

Channeling Midsommar from Celtic Rituals to Pagan Culture and Humanist Criticism

Maharanny Setiawan Poetri^{a1}, Cahyani Fitri Melania^{b2*}

^{ab}Universitas Gadjah Mada, Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta, 55281, Indonesia

¹maharannysetiawanpoetri@mail.ugm.ac.id; ²cahyanifitriamelania2000@mail.ugm.ac.id

<p>ARTICLE HISTORY Accepted: 8 July 2024 Revised: 23 August 2024 Approved: 22 September 2024 Published: 31 October 2024</p> <p>*Corresponding cahyanifitriamelania2000@mail.ugm.ac.id</p> <p> 10.22219/satwika.v8i2.34900</p> <p> jurnalsatwika@umm.ac.id</p> <p>How to Cite: Poetri, M. S., & Melania, C. F. (2024). Channeling Midsommar from Celtic Rituals to Pagan Culture and Humanist Criticism. <i>Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial</i>, 8 (2), 369-378. https://doi.org/10.22210/satwika.v8i2.34900</p> 	<p>ABSTRACT</p> <p>Midsommar presents pagan tradition by hosting a midsummer festival by the cult Hårga in Halsingland, Northern Europe. The midsummer festival is a representation of Celtic ritual –consisting of several rituals as a pagan tradition preserved by the Hårga cult. This research aims to identify the representation of Celtic rituals in Ari Aster's Midsommar using Stuart Hall's perspective. Hall (1997) explained that representation is born from the production of the concept of meaning in the mind through language. The representation of Celtic rituals in Midsommar is a form of Hårga's pagan tradition that among others provokes humanist criticism. This research uses a qualitative method with a cinematography approach. The research data was collected from direct observation of dialogue, narrative, and scenes in the film Midsommar –and presented in the form of selected screenshots. The results of this research include: 1) Midsummer festival is a representation of Celtic ritual. It symbolizes the gratitude of the Hårga cult. 2) Midsummer festival contains ritual instruments that convey the essence of Hårga's pagan tradition and raise humanist issues. It negates humanity in some of its rituals, thus provoking humanist criticism as a rejection of the Celtic rituals represented.</p> <p>Keywords: Celtic rituals; humanist criticism; Midsommar; representation.</p> <p>ABSTRAK</p> <p><i>Midsommar menceritakan tradisi pagan festival musim panas oleh kultus Hårga di desa Halsingland, Eropa Utara. Festival musim panas dalam adalah representasi ritual Kelt -terdiri dari beberapa ritual sebagai tradisi pagan yang dilestarikan kultus Hårga. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi representasi ritual Kelt dalam film Midsommar karya Ari Aster menggunakan perspektif Stuart Hall. Hall (1997) menjelaskan bahwa representasi lahir dari produksi konsep makna dalam pikiran melalui bahasa. Representasi ritual Kelt dalam Midsommar merupakan bentuk tradisi pagan kultus Hårga yang diantaranya mengundang kritik humanis. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan sinematografi. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dari pengamatan dialog, narasi, dan adegan secara langsung dalam film Midsommar -dan disajikan dalam bentuk gambar tangkapan layar terpilih. Hasil penelitian ini meliputi: 1) Festival musim panas adalah representasi ritual Kelt. Festival musim panas dalam Midsommar melambangkan rasa syukur dari kultus Hårga. 2) Festival musim panas mengandung instrumen ritual yang menyampaikan tradisi pagan kultus Hårga serta menimbulkan isu humanis. Festival musim panas dalam Midsommar menihilkan kemanusiaan dalam beberapa ritualnya sehingga mengundang kritik humanis sebagai penolakan terhadap ritual Kelt yang direpresentasikan.</i></p> <p>Kata kunci: ritual Keltik; kritik humanis; Midsommar; representasi.</p>
---	--

© 2024 This is an Open Access Research distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original works are appropriately cited.



