

A Myth of Wereword in *Viking Wolf* Movie (2022)

Inayah

Inayah.ay06@gmail.com

Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an, Wonosobo, Indonesia

Atinia Hidayah

atinia@unsiq.ac.id

Universitas Sains Al-Qur'an, Wonosobo, Indonesia

Abstract

This study aimed to analyze: (1) how the Viking Wolf movie (2022) presents the werewolf myth (2) how blod represents the transformation process of human into werewolf in Viking Wolf movie (2022). The study uses descriptive qualitative method to analyzed and described in descriptive form. In this research, applies Roland Barthes' semiotic theory as a grand theory and relevant source related to werewolf mythology. The object of research is myth of werewolf in the Viking Wolf movie (2022) directed by Stig Svendsen. The primary data used is a movie entitled Viking Wolf (2022) and also used supporting data from journals, books and other. The method of collecting data includes watching and reading, identifying, selecting, and classifying. The method of analyzing the data by displaying, explaining, and interpreting. The result of the study : (1) representation of the werewolf myth in Viking Wolf movie (2022), namely, the Vikings' obsession with animal power, the full moon; the culmination of mystical power and unchanged eyes symbolize human identity and human-like werewolf, (2) representation of blood in the transformation process of human into werewolf throught dreams in Viking Wolf movie (2022), namely, half-bloody; sensitive sense and changes habits and blood covers the body; animal instint and physical changes.

Keywords: *myth, werewolf, viking, norse*

Introduction

Werewolf becomes one of the mystical creature that is believed in parts of ancient Europe. It is believed that werewolves are the result of curse. It turns a person into a ferocious wolf. The belief in werewolf is strengthened by the existence of phenomena and stories in Greek and Norse mythology which are believed to be the origins of werewolves, even though basically these two mythologies have different backgrounds.

Myth of werewolf is currently quite popular in various countries. Although derived from the classical mythology of European nations, werewolf have succeeded in providing inspiration for the world of entertainment media in various countries of the world. One of the films that explores the werewolf myth is *Viking Wolf* (2022). One of the movie that explores the werewolf myth is *Viking*

Wolf (2022). This movie directed by Stig Svendsen, tells the story of the werewolf myth in Norse mythology. The movie tells the beginning of the Vikings era in 1050 who invaded Normandy and accidentally released a cursed "devil" wolf. Until finally the wolf killed all the Vikings on the ship on their way home. A thousand years after the incident, there was a great chaos in the Municipality of Nybo, Norway. There were allegations of murder due to wild animals in the forest. Elin Gran was the murdered victim suffered from unusual injuries, such as burnt, loss of internal organs, and large lacerations on her arms. No one realized that it was caused by a werewolf because for them the werewolf story was just a myth. The climax of the story occurs when Thale, one of the survivors of the murder, turned into a werewolf. That is because she got injured from a werewolf when she tried to save Elin Gran during the accident.

Literary Review

Roland Barthes's Semiotics Theory

Semiotics or semiology is the science that studies signs which consist of signifiers and signifieds which have a relationship based on conventions called signification. . According to Barthes: *"All these inquiries have helped to focus the preoccupations of a semiological discipline which would study how humanity gives meaning to things"* (Barthes, 1988:179). It emphasize that everything outside of language in social life is its own sign system. How objects can provide meaning in the contemporary world.

Roland Barthes' semiotic theory specifically focuses on non-verbal signs, include songs, dialogue, notes, logos, images, facial expressions, and gestures. Roland Barthes' semiotics analyzes the meaning of signs through two levels, namely denotation and connotation. Denotation occupies the first level of significance which explains the relationship between signifier and signified in a sign and produces a real and definite meaning. Meanwhile, connotation occupies the second level of significance, where the sign whose signifier has an open meaning or accepts new interpretations.

Roland Barthes sign map

1. Signifier	
--------------	--

	2. Signified
3. Denotative Sign	
4. <i>CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIER</i>	5. <i>CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIED</i>
6. <i>CONNOTATIVE SIGN</i>	

(source: Copley and Jansz, 1999: 51, *Introducing Semiotics*. New York: Icon Books – Totem Books)

From the Barthes map above, it can be seen that the denotative sign (3) consists of signifier (1) and sign (2). However, at the same time the denotative sign is also a connotative sign (4).

