 2010, 66). Therefore Loki refuses to be a sorceress like Karnilla or his mother who only use their power to assist the king and the order he established but by deciding to be a witch, Loki aims to rebel against his father, against his king and the order of the Asgard. He decides to live outside the status quo that is definitely rejecting him. He embraces his own power by determining to be a witch.

2.2 The Features of Loki Corresponding to The Trickster Figure

Loki will be analysed as a trickster and how much does he fit into this category will be detected. Not only Loki in the Norse mythology but his representations in the contemporary literature as well will be taken into consideration. Loki has a place in the mind of people mostly as the trickster god. He is as Sturluson describes:

Also numbered among the Æsir is he whom some call the mischief-monger of the Æsir, and the first father of falsehoods, and blemish of all gods and men: he is named Loki or Loptr, son of Fárbauti the giant; his mother was Laufey or Nál; his brothers are Býleistr and Helblindi. (trans. Brodeur, 2018, 37).

“As his name explicitly states, the trickster is a consummate and continuous trick-player and deceiver.” (Hynes & Doty, 1997, 35). He likes to deceive others, play tricks and in the end becomes the butt of his own joke. As a trickster god and observed from Sturluson’s *Prose Edda*, Loki fits into this category. The fact that, this description is the first information the reader gets regarding Loki is spectacular. These aspects are given as his primary characteristics. His deceiving nature can be observed well in the event with the giant who is building the citadel of Asgard. Loki takes the form of a mare to distract the giant’s stallion away and thus keeping him from completing the citadel. He is willing to go at great lengths to tricks someone if necessary. He is not someone to shy away from changing his sex and giving birth to a child. No one expects someone to do that as it is against the norms, therefore it leads the trick to be successful. Loki usually uses his abilities in order to save his life after putting the gods and goddesses into trouble himself and be threatened by them. It is clear that Loki has a great motivation to perform these tricks since he values his life so much.

The trickster figure does not have much motivation other than saving his life or satisfying his selfish needs which eventually leads to the end of the old order and the new order built upon the old. He disguises himself as an old woman to trick Frigg into telling him the one plant she did not receive oath from, tricks the blind brother Hödr into killing Baldr and then tricks Frigg once again as he disguises himself as a giant woman to not cry for Baldr's return. However in *The Gospel of Loki* it is observed that, Loki has multiple reasons in performing these tricks. In the case of Baldr, he has a long history of grudge against him as he is the one god that is liked and admired by everyone whereas Loki could be nothing but a slighted, unwanted god. He is full of jealousy and he sees Baldr as a negotiation tool with his daughter to save himself from death. Therefore he tricks Frigg into not extracting oath from the mistletoe to later make a weapon out of it. By tricking the blind brother, he causes the death of Baldr and by not weeping he seals the deal with his daughter as Baldr has to live with her now.

Loki changes form to that of a servant girl in *Loki: Where Mischief Lies* in order to eavesdrop on the conversation his father has with a selected few about what he saw in the Godseye mirror. While in Midgard, he tricks the SHARP society to have them stop in order to save Amora. Loki cares about her and he is willing to cover the crimes she commits so that Odin would not hear of her and kill her. He tricks for someone else. At the end he tricks Amora with pretending to be believing in her and planning to take over Asgard with her because he knows that Amora plans to kill him and been trying to manipulate him all this time. He tricks her not only to save himself but also saving Asgard and proving himself as a hero. However things do not go the way he wants.

Loki becomes the butt of his own joke as much as he tricks others. He tries to hit an eagle with a stick but in the end, he is dragged hitting stones, trees and hills. He tricks Idunn and kidnaps her but then the gods and goddesses threaten him. He brings Idunn back and Thjazi is dead, then his daughter comes seeking revenge and he has to make her laugh to avoid death. He makes a complete fool of himself in order to make Skadi laugh by tying a rope to his penis and the beard of a goat. He brings the Aesir valuable items but have his mouth stitched because he loses the

bet. He cannot realise the tricks giant king Útgarda-Loki plays and have his reputation damaged. He tries to break into the most protected center of the Ice Elves' castle with Thor only to be captured and then be lectured by his father. All these events show that the tricks Loki plays "... exhibit an internal motion all its own. Thus, a trick can gather such momentum as to exceed any control exercised by its originator and may even turn back upon the head of the trickster, so the trick-player is also trickster-tricked." (Hynes & Doty, 1997, 35).