INTRODUCTION

Religious rituals are a form of expression of culture and beliefs held by a society. The phenomenon of rituals can be seen in various media, including films, which often depict rituals as an important element in cultural narratives. One interesting example is Ari Aster's film *Midsommar*. The film was released in 2019 and explores the pagan rituals performed by a community in Sweden during the Hårga cult festival in *Midsommar*. *Midsommar* highlights how Celtic rituals are used to depict the darker side of pagan culture, with an emphasis on the cycle of life and death understood through the lens of ancient beliefs. In the context of the film *Midsommar*, the rituals are not only an exotic cultural backdrop but also a tool to critique and expose the tensions between tradition and modernity. The film is full of symbolism that links back to the Celtic ritual origins of the festival, showing how these rituals remain alive and relevant in contemporary art forms. *Midsommar* not only exposes the beauty and horror of these rituals but also invites the audience to consider a broader humanist view in interpreting these beliefs and practices. Amidst the controversy between modern values and ancient beliefs, the film provides deep insight into how pagan traditions can be understood and criticized from a humanist perspective.

[Stuart Hall's \(1997\)](#) study of representation argues that the way a culture or group is represented in the media is not simply a depiction of reality but is also a construction driven by particular cultural interpretations and biases. It can be said that representation is an activity that represents something, displays it again and is a way of interpreting what is displayed, both objects and text ([Fatimah & Febriana 2023](#)). In Ari Aster's *Midsommar*, the Hårga cult, which features Celtic rituals, is presented as an integral part of an exotic and mysterious pagan culture. Hall argues that this representation reinforces or changes the audience's view of the culture being portrayed. In the context of *Midsommar*, these rituals are not simply aesthetic elements but also vehicles for exploring broader themes such as cultural uncertainty and the conflict between modernity and tradition. The film's depiction of the Hårga cult and its rituals shapes the audience's perception of Celtic paganism as separate from contemporary Western cultural norms, often drawing on stereotypes and interpretations based on cultural fantasy. Thus, the representations in

Midsommar not only dramatize the story but also affirm the position of a particular culture within a broader global context, consistent with Hall's theory of how media shapes and regulates how we understand and view other cultures. Through Hall's theory, the researcher intends to examine more deeply how Celtic rituals are represented in the film *Midsommar*. This representation process also shows how pagan traditions can be understood and reinterpreted in the context of humanist views.

Ritual representation in various cultures has been studied in various studies with various focuses, both from Indonesian culture and abroad. Research related to ritual representation in Indonesian culture itself, as seen in the study of the Sedekah Gunung ritual in Lencoh Village, Boyolali ([Rachmawati, \(2019\)](#)) and the Babukung ceremony among the Dayak Tomun tribe ([Liadi. F, et al. 2024](#)). Ritual culture outside Indonesia is seen in a study conducted by [Aniukwu & Ojelibeckwu \(2023\)](#), who analyzed how ritual representation in Nollywood films influences the behavior of young people in Awka, Nigeria. On the other hand, the representation of the pagan tradition of the Hårga cult in the film *Midsommar* has been the object of various studies that combine cultural, political, and media perspectives. Through a cultural perspective, [Baran \(2023\)](#) analyzes *Midsommar* from the perspective of Swedish ethnonationalism, seeing how pagan traditions and folkloric elements are used to preserve cultural identity and reflect a right-wing political agenda. From a political perspective, [Edgecomb \(2023\)](#) highlights the symbolic divergence in Sweden's Midsummer festival, revealing how different ideological groups can interpret this tradition differently. Meanwhile, from a media perspective, it highlights the tension between technological communication and social interaction in *Midsommar* as part of the debate about technology and social life and the dangers of performative activism in film ([Sutton, 2022 & Hu, 2023](#)). In this study of the *Midsommar* film, Stuart Hall's theory of representation is used to analyze how the pagan tradition of the Hårga cult inspired by Celtic rituals is represented in the film and how the meanings constructed through these symbols can be understood within a humanist perspective. These previous studies provide a strong foundation for understanding how rituals and cultural traditions can be interpreted,

reconstructed, and represented in various media, including film.