Cultural Studies

Cultural studies is a multidisciplinary or post-disciplinary science of inquiry that contains a collection of theories produced by thinkers who regard the production of theoretical knowledge as a political practice that blurs the boundaries between cultural studies and other subjects. In this case, knowledge is never seen as neutral or objective, but rather as a matter of positionality, where someone speaks, for whom and with what purpose. The goal of cultural studies is to uncover power relationships and examine how these relationships influence various forms of culture.

Barker (2004) stated that cultural studies is concerned with an exploration of culture, as constituted by the meanings and representations generated by human signifying practices, and the context in which they occur. There are several key concepts in cultural studies, namely; representation, materialism, non-reductionism, articulation, power, popular culture, texts and readers, and subjectivity and identity.

One form of culture that is passed down from generation to generation is myth. The forms of belief of ancient people have become a culture that continues to be believed and maintained to this day. This cannot be separated from the role of cultural studies which is a marker of public awareness as something that is integrated in everyday life.

Werewolf Mythology

Werewolves are supernatural creatures that are quite popular and well known to the public today. The werewolf myth cannot be separated from lycanthropy even though many people call them werewolves. Referring to O'Donnell (1912), in his book *Werewolves*, the word werewolf (or werewolf) is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *wer*, *man*, and *wulf*, *wolf*, and has its equivalents in the German *Währwolf* and French *loup-garou*. The werewolf myth developed in ancient Europe and is believed to have originated from Greek and Norse mythology where humans turned into monsters that were half human and half wolf. It is said that werewolves will change when the full moon arrives, at which time their mystical powers reach their peak.

Lycanthropy in Ancient

Lycanthropy is a loanword from Ancient Greek *lykánthropos* (λυκάνθρωπος): *λύκος*, *lýkos* ("wolf") + *άνθρωπος*, *anthropos* ("man"). The compound "lyc-" comes from the Proto-Indo-European root **wlkwo-*, meaning "wolf", formally denoting the transformation "wolf - man". Lycanthropy is the ability to transform oneself into an animal. According to Baring-Gould (1865), the theory of transformation from human into lycanthropy is through magic or punishment from the gods. In ancient times, changing behavior to become like an animal was considered madness because of the illness suffered that is why ancient people called this madness Lycanthropy. As culture developed, supernatural things enveloped werewolf superstition and magic rituals emerged so that someone could change themselves to resemble other creatures.

Werewolf in Norse Mythology

Werewolf is a myth in Norse mythology. A superstition that developed in Norway is that it is believed that a person can take on the form and characteristics of another creature. According to Baring-Gould (1865), a person is said to be *eigi einhamir*, not one-skinned. This of course cannot be separated from the tradition of ancient people who always wore animal robes, giving birth to the werewolf myth in Norse mythology. An *eigi einhamir* can change himself into the form of another creature through certain rituals. However, in these changes, there is one

thing that has not changed, namely the eyes. Even with magic and supernatural powers, the eyes can never be changed.

Wolves are the most popular animals because of their character. That is why Scandinavians are so obsessed with wolves. In Old Norse, wolves were known as *varg-r*, which had the dual meaning of wolf and godless man. Additionally, wolves are called *ulven*. All of these terms refer to *warg*, which is a type of evil wolf. A person who turns into a werewolf will behave ferociously and barbarically like a wolf. The Vikings made various attempts to gain wolf power. According to O'Donnell (1912), there are several ways in Norway to become a werewolf or lycanthropy; first, perform rituals on the banks of the lycanthropus river on full moon nights. Second, using lycanthropus flowers which are used after sunset and during the full moon. Third, perform a magic ritual with a circle. All requirements must be fulfilled and carried out exactly at twelve o'clock at night on the full moon by chanting certain mantra.

Research Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher wants to use descriptive qualitative method as the principle instrument. Moloeng (2007: 6) explained that qualitative research is research with the aim of understanding what phenomena are experienced by research subjects as a whole through descriptions in the form of words and language, in the specific context experienced and by utilizing various scientific methods. The object of research is myth of werewolf in the *Viking Wolf* movie (2022) directed by Stig Svendsen.