Loki is a very mischievous character who does things only for the sake of mischief. He cuts off Sif's hair and there is no given reason for this action. However in *The Gospel of Loki* he does this to humiliate Thor, to take revenge from him. While the trickster figure is an unpredictable character with no known reason to his actions, Loki is presented as a more human character with his own inner world and reasons. Loki changes the wine of Thor to slugs in order to humiliate him again in the *Loki: Where Mischief Lies* because Thor humiliates Loki first in sparring and this little trick draws the attention of the sorceress Amora. This mytheme is reimagined in a way to give more human qualities to Loki in the contemporary literature.

Loki resembles the Wakdjunkaga in gross appetites as Radin explains. Trickster has an insatiable hunger for food and sex. The hunger is very obvious during the eating contest in the halls of Útgarda-Loki. Loki eats every piece of food in front of him and only loses because his opponent is a wildfire and it consumes the bones as well. He is even capable of racing with a wildfire when it comes to eating. Loki keeps on breaking taboos when it comes to sex as he not only changes his species but also his sex when he becomes pregnant from a stallion. Loki admits having this greedy hunger in *The Gospel of Loki* and shows confusion towards the taboos the gods and goddesses have.

There were a few compensations to having corporeal Aspect. Food (jam tarts were my favourites); drink (mostly wine and mead); setting things on fire; sex (although I was still extremely confused by all the taboos surrounding this – no animals, no siblings, no men, no married women, no demons – frankly, it

was amazing to me that *anyone* had sex at all, with so many rules against it). (Harris, 2015, 33).

Such a greed is non-existent in the *Loki: Where Mischief Lies*. He only has a crush on Amora in Asgard and once he meets with Theo he ends up falling in love with him. Except for Amora, Loki has no experience in sex. Any kind of greed for food is also absent. Loki is presented as more of a human in this book.

As can be seen from the previous trait, the trickster figure is a more primitive character. He represents the state that has hardly left the animal level which is the shadow in Jung's theory. Trickster figure only cares about his own gain, his own selfish need and desires. Loki except in *Loki: Where Mischief Lies*, fits into this category as already described. Loki is more civilised in the last book because not only gross appetite is absent but he is also careful about manners and studies the manners of other cultures to be respectful. Another aspect which fits into the character Loki is the shadow as the saviour. He saves gods and goddesses from many troubles even though he is the one to cause most of them. He stops the giant from building the walls and claiming Freyja, sun and the moon, he helps Thor get his hammer back, he brings Idunn back after helping Thjazi to kidnap her. Loki in *Loki: Where Mischief Lies* saves the humans from both becoming the living dead and saving the whole Midgard by stopping Amora and her army. In some of the interpretations, he is even saving the worlds by killing Baldr.

Karl Kerényi claims that the trickster is the bringer of change and chaos. It is possible to experience what is forbidden through trickster. Loki definitely brings chaos and makes it possible for the reader to experience what is forbidden in his culture. He does many things out of norms such as changing his sex and becoming a woman, or practicing magic when he must desert it and focus on becoming a warrior instead. The biggest example however is the death of Baldr. "Loki represents change and the natural disorder of the cosmos, a force that Frigg, Baldr's mother, has derailed by obtaining a pledge from every living thing, except Mistletoe, that they will not hurt Baldr." (Krause-Loner, 2003, 53). Baldr's death is the start of Ragnarok, a new order built upon the old one. However, in *The Gospel of Loki* he is no longer the mastermind of the Ragnarok but just a commander of an

army who is seeking revenge for the misdeeds done to him. Loki even stops a vision of the Ragnarok in *Loki: Where Mischief Lies* by defeating Amora and asking the help of his brother Thor to defeat the army. He is no longer a universal agent of chaos who brings a new order. He simply either fulfils his destiny and takes revenge or he rebels against his destiny as the apocalypse bringer villain and becomes the hero.