Not many studies specifically discuss the representation of Hårga's pagan traditions from a humanist perspective and how Celtic rituals are represented in the film *Midsommar* using Stuart Hall's representation theory. This factor prompted the researcher to conduct an in-depth analysis of how the pagan traditions presented in the film can be read through the lens of humanism. This is interesting because cultural representation is not only related to visual depictions but also to the way the culture is constructed and understood by the audience. In the context of *Midsommar*, there is a blend of pagan traditions and modern values that create a complex narrative. The main topic of this study is how the film uses Celtic ritual symbolism to depict the conflict between traditional and modern values and how this representation can be interpreted through Stuart Hall's theory. This study aims to identify and analyze the cultural representation strategies used in *Midsommar*, as well as understand how the film creates meaning through ritual symbolism. The results of this study are expected to contribute to the study of cultural representation in the media, especially in the context of film.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method to identify the representation of Celtic rituals in Ari Aster's *Midsommar* film. According to [Moleong \(2012:6\)](#), qualitative research is a research that intends to understand phenomena related to the research subject holistically and by means of description the intention is to understand phenomena in the form of words and language in a special, natural context by utilizing various natural methods. This method starts from data collection, data classification, to report creation. The cinematographic approach in this research supports the exploration of research objects in the form of films. [Mascelli \(1987\)](#) coined that cinematography has cinematic elements, namely angle shot, type shot, composition, continuity and cutting. In this research, cinematography is used for describing the scene from a visual aspect. Cinematography encompasses a range of cinematic elements that contribute to the visual storytelling of a film. Angle shots and type shots are integral to composition, influencing how a scene is perceived by the audience ([Petrogianni et al., 2022](#)). The composition itself is the arrangement of visual elements within the frame, which includes the positioning of actors, lighting, and the choice of camera angles, all of which are crucial for setting the tone and

mood of a scene ([Bruckert et al., 2022](#)). Continuity is a principle that ensures a seamless flow of events, maintaining spatial and temporal consistency across shots ([Smith, 2012](#)). Cutting is another term of editing, it is transition of one shot or scene to another film ([Mascelli, 1987](#)). These elements are important to support the description of research data in the form of screenshot pictures.

This research data is in the form of dialogue excerpts and selected scenes in the *Midsommar* film by Ari Aster. The research data in this film shows the depiction of Celtic rituals through narratives about characters, dialogue, actions, settings, characters' thoughts, and cinematographic depictions. The research data sources in this research are dialogue texts and pictures or scenes from *Midsommar* film. Therefore, research data is analyzed using a qualitative method and a cinematographic approach with the aim of making the results and discussions presented more comprehensive.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research are presented in a table form. The four major events of Hårga's pagan tradition which is midsummer festival, there are: Attestupa, maypole dance, planting the seed, and human sacrifice—depicted in *Midsommar* are practically representation of Celtic rituals; on the other hand, humanism draws criticism to its several ritual instruments.

Table 1. The Result of this Research

Events in <i>Midsommar</i>	Results		
	Celtic Ritual Representation	Brief Description	Humanist View
Maypole dance	Beltane	Maypole dance includes May Queen selection and Greenman promotion that are parts of Beltane	This event of paganism has no dehumanization
Planting the seed	Beltane	Contains two rituals welcoming spring (planting seed and having sex) to ensure the mother phase (fertility) during Beltane	The second ritual beyond the victim's awareness since he is influenced by anesthesia containing aphrodisiacs
Attestupa	Lughnasadh	Martyrs' death (suicide) as <i>first grain</i> to obey Hårga's circle of	Suicide is a form of eliminating the value of life

Events in <i>Midsommar</i>	Results		
	Celtic Ritual Representatio n	Brief Description	Humanist View
		life is an interpretation of Lughnasadh.	
Human sacrifice	Lughnasadh	The act of burning humans as a form of offering is part of Lughnasadh.	Any form of murder is taking away a human's right to life

In the [table 1](#), the results of this research explain the identification of Celtic ritual representations that are seen at events in the midsummer festival as Hårga's pagan tradition in *Midsommar*; it is divided into 2, namely: 1) Maypole dance and planting the seed are representations of Beltane –one of Celtic ritual, 2) Attestupa and human sacrifice are representations of Lughnasadh –one of the Celtic rituals. Furthermore, a humanist view is put forward to address the essence of pagan tradition in the film *Midsommar* which brings degradation of human values. There are three humanist criticisms to three of the four events in *Midsommar*.