In this research, the primary data used is a movie entitled *Viking Wolf* (2022) and also used supporting data in this research, include journal and books. Research data includes images, dialogue, words on utterance, and sound in movie's subtitle that are relevant the research object. There are several techniques for collecting data, namely; watching and reading, identifying, selecting, and classifying. The data that has been obtained will later be presented by researchers, explained and interpreted relevantly according to the theory used.

Findings and Discussion

In this chapter, the researcher presents, explains, and interprets in depth the Myth of Werewolves and the signification process in revealing the meaning of blood in the *Viking Wolf* movie (2022). First, the researcher will present how the Werewolf Myth is presented in the *Viking Wolf* movie (2022). Second, the researcher will show the depiction of blood represents the transformation process in werewolf form in the *Viking Wolf* movie (2022).

1. Representation of Werewolf Myth in the *Viking Wolf* movie (2022)

a. The Vikings Obsession on Animalistic Power



(*Viking Wolf*, 00:00:47)

The scene above shows the Vikings attacked Normandy fiercely. The fire burned through the trees and grass, creating a bright red glow during the attack. Vikings were merciless. The attack happened because the Vikings wanted to take silver and gold in order to survive. Vikings were taking journey and invading other regions in search of silver, gold, food, and expending territory. The attack usually executed at night.

In this scene, the burning fire is a sign. This sign implies a sign of the feelings of the Vikings, so it indicates ferocity and high spirit. The ferocity of the Viking attacks could be seen from the fire that burned, burning trees, grass and surrounding buildings. Fire became a symbol of the burning passion that made the Vikings' ambitions and behavior like animals. The Vikings were merciless and cold-blooded. They kill and destroy their opponents to get what they want. This high enthusiasm is understood from the act of imitating animalistic behavior. Their barbaric attitude towards opponents reflects a

feeling of wanting to dominate. Bloodlust makes vikings kill without mercy. Like a hunting animal attacking its prey.

When carrying out attacks, the Vikings had a characteristic that was always attached to them. This can be seen from the coat worn, apart from providing body warmth, it also provided power for the Vikings.



(*Viking Wolf*, 00:01:33)

The scene above shows an event that occurred when the Vikings forced and broke into a monastery because they were after valuable items there, such as gold and silver. Vikings wore fur coats and some wore Viking helmets. Inside the monastery, the Vikings discovered a secret room with a wooden door. The monk who refused to open the room made the viking leader angry and slashed the monk's neck with the sword he was carrying. The Vikings tried to open the door by smashing it with the ax they were carrying until it broke.

In this scene, the coat becomes a signifier. It marks power, intimidation, and ferocity as a signified. The dominant signified revealed throughout the movie is power. This can be understood from how the Vikings controlled their opponents. It is believed that the power that the Vikings gained came from the furry coats of the wolves they wore.

b. Full Moon: Culmination of Mystical Power



(Viking Wolf, 01;21:23)

The picture above shows a werewolf scene in the middle of Nybo city. Under the full moon, werewolves are fiercely ready to attack residents. The residents of Nybo town were unaware of the danger that lurked. Werewolf attacked and killed residents. The full moon that night was a silent witness to a terrible event.

In the scene above there are two signifiers to discuss. The first signifier is the full moon. It implies mystical power, power. Mystical things are beyond human rationality. Mystical powers are generally obtained through certain rituals and methods where those who believe will have the desired powers. But sometimes, the full moon provides extraordinary energy to perfect existing power. In the picture above, the full moon shines on the werewolf, which implicitly gives the werewolf its mystical powers which makes it more ferocious with its power.

The second signifier is werewolf. It implies wildness and power. Werewolves are mystical creatures who are believed to have extraordinary powers. Werewolf look's more ferocious and bloodthirsty when the full moon appears. This is because mystical power reaches its peak when the full moon arrives. The power to attack and the hunger to kill the victim are multiplied many times over.

c. Unchanged Eyes Symbolize Human Identity

Eye is an interesting aspect in the *Viking Wolf* movie (2022). Eye is a unique identity for every creature. In Norse mythology, eyes can never be changed even with magic.