Trickster is a culture hero. "Loki is a creative figure, producing items or causing them to be produced." (Krause-Loner, 2003, 54). One of the most important creations Loki causes is Thor's hammer Mjölnr and by having a bet, he causes more items to be created even though he does not intend to be a culture hero. There is a lack of culturally important item creation but Loki instills hope of a better and a more inclusive world in *Loki: Where Mischief Lies*. This mytheme is used to correspond to the present values. He is a queer character and he gives hope to Theo of an advanced world where same sex desires or genders opposing the binary opposition are not considered to be a crime. A world where you can be yourself freely. A hope for a better future.

The tension Ricketts claims between the trickster and shaman and the hero also exists between Loki, Thor and Odin. Thor is the hero and Odin is the shaman. Loki constantly humiliates Thor and makes him look like a slow minded person. He suggests Thor to dress up as a woman in order to get his hammer back thus mocking him. He sleeps with Thor's wife and then cuts her hair as a proof of their intimacy. Changes Thor's wine to slugs to make him spurt out his wine in the middle of a feast to make him look mannerless and rude. Additionally Loki is represented as opposing the shaman figure Odin. He is a shaman figure because he sacrifices his eye for knowledge and hangs himself from the tree Yggdrasil for the same reason. He learns the art of runes in *The Gospel of Loki* and through them he uses his powers. Loki naturally possesses wildfire but has to use runes in Odin's world but the truth that his essence is of wildfire does not change. During the feast of Aegir, Loki insults Odin too and blames him with using magic like a witch however in *The Gospel of Loki* he does not say anything to Odin when he insults everyone else openly even Thor. Loki puts Odin in the place of a father without

realising or admitting to it therefore he does not have it in him to insult him that way. On the other hand, Loki finds the real power in defiance. He defies his fate of bringing the apocalypse. He finds the real power in himself rather than some magical artifacts like a shaman would do.

Lévi-Strauss depicts the trickster as a mediator. He gives the examples of raven and coyote as they are neither herbivorous nor carnivorous. They are carrion eaters. While they do not hunt for their own food, they do not also feed on plants. They eat the carcasses of the animals hunted by other animals thus making the perfect mediator between the two different type of animals. Trickster is also a mediator as such. “Since his mediating function occupies a position halfway between two polar terms, he must retain something of that duality— namely an ambiguous and equivocal character.” (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, 226). This is clear in Loki being of giant heritage but also amongst the Asgardian gods and goddesses. He is neither a giant nor a god completely. In the beginning of *The Gospel of Loki*, he is at first pure chaos but Odin calls him out of the chaos and once Loki assumes a physical body, he is no longer pure chaos but neither a pure godly, orderly being like Odin and the others. Thor represents muscular strength and Amora represents pure magic whereas Loki is in between. He is neither muscular like his brother nor a complete magic wielder like the powerful sorceress Amora. Loki mostly relies on his intelligence to solve problems. In general, his ability to change his species and biological sex makes him an ambiguous, character. He is neither completely man nor completely woman. He is genderfluid and changes between them quite often or he exists as both genders at the same time as he explains in *Loki: Where Mischief Lies*.

Loki does not possess every trait of trickster in the list Babcock-Abrahams presents. However there are still quite a number of traits that are compatible with Loki. Most of these characteristics can be viewed as associated with Turner’s liminality. Loki is essentially a boundary crosser. Loki disregards the limits and does what he wants to do. He turns into a woman and gives birth to a child, he learns magic even though it is forbidden for him. Aside from these, he does not have his own hall like the other gods and goddesses, he does not occupy a certain space

constantly. As an ambiguous person who is both a Jötunn and an Asgardian, he can travel anywhere he wishes without a problem.

Even though Loki's sense of humour is not scatological all the time, the best example of this would be how he made Skadi laugh. He ties one end of rope to his genitals and the other to the beard of the goat. Both screams whenever the other pulls. This is so absurd and scatological that Skadi cannot help herself and laughs. Babcock-Abrahams also mentions exaggerated desire for sex and food. As already stated, Loki has a variety range of sexual partners not only among the Aesir but also from even other species except in *Loki: Where Mischief Lies* where Amora is his only experience in a sexual intercourse. He is also capable of eating so much that is enough to compete with an all consumer wildfire.