Based on the results that have been found, this section will further discuss the main findings that have been presented, focusing on how *Midsommar* represents Celtic rituals from the pagan tradition of the Hårga cult and how humanists respond to the Hårga cult's tradition of sacrificing humans to nature as a form of their love for nature.

Representation of Celtic Rituals in *Midsommar*

The representation of Celtic rituals in Ari Aster's *Midsommar* highlights how pagan traditions rooted in ancient beliefs and practices are revived in a modern context. The film uses visual and narrative elements to depict these rituals in evocative detail, creating an intense and disturbing cinematic experience for the viewer. These rituals, including seasonal celebrations, human sacrifice, and the ceremony of choosing a May Queen, are rooted in pagan traditions rich in symbolism and spiritual meaning. Aster incorporates Celtic elements such as reverence for nature, the cycle of life and death, and oneness with the universe to depict a world governed by laws and beliefs different from the modern world. This research uses Stuart Hall's theory of representation to articulate the Celtic rituals that viewing pagan traditions with fear on one hand and respecting their spiritual depth on the other. Hall's approach emphasizes that representation always involves

selecting, emphasizing, and eliminating certain aspects of the culture being represented.

Midsommar's pagan traditions are reflected in a series of festivals that symbolize the cycles of nature, similar to the Celtic calendar's Wheel of the Year. These festivals include Samhain, which marks the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter; Yule, which signifies the return of light; Mbolc, which marks the beginning of spring; Ostara, which celebrates the equality of day and night; Beltane, which celebrates the height of spring; Litha, which marks the peak of sunlight; Lughnasadh, which marks the beginning of the harvest season, and Mabon, which signifies the balance between day and night ([Kramer-Rolls in Rabinovitch & Lewis, 2002](#)). Each festival has deep spiritual significance, reflecting the changing seasons and the fruits of hard work. However, in Ari Aster's *Midsommar*, there are only two main rituals that clearly show in the film, which are the Beltane and Lughnasadh.

Beltane

According to Kramer-Rolls (in Rabinovitch & Lewis, [2002](#)), one of the main rituals in the Celtic Wheel of the Year calendar is Beltane. Beltane is an important festival in pagan traditions, particularly in Wicca and Druidic practices, celebrated on May 1. The festival marks the beginning of summer and is a time to celebrate growth, fertility, and new life. Beltane is often associated with fire, with rituals involving flames, bonfires, and other symbols representing energy and vitality. The celebration involves various ceremonies, including dancing around the maypole, symbolizing the union and unification of male and female energies. In Celtic mythology, Beltane is also associated with fertility gods and goddesses and the presence of magical creatures. The festival is a time to acknowledge the cycles of nature and celebrate the relationship between humans and the natural world.

In *Midsommar*, the Beltane ritual is represented in three main scenes. The first scene, which represents Beltane, is at minute 01:38:06, as shown in [picture 1](#) below.



Picture 1. Maypole dance

The [picture 1](#) shows the opening ceremonial of the Beltane ritual that is called Maypole dance when the girls in Hårga cult are dancing around the maypole together with joy. Dancing around the maypole is a summer celebration with the May Queen as the chosen symbol. The film *Midsommar* uses low and high angles to highlight dance formations and character interactions. The May Queen is rooted in early celebrations of fertility and natural cycles. Dani, the May Queen, symbolizes fertility and the new life of the Hårga community, while the flower crown symbolizes the relationship between nature and fertility. The concept of the May Queen is indeed rooted in early celebrations of fertility and springtime, as she symbolically represents the embodiment of the earth's fertility, beauty, and the commencement of the Mother phase, which is associated with fertilization and growth ([George, 2020](#)). The May Queen is a central figure in May Day celebrations, often linked to ancient fertility goddesses and the welcoming of summer ([George, 2020](#)). This figure is a later variation on goddesses associated with summer and fertility, and her crowning signifies the triumph of summer over winter, encapsulating the themes of renewal and fertility ([George, 2020](#)).