(*Viking Wolf*, 00:25:53)

(*Viking Wolf*, 01:19:25)

(The picture on the left is Thale as a human and on the right is Thale as a werewolf)

In the picture above, Thale and the werewolf have different characters, but there is one thing in common, namely the eyes. Thale's eye colors as a human are brown and blue. This can be seen from the image on the left. The werewolf figure on the right also has the same eye color as Thale, namely brown and blue. The transformation that Thale underwent into a werewolf did not change the color of her eyes, which were different. This is in accordance with Norse mythology which states that eyes will not change even with magic.

From the picture above, the eyes are the signifier. It signifies identity and character. Eyes contain implied meanings that reflect the character of their owner. Eyes become an identity because each species has differences. Through the eyes, identity is easily recognized because the eyes are an identification sign for every creature. Each creature will be easily recognized by the look in its eyes. So, from the two images above, the same aspect is found, namely the eyes. Same eye color, brown and blue. This indicates that both figures come from the same creature.

d. Human-Like Werewolf



(*Viking Wolf*, 01:19:30)

The picture above, the werewolf is in a family room in the house. The scene above shows the werewolf looking at Jenny, who is in front of it. The werewolf's gaze was so calm and gentle because looked into Jenny's eyes. A gaze that seemed to recognize the small figure in front of it. This can be seen from the way its eyes and mouth gesture are relaxed. The werewolf's expression showed as it wanted to understand and it was observing Jenny as if it recognized Jenny.

In the scene above, the expression becomes a signifier. It signified situations and feelings. The situation in the room was very calm, especially the family room which had a homely atmosphere that made the werewolf relax. This can be seen from the expression he gives when looking at Jenny. The small figure in front of it implicitly gave off a familiar feeling. The werewolf with eyes that seemed to be trying to understand the feelings indirectly reminded of the memories when was human.

The human-like werewolf presented in the *Viking Wolf* movie (2022) is relevant to the Norse myth that werewolf is a human who transforms into a monster that is half human and half wolf. This is certainly in line with the human identity that still intact when being a werewolf.

2. Representation of Blood in the Transformation Process of Human into Werewolf in *Viking Wolf* Movie (2022)

a. Half-Bloody: Sensitive Senses and Changes in Habits

The representation of blood in the process of transforming humans into wolves experienced by Thale is marked through dreams. The first dream is half-bloody, where in the dream half of his body is covered in blood. This is a sign that the scratch wound is starting to become infected, and causes changes in his senses and living habits

[scratching]

Teacher : *A lot of damage and disaster ...*

[scratching]

Thale : *What?*

Teacher : *Excuse me? Odin throws the serpent into the ocean...*

[deep, loud scratch] – [pencil scratching loudly]

(*Viking Wolf* : 00:40:38)

The scene in the dialogue above occurred in the classroom during class time. The calm atmosphere suddenly became noisy when Thale heard a clear rubbing sound in her ears. She panicked and suddenly said "what" as a form of spontaneity because she was shocked. People started looking at Thale with strange looks and sneering at her. Thale panicked and was afraid because she was the only one who heard the sound.

In the dialogue above, when the teacher said, "*A lot of damage and disaster...*" a scratch sound is heard and then Thale said, "*what*". Her word becomes signifier. This signifies shock, ignorance, and panic. This is a form of the body's natural response when receiving something foreign. Hearing a sound that is so clear and unnatural to people will definitely cause fear and panic. Thale's increasingly sensitive sense of hearing was certainly one of the changes she experienced during the transformation process into a werewolf.



(Viking Wolf, (00:59:05)

The picture above shows the atmosphere in a quiet room. The sunlight that began to shine into the room showed a situation where Thale was sleeping on a pile of cloth and pillows. The empty mattress is still clean and tidy. Thale was curled up in his sleeping position, fast asleep in a nest-like pile of cloth.

In the scene above, Thale's sleeping position is a signifier. It signifies warmth and character. Warmth while sleeping will make the sleep more soundly. Curling up is a sleeping position that some people may do to sleep warmer. However, Thale's sleeping position was very unusual. This change in sleeping habits makes Thale resemble a wolf, sleeping curled up on a pile of hay. Such sleeping habits are a typical wolf character. So, with Thale's habits changing like that, it is a sign that the process of transformation of Thale into a werewolf is currently underway.

b. Blood Cover the Body: Animal Instincts and Physical Changes

The final process of Thale's transformation into a werewolf is marked by a dream in which his entire body is covered in blood. The representation of blood in this final stage of the transformation process suggests that Thale's human soul was completely replaced. This is characterized by physical changes and dominating animal instincts.