Loki is a very ambiguous character not only in action but also in nature. He is born a giant but he is considered to be a god among the Aesir. He generally presents himself as a male but he never hesitates to become a female and even give birth to a child if he desires. He is genderfluid in this case. He is young in appearance but he does not mind to change his form to that of an old person either. He is never really fixed. He changes his form as he wishes to anything possible, even to an animal quite easily. Therefore he is very ambiguous. His ambiguity and boundary crossing nature makes him an antisocial and amoral being observable especially in Lokasenna section. He undermines the gods and goddesses, thus the hegemony. He kills a servant in the feast when the feast hall is considered to be sacred and no deaths allowed. One last trait that is compatible with Loki is the dualistic nature. Loki both causes trouble and then saves the gods and goddesses from the same trouble. He is both good and evil. He both causes creation like Thor's hammer and leads to destruction like the death of Baldr and brings the apocalypse. He both causes the living dead army to rise and then he helps the army to be destroyed.

William Hynes also has a list of characteristics that can be applied to Loki. One of them is the same as Babcock-Abrahams' which is the ambiguity of the trickster and it is already stated that Loki is a highly ambiguous character by nature

and choice. Another trait is that the trickster is a prankster and a deceiver. He changes Thor's wine to slugs, he cuts Sif's hair. He tricks everyone constantly as examples are given already even though his tricks do not end well every time. Trickster is a shape shifter. He can turn himself into anything he desires. No taboos exist for him so he can turn into a woman willingly. He can turn into an animal if it is going to serve to his purpose. Trickster is a situation inverter. He breaks orders and taboos, brings the high low. He cannot even comprehend taboos so it is natural for him to break them. He insults and brings the gods low in Lokasenna and brings specifically Thor low by dressing him in bridal gown in the Lay of Thrym. He inverts the situation of immortality that Frigg works really hard for his son, by causing Baldr to die. Trickster is the messenger and the imitator of the gods. He is an imitator because he is a giant who joined the Aesir through blood brotherhood with Odin or as in *The Gospel of Loki*, he is the part of pure chaos but called forth by Odin and assumed a physical aspect. He is the messenger of the gods clearly noticed in the Lay of Thrym because Loki talks for Thor and closes his gaps. He is the one sent to Midgard in the name of his father to solve a magical problem. He goes with Thor to negotiate with the Ice Elves. Finally trickster is a sacred and lewd bricoleur. Loki is counted among the Aesir but he is not like other gods and goddesses. He can break taboos and perform things the others cannot. Even though known as male, he can turn into a female and give birth which is found repulsive by Heimdall even. He is the mix of what god is and is not. He possesses both sacred and profane values.

Loki is a liminal being as he has a contradictory nature, ability to shape shift, and by being able to invert situations. "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial." (Turner, 1991, 95). A liminal being is an outcast to the society it belongs, the ambiguous nature resisting classification. Loki is also considered to be an outsider, with no halls for him. Even though he is considered to be one of the gods, he does not fit into the category with his deeds. He is also born as a giant but through blood brotherhood, he is one of the Aesir. He easily breaks the rules that the other gods and goddesses must follow. His gender or actually his

biological sex is not fixed as well, changing at his whim. Turner claims that a liminal is both sacred and profane, high and low which can be said to be the sacred and lewd bricoleur.

Loki is a queer character as he is represented as genderfluid or non-binary and as a pansexual. Loki changes his sex quite often and not only to save his life or for another reason but because he wants to. Odin claims in the Lokasenna that Loki lived like a woman for months, milking cows and giving birth to children. He also does not hesitate to turn into a mare and give birth to eight legged horse. His attraction is talked of less but he is willing to have an intercourse even with other species. He mentions how he cannot comprehend the taboos regarding the sex and wonders how anyone has sex at all with such restrictions. In *Loki: Where Mischief Lies* Theo questions him directly and Loki admits to being pansexual by saying he is equally comfortable with either and mentions that he exists as both genders without changing which shows he is non-binary. Loki is pushed to be the other because of his liminal and queer nature. He does not stay in boundaries. He is a disgrace in a patriarchal society because he can give birth to children. He is different than the rest. When everyone is a muscular warrior, Loki is a sorcerer. He practices magic even when it is forbidden. He does not fit in.