The second scene, which also represents Beltane, is at timestamp 01:57:37, as in [picture 2](#) below.



Picture 2. Planting the Seeds

The scene in the [picture 2](#) shows Dani as the May Queen who participates in the seed-planting ritual. The May Queen is a symbol of celebration and fertility, symbolizing the Hårga community's bond with nature. The ritual involves lighting a torch and singing a mantra to plant seeds, a Celtic ritual part of pagan culture. The high angle highlights the planted seeds, while over-the-shoulder shots provide character perspective. The ceremony took place during the day during summer, with bright and natural lighting. The May Queen is deeply rooted in the traditions surrounding the welcoming of summer and is a significant aspect of May Day celebrations. She embodies the spirit of the season and is a later variation on goddesses associated with

summer and fertility. Her crowning is part of the May Day ritual, which has evolved over time, integrating aspects of Beltane in pagan tradition.

Beltane, which is a ritual that is identical to fertility celebrations in pagan culture, is always associated with sexual rituals. As in the scene with timestamp 02:06:43 in [picture 3](#) below.



Picture 3. Having Sex

The [picture 3](#) shows the scene of Christian being forced to have sexual relations with Maja in a human fertilization ritual by the Hårga cult. Human sexual ritual is considered sacred in pagan cultures, reflecting natural regeneration and balance. This scene depicts sexual intercourse as not only a physical action but also as a profound spiritual tradition for the Hårga community. In addition, this scene reflects pagan beliefs about fertility and natural balance, where women played an important role as intermediaries of fertility and regeneration, revered as manifestations of pure natural power. The use of a low angle in visual media typically serves to convey a sense of vulnerability or powerlessness of the subject being filmed or photographed ([Fanani et al., 2016](#)). This technique can be particularly effective in ritualistic contexts, where the emotional and symbolic weight of the scene is heightened by the camera's perspective.

Lughnasadh

Another main Celtic ritual in Pagan tradition is Lughnasadh. According to Kramer-Rolls ([in Rabinovitch & Lewis, 2002](#)), Lughnasadh is one of the four main festivals in the Celtic pagan calendar, traditionally celebrated in early August to mark the peak of the harvest season. The festival is dedicated to the god Lugh, a god of the sun and craftsmanship, who protects farmers and crops. Lughnasadh ceremonies often involve sacrificial rituals as a form of gratitude for the harvest of the Pagan cult, as well as a form of petition to the nature gods to ensure the fertility of the land and the sustainability of future harvests. Kramer-Rolls ([in Rabinovitch & Lewis, 2002](#)) emphasizes that this ceremony connects the community with the cycles

of nature, reaffirming their spiritual connection to the land and their ancestral traditions.

In *Midsommar*, two data represent the Lughnasadh ritual. The first data that describes the Lughnasadh ritual is in [picture 4](#) below with a timestamp of 01:40:20



Picture 4. *Attestupa*

[Picture 4](#) shows one of the sacrificial rituals included in the Lughnasadh ritual. This ritual is called *Attestupa*. The *Attestupa* ritual involves elderly people jumping off a cliff to die for their beliefs. Two elderly individuals become martyrs, one dying instantly after falling on a large rock, while the other is only seriously injured and killed by the community with a large wooden hammer. The film uses various lighting, camera angles, and lighting to support the scene's horror. The *Attestupa* ritual is part of the Hårga community's pagan tradition, considered a sacred sacrifice to invoke the land's fertility and community survival. The ritual reflects the Hårga community's close connection to nature and desire to maintain life balance in their ecosystem. However, this ritual directly contrasts modern humanism, which upholds human rights and individual values. Humanism emphasizes the inherent value of everyone, regardless of age, and the *Attestupa* ritual is seen as sacrificing the lives of the elderly for collective interests or certain traditions without considering individual freedom and rights.