(Viking Wolf, 01:13:27)

The picture above shows the accident when Thale began to experience a physical transformation while on a bus during a full moon. The canine teeth that appeared were one of several forms of change that Thale experienced. The atmosphere on the bus, which was calm because the passengers were resting, suddenly became tense when Thale groaned in pain.

In the picture above, the fangs are the signifier. This signifies a wild creature. Fangs are a tool for killing prey. Fanged creatures are generally fierce predators. Werewolves are predators that have sharp fangs. Werewolves use their fangs to bite and kill their prey. The appearance of Thale's fangs is an indication of the power of the full moon which help triggers Thale's transformation into a werewolf.



(Viking Wolf, 01:22:38)

The picture above shows the incident of a werewolf attack in the city of Nybo. The attack, which occurred during the full moon, resulted in many casualties. The werewolf ferociously and barbarically killed the

townspeople who were partying in a cafe. Everyone scattered trying to save themselves.

In the scene above, the werewolf is a signifier. It signifies death. Werewolf is wild, merciless creatures. This creature, known as a half-human, half-wolf monster, is very ferocious. Werewolf and death become a terrifying whole. Animal instincts is take over completely. In this final stage, Thale has completely transformed into a werewolf.

Conclusion

The result of the research is *Viking Wolf* (2022) which explains the werewolf myth with a focus on four aspects. This aspect is represented in the Vikings' obsession on animalistic power, full moon; culmination of mystical power, human identity; the eyes do not change and human-like werewolf. On the other hand, *Viking Wolf* (2022) represents the transformation of humans into werewolf with blood through dreams, through two stages. Each dream marks a transformation process. Half-blooded: sensitive senses and changes in habits and blood cover the body: animal instincts and physical changes.

References

- Barthes, Roland. (1968). *Elements of Semiology*. New York: Hill and Wang
- (1968). *Elemen-Ellemen Semilogi*. (M. Ardiansyah. Translation). Yogyakarta: BASABASI
- (1988). *The Semiotic Challenge*. United Kingdom
- Barker, Chris. (2003). *Cultural Studies – THEORY AND PRACTICE*. Second Edition. SAGE: London
- (2004). *The Sage Dictionary of Cultural Studies*. SAGE: London
- Baring-Gould, Sabine. (1865). *THE BOOK OF WERE-WOLVES*. Smith, Elder and CO: London. The Project Gutenberg eBook. Downloaded on July 23rd, 2023.
<https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/5324/pg5324-images.html>
- Cobley, Paul & Jansz, Litza. (1999). *INTRODUCING Semiotics*. Icon Books-Totem Books: New York. Downloaded on November 29th, 2023.

<https://www.felsemiotica.com/descargas/Cobley-Paul-and-Jansz-Litza-Introducing-Semiotics.pdf>

Durn, Sarah. (2021). *The Long, Hidden History of the Viking Obsession With Werewolves*. *Atlas Obscura*. Accessed on September 11th, 2023. <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/hidden-history-viking-wolf-warrior-werewolf>

Moleong, Lexy J. (2007) . *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya Offset

O' Donnell, Elliott. (1912). *WEREWOLVES*. Project Gutenberg. Methuen and CO. Ltd: London. Downloaded on July 23rd, 2023. <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/26629/pg26629-images.html>

Stewart, Caroline Taylor. (1909). *THE ORIGIN OF THE WERWOLF SUPERSITION*. Project Gutenberg. University of Missouri: Columbia. Downloaded on July 23rd, 2023. <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/44134/pg44134-images.html>

Scott, Jess. (2023). *The Werewolf in Norway: Everything You Need to Know*. Article Mythology. Accessed on October 1st, 2023. <https://www.lifeinnorway.net/werewolf-in-norway/>

Wargs. (2023, July 18). Tolkien Gateway. Accessed on October 2nd, 2023. <https://tolkiengateway.net/wiki/Wargs>