CONCLUSION

Through various theories regarding the trickster, Loki is analysed as a trickster figure and his representations in both Norse mythology and contemporary literature is compared. First of all he is a trick player and sometimes ends up being the butt of his own joke. He does not need any reason other than being mischievous in doing things like cutting Sif's hair. He brings disorder to an ordered world of the Aesir. He is capable of doing what the other gods and goddesses cannot by nature. Loki is a liminal figure who does not fit into any category completely. He has an immense appetite for both food and sex. In order to satisfy his selfish desires, Loki does whatever he wants without thinking of the consequences. He is hardly above the primitive level, only caring about what he wants and needs. He is contradictory as he both puts Aesir into trouble and then be the one to save them. He also causes culturally important items to be created but at the same time he brings destruction. He is an agent of chaos who makes possible for a new order to be born from the dusts of the old order.

He is against all shamans or shaman figures. He allows the reader to experience what is forbidden according to the norms of the culture he belongs. He is a mediator, neither this nor that but carries the traits of both sides still. He constantly crosses boundaries and disregards limits. He has a perverted sense of humour. He is very ambiguous by nature and possesses shape shifting ability. He can invert any situation with his cunning intelligence. As he is of giant heritage and also considered to be one of the Aesir, he is given the role of messenger of the gods. He is bricoleur of things sacred and lewd. As a genderfluid and pansexual person, Loki is queer. His nature pushes him to be the other by the society he belongs to. All things considered, Loki in Norse mythology is a trickster figure as he is compatible with many characteristics of a trickster that are presented in the first chapter.

The trickster god Loki feels more human with more humane characteristics in contemporary literature. Loki is rewritten in order to give him voice as he is the other. During postmodernism, myths are rewritten in order to replace grand narratives with mini narratives. It gives the marginalised an opportunity to make his voice heard and defies the universally acknowledged truth of its time. Loki is mischievous and loves to play tricks, which still earns him the name of the trickster. Amorally especially calls

him trickster after seeing him change Thor's wine to slugs. Still some of his tricky ideas can get him into trouble as he tries to get into center of the Ice Elves' castle but fails. While the gross appetite exists in *The Gospel of Loki* as Loki is able to compete with a wildfire and hooks up with most of the goddesses, this kind of appetite is absent in *Loki: Where Mischief Lies*. In fact Amora is Loki's first experience. The more literary invention the book has, the further away Loki is from a primitive being. Therefore is no longer the shadow in Jungian sense but possesses more human qualities. He still shows saviour qualities as he saves gods and goddesses from trouble and even stops a vision of Ragnarok in *Loki: Where Mischief Lies*. Loki still brings chaos and disorder but he is no longer a universal agent of chaos senselessly. Loki has his own reasons for behaving the way he does because he is pushed to be the other by the Aesir. All Loki wishes is to belong, to be a part of them, to be loved and to be appreciated. He wants to be equal with his brother or at least be given the chance to prove his worth once. He tries to show what he is capable of but because he is pushed outside, he makes mistakes, therefore he is pushed even more outside. He no longer brings chaos to make whole or to bring a new order selflessly, he does it for personal reasons.

Although he causes important items to be created like Thor's hammer, the culture hero aspect exists as a hope instead of a creation in the *Loki: Where Mischief Lies*. He becomes the hope of queer people by talking about a world where a safe space exists for them. He gives hope of an advanced community where queer people is not treated as outsiders anymore and being queer not treated as a crime. Loki is a mediator between Aesir and Jötunn, order and chaos, muscle power and magic. Loki crosses boundaries all the time, doing what is forbidden like stealing Norn stones. Loki is an ambiguous and liminal person in contemporary literature as well which is the reason why he is so popular in a society which opposes the binary oppositions. Loki uses his shape shifting abilities where needed. He inverts the vision of apocalypse and becomes a hero instead of a villain. He becomes the messenger of Odin with Thor as his sons. He is queer in being presented as either genderfluid or non-binary and pansexual. He becomes the other for possessing magic and in the community he is born into, muscle power is valued instead of magic.