The next scene, which also represents the Lughnasadh as a sacrificing ritual in the *Midsommar* film, is at timestamp 02:18:52 as in [picture 5](#) below.



Picture 5. Human Sacrifice

The [picture 5](#) shows the ritual of sacrificing nine humans in a yellow triangular house. The victims are divided into four groups: determined Hårga community members (Ingemar and Ulf), outsiders (Mark, Josh, Simon, and Connie), and a chosen person by the May Queen (Christian). Christian is drugged and stuffed into a bear's body before being burned with the other victims. Cinematographic elements, such as angles, camera shots, and lighting, enhance the emotional impact and symbolism of the ritual. Wide shots show the ceremony location, close-up shots capture facial expressions, and tracking shots follow the characters to the yellow wooden building. Static shots show a wooden house engulfed in flames, contrasted with the film's dark themes. The ritual demonstrates how pagan cultures viewed sacrifice as a vital part of their lives to maintain nature balance and the survival of the Hårga community. The detailed depictions and intense atmosphere add to understanding the relevance and horror of ancient pagan traditions in a modern context.

Humanist Criticism of Hårga's Pagan Tradition

Humanism is a view of life that values human value, dignity, and potential, emphasizing rationality, ethical decision-making, and progress without supernatural authority. It is associated with humanity, dignity, and self-development, respecting every individual's rights and promoting freedom of thought. Paganism, on the other hand, is a term used to describe polyesthetic religious practices related to traditional ritual beliefs and ancient cultures. It emphasizes a strong relationship with nature and natural cycles, often using rituals and magical practices to influence the world. Humanist criticism of pagan culture often highlights the tension between humanism's values and those inherent in pagan beliefs. Humanists argue that pagan culture hinders intellectual progress and knowledge, and that devotion to mythology and pagan rituals distracts humans from seeking truth. They also criticize pagan culture from a moral perspective, arguing that humanism promotes a morality based on human well-being and social justice, while pagan cultures often have hierarchical social structures.

In the context of the *Midsommar* film, the extreme elements of paganism, namely rituals, sacrifices, and spells, give rise to humanist criticism of pagan culture, including in the data:

[Picture 3](#) where Christian is forced to engage in sexual relations with a girl from the Hårga community, violating his freedom and autonomy. Humanist criticism

emphasizes the necessity of acknowledging and confronting all manifestations of sexual violence, whether they are direct or indirect. This perspective aligns with the findings of Marshall (1994; 1996), which suggest that subtle forms of psychological abuse, including those that may not be immediately recognized as abusive, can have significant impacts on women's psychological states and perceptions of their relationships (Marshall, 1999). Similarly, the study on sexual assault against older women highlights the importance of recognizing sexual violence that occurs within familiar relationships and is often overlooked due to ageist and sexist biases (Band-Winterstein et al., 2021).

The next data that infringe the norms of humanism is in picture 4. Picture 4 depicts a suicide scene committed by elderly in the Attestupa ritual. The Attestupa ritual is a tradition where elderly parents sacrifice themselves by jumping off a cliff as a form of sacrifice for the community, which is very contrary to the notion of humanism. Humanist principles advocate for the respect and dignity of each person, emphasizing the importance of individual autonomy and the development of a moral life through voluntary acceptance of ethical norms (Chan, 2013). This perspective aligns with the protection and enforcement of civil liberties and human rights, as outlined in various legal frameworks and conventions, such as the European Convention on Human Rights (Foster, 2013).

The final picture that challenges humanism is the human sacrifice ritual carried out by the Hårga community by burning nine humans, as shown in data 5. In the film *Midsommar*, the ritual burning of nine humans by the Hårga community can be seen as an extreme manifestation of the lack of morality and respect for human life, which is contrary to the principles of humanism, which prioritize human dignity and values.