Out of all the characters in the Norse mythology, Loki is chosen for rewriting because he is the other, the liminal character with no voice. Loki is a trickster figure both in the Norse mythology and in contemporary literature with one difference being Loki becoming more of a human than a primitive being, he has his own feelings and thoughts. He feels pain and betrayal as vivid as anyone else. He is able to feel unlike how he was pictured in the original scripts. He is a trickster god but with a more humane touch. What makes Loki the other in the old Norse society; his liminality and queer personality, all makes him a hero in our current community where people resist binary oppositions.



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TÜRKÇE GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Bu tezin amacı miti ve hilekar figürünü açıklamak, ve Loki'nin nasıl İskandinav mitolojisinde temsil edildiği ve çağdaş edebiyatta nasıl yeniden yazıldığını incelemektir. Loki liminal bir karakter olduğu için oldukça ilgi çekicidir, bu yüzden İskandinav mitolojisi içinde tüm karakterler arasından yeniden yazılması için o seçilmiştir. İskandinav mitolojisinde önemsenmeyen ve tapılmayan bir tanrı olsa da, belirsizliği, ikili karşıtlığa direnmesi, queer bir karakter olması ve diğer olmaya itilmesi günümüz çağı ve toplumunda onun bir kahraman olmasına sebep olmuştur. Toplumsal normların ve kültürün değişken olması sebebiyle, yüzyıllar sonra Loki, kendi sesini bulmuştur.

Mit yoruma açık olması sebebiyle tek bir anlama sahip değildir. Bu yüzden miti açıklamak için çeşitli önemli isimlerin tanımlamalarına bu tezde yer verilmiştir. Mitin birçok anlamı ve fonksiyonu vardır. Mit eski kahramanların yaptıkları önemli işlerin abartılarak tanrılaştırılmış hali olabilir. Etiyolojik olarak mit, yaratılmış her şeyin orijinlerini açıklar ve bilinmeyen sorulara cevap verir. Bu sebeple de Mircea Eliade mitlerin kutsal olduklarını savunur. Mit ayrıca psikolojik çalışmalarla da bağlantılıdır. Freud'a göre mitler, Odipus kompleksi gibi cinsel komplekslerin dışa vurumudur ya da Jung'a göre mitler tüm insanlığın paylaştığı bir toplu bilinçaltında var olmaktadır ve bu yüzden benzerlikler göstermektedir.

Arketip ve mitbirim gibi konseptlere de bu tezde açıklık getirilmiştir. Arketipler toplu bilinçaltında var olan sezgisel insan davranışlarındaki benzer yapılar ve spontane tepkilerdir. Toplu bilinçaltı kişisel bilinçaltından farklıdır çünkü toplu bilinçaltı tüm insanlığın paylaştığı bir bilinçaltıyken, kişisel bilinçaltı ise kendi deneyimlerimizden baskıladığımızı duygu ve düşünceleri barındırır. İçgüdüler ve arketipler birbirlerine benzeselerde, ayırım yapılması gerekmektedir çünkü arketipler içgüdülerin kendisi değil, bu içgüdülerin arkasındaki özdür. Bireyleşme yolundaki en önemli arketipler; ego, gölge, anima/animus ve benliktir. Mitbirim ise mitin özünü kendinde barındıran en küçük elementtir. Lévi-Strauss mitlerin başlangıç noktasının evrenin düzensizliğine bir düzen getirme arayışında olduğunu savunmaktadır. Ayrıca ilkel zihin ve bilimsel zihin ayırımına da karşı gelmektedir çünkü ona göre, insan zihni her dönemde aynıdır. Günümüzde matematik ve deneylerle cevap verilmeye çalışılan

sorulara eski uygarlıkta insanlar haya gücü ile cevap vermeye çalışmışlardır. Metod değişik olsa da merak hissi ve sorulan sorular aynıdır. Mit dile benzer ancak mitin var olabilmesi için dile ihtiyacı vardır ve bu yüzden dil ile mit aynı değildir. Bu farklılıkta mitbirimlerin sesbirim ve anlambirim gibi birimlerle benzerlik gösterse de, daha yüksek bir seviyede aranması gerektiğini göstermektedir. Bu mitbirimler tek başlarına önemli olsalar da birbirleriyle ilişkileri de bir o kadar önemlidir.

Hilekar figürü de aynı mit gibi yoruma açık olduğundan tek bir anlama sahip değildir. Hilekar belirsiz bir karakterdir ve ikili karşıtlığın dışında var olmaktadır; hem hepsi hem de hiçbiridir, arada ve gridir. Karşıt karakteristik özellikleri bünyesinde bulundurmaktadır. Bu figür ile çalışan önemli isimler; Radin, Jung, Babcock-Abrahams, ve Hynes gibi isimlerdir. Jung'tan etkilenen Radin hilekarı aynı Jung gibi, bir arketip olarak öne sürer. Jung hilekarı gölge arketipine benzetir. Kerényi hilekarın kaos ve değişim getirdiğini ve yasaklara karşı çıkma deneyimini gösterdiğini savunur. Ricketts hilekarı hilekar-dönüştürücü-kültür-kahramanı olarak adlandırır ve şamanla arasındaki farklılıklara dikkat çeker. Lévi-Strauss hilekarın arabulucu yönünden ve nasıl iki karşıtlığın her yanından özellik barındırdığından bahseder. Babcock-Abrahams on altı karakteristik özelliğin bulunduğu bir liste sunarken Hynes bu listeyi özetler ve geliştirir. Queer teori ve liminallikte hilekar figürü ile bağlantılı olarak incelenir.

Şiirsel Edda, Nesir Edda, Loki'nin Müjdesi ve Loki Festliğinin Kalbinde kitapları incelenmiş ve karşılaştırılmıştır. Loki her şeyden önce hileler yapan birisidir ve bazen kendi şakalarıyla şakalanır. Sif'in saçını kesmesinde muzip bir kişiliğe sahip olmasından başka bir sebep yoktur. Aesir'in düzenli dünyasına kaos getirir. Doğası gereği diğer tanrı ve tanrıçaların yapamadıklarını yapabilir. Loki hiçbir kategoriye ait olmayan, liminal bir karakterdir. Hem yiyeceğe hem de sekse karşı doymak bilmez bir açlığı vardır. Kendi bencil ihtiyaçlarını gidermek uğruna sonuçlarını düşünmeden her şeyi yapar. İlkey düzeyin çok üstünde olmadığı için sadece kendi istek ve arzularını önemser. Aesir'i hem belaya sokup hem de aynı beladan kurtarmasında da görüldüğü gibi oldukça tutarsızdır. Kültürel olarak önemli eşyaların yaratılmasında etkin rol oynasa da, ayrıca yıkımın da getiricisidir. Eski düzenin küllerinden yeni bir düzenin doğmasına yardımcı olan bir kaosun ajanıdır.

Tüm şamanlara ve şaman figürlerine karşıdır. Ait olduğu kültürün kaidelerine göre yasak olanın deneyimlenmesini sağlar. Loki arada bir yerde alır, ne orada ne de buradadır ama iki yerinde özelliklerini taşır. Sürekli olarak sınırları geçer ve onları görmezden gelir. Sapkın bir mizah anlayışı vardır. Doğası gereği oldukça belirsizdir ve şekil değiştirme özelliğine sahiptir. Kurnaz zekasıyla her olayı tersine çevirebilir. Hem devlerden gelme hem de buna rağmen Aesir'den biri olarak görüldüğü için, tanrıların habercisi rolünü üstlenir. Kutsallığın ve ahlaksızlığın birleşimidir. Akışkan cinsiyet kimliğine sahip olduğu ve panseksüel olduğu için Loki queer bir karakterdir. Doğası onu ait olduğu toplumda “diğer” olmaya iter. Her şey dikkate alındığında İskandinav mitolojisindeki Loki, daha önce verilen hilekar figürünün karakteristik özellikleriyle benzerlik gösterdiği için bir hilekardır.

Çağdaş edebiyatta hilekar tanrı Loki daha çok insani özellikler kazanmıştır. Diğer olduğu için Loki yeniden yazılmış ve ona kendini ifade etme şansı tanınmıştır. Postmodernizm'de mitler, küçük anlatıları büyük anlatılarla değiştirmek için yeniden yazılır. Ötekileştirilene sesini duyurmasına ve evrensel gerçekler olarak bilinenleri reddetmesine olanak sunar. Loki muziptir ve hileler yapmayı sever ki bu özellikler ona hilebaz namını kazandırır. Amora onu Thor'un şarabını sümüklü böceklere çevirmesine şahit olduktan sonra özellikle hilebaz olarak çağırır. Bazen bu hilebazlıkları başına iş açabilir, aynı buz elflerinin sarayının merkezini ele geçirmeye çalışıp başaramaması gibi. *Loki'nin Müjdesi*'nde tükenmek bilmez açlık söndürülmesi güç ateş ile yarışmaya yetecek kadar büyük olsa da ve neredeyse bütün tanrıçalarla ilişkisi olsa da bu tür bir açlık *Loki Fesatlığın Kalbinde*'de bu tür bir açlık bulunmamaktadır. Hatta Amora Loki'nin ilk deneyimidir. Kitap ne kadar çok edebi icatlarla doluyorsa Loki de o kadar ilkel bir figür olmaktan uzaklaşır. Bu sebeple o artık Jung'un bahsettiği gölge arketipinden uzakta, daha insani bir karakterdir. Yine de tanrı ve tanrıçaları beladan kurtaran ve hatta *Loki Fesatlığın Kalbinde*'de kıyametin bir vizyonunu engelleyen bir kurtarıcıdır. Kaos ve düzensizlik getirse de Loki artık mantıksızca bir kaosun hizmetkarı değildir. Loki'nin yaptıklarının ardında artık sebepleri vardır çünkü o Aesir tarafından ötekileştirilmiştir. Loki'nin tek isteği bir yere ait olmak, bir şeyin parçası olmak, sevilme ve sayılmaktır. Kardeşinin eşiti olmayı ya da en azından değerini kanıtlama şansı istemektedir. Nelere kadir olduğunu

göstermeye çalışır ancak dışarı itilir, bu yüzden hatalar yapar ve daha da çok dışarı itilir. Artık kendiliksizce bir bütün yaratmak ve yeni düzen getirmek için kaosu getirmez. Bunu getirmesi için kişisel sebepleri vardır.

Thor'un çekici gibi önemli eşyaların yaratılmasına sebep olsa da *Loki Fesatlığın Kalbinde*'de bu özellik daha çok bir umut olarak kendini gösterir. Güvenli bir toplum ve dünyadan bahsederek queer insanların umudur olur. Bu insanların ötekileştirilmediği ve suçlu olarak görülmediği gelişmiş bir toplumun umudunu verir. Loki Aesir ve Jötunn'un, düzen ve kaosun, kas gücü ve sihirin arasında yer alır. Loki sürekli olarak sınırları aşar ve Norn taşlarını çalmak gibi yasaklı işlere kalkışır. Loki çağdaş edebiyatta da belirsiz ve liminal bir karakterdir ki bu da tam olarak ikili karşıtıklara karşı çıkan bir toplumda popüler olmasının sebebidir. Loki şekil değiştirme özelliklerini ihtiyaç duyduğu her yerde çekinmeden kullanır. Kıyameti durdurur ve düşmanken kahraman olur. Thor ile birlikte babası Odin'in habercisi olur. Panseksüel ve ikilik dışı ya da akışkan cinsiyet kimliğine sahip olduğu için queer bir karakterdir. Sihir yetisine sahip olduğu için ötekileştirilmiştir çünkü doğduğu toplumda sihir yerine kas gücü tercih edilmektedir.

İskandinav mitolojisindeki bütün karakterler arasından yeniden yazılması için Loki seçilmiştir çünkü o ötekidir, sesi olmayan liminal bir karakterdir. Loki hem İskandinav mitolojisinde hem de çağdaş edebiyatta da hilekar figürüdür. Tek fark Loki çağdaş edebiyatta kendi duygu ve düşüncelere sahip olmasıyla, ilkel bir figürden ziyade daha insansı bir karakter olmuştur. Orijinal metinlerde resmedilen hissiz Loki'den çok farklıdır. Hilekar bir tanrıdır ama daha insansı özelliklerle. Loki'yi İskandinav mitolojisinde ötekileştiren ne varsa onu günümüz edebiyatında bir kahramana dönüştürmüştür.