The concept of human sacrifice as part of traditional ceremonies, which may be perceived as a form of dehumanization, is a complex and multifaceted issue. In various cultures, human sacrifice has been practiced as a means of appeasing deities, seeking favor, or as a form of ritualistic violence (Carrasco, 2013). The act of sacrificing a human being in a ritual context can be interpreted as the ultimate form of violence, where the individual's life is subsumed under the perceived needs or values of the community or religious belief system.

Humanism, as a philosophy, emphasizes the importance of human values, such as rationality, freedom, and the dignity of each individual. In the context of the film *Midsommar*, the rituals carried out by the Hårga community depict serious violations of humanist values.

Additionally, the film highlights how traditions and rituals can lead to acts of violence and injustice when they are not questioned or reconsidered through a humanitarian lens. The Hårga community adheres to their traditions without considering their actions' moral and ethical consequences. This underscores the importance of a critical and rational approach to traditions and beliefs, as advocated by humanism, which encourages understanding and respect for human life over cruel and inhumane traditional practices.

CONCLUSION

Through analysis of Ari Aster's *Midsommar*, a pagan-themed film inspired from Sweden –explains the existence of belief patterns in rural Europe. Paganism is a collective belief produced from the language and culture of society. The pagan traditions of the Hårga cult are a negotiation of pagan culture that is different from the cultural construction of the outsiders in *Midsommar*. This research identifies the existence of representations of Celtic rituals that are covered in horror and cruelty of village people who appear good and polite. They have an ideology that was born from beliefs passed down from generation to generation so that they are limited in their thinking about seeing the essence of individuals who are not their peers. Midsummer festival is a form of celebration of the Hårga cult by cutting off other people's lives for obeying the ritual instruments in it. This ritual instrument is a representation of Celtic ritual seen from the dialogue, scenes and narration in *Midsommar*. Some of them are contrary to humanist views, so criticism emerged as a form of rejection of the pagan traditions of the Hårga cult as presented in the film *Midsommar*. Further, it is identified as a representation of Celtic ritual, humanists view that the essence of pagan traditions should not be as depicted in the film *Midsommar*.

From this research, a form of Celtic ritual representation can be found in the film *Midsommar*. However, it is not completely explained how the representation of Celtic rituals takes place with empirical data and the persistence of rituals in Europe. The obstacle in writing this research is that it is difficult to explain in detail about Celtic rituals since there is little original literature about these rituals. Further research can discuss paganism activities in films such as analyzing the social construction of paganism and its relevance in rural Europe. From this research, it can be seen whether there is a distortion or deconstruction of the meaning of paganism in this contemporary era.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, M. A. (2011). Fire, foliage and fury: vestiges of midsummer ritual in motets for John the Baptist. *Early Music History*, 30, 1–53. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261127911000027>
- Aniukwu, N., & Ojelibeckwu, V. O. (2023). Nollywood Ritual Representation And The Awka Youths: An Examination Of The Parents' perspectives. *IGWEBUIKE: African Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 9(2). Pp. 156-171 DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.31621.83688
- Band-Winterstein, T., Lev, S., Harel, D., & Goldblatt, H. (2021). Forms of sexual assault against older women in the context of acquaintance relationships: An intersectional perspective. *Health & Social Care in the Community*, 30(5). <https://doi.org/10.1111/hsc.13672>
- Baran, S. A. (2023). 'Once upon a Midsommar...': Nature, nationalism and the Swedish folkloresque. *Horror Studies*, 14(2), 205–217. https://doi.org/10.1386/host_00070_1
- Blockytė-Naujokė, K. (2023). Midsummer celebrations in Lithuania minor: continuity and change in traditions. *Res Humanitariae*, 31(2), pp.113–138. <https://doi.org/10.15181/rh.v31i0.2585>
- Bolat, N. (2021). Technical Structure of Fear in the Visual Narrative (pp. 19–35). *igi global*. EISBN13: 9781799846567 <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-4655-0.ch002>
- Brighter, G., & Rader, N. (2019). Establishing Shot Type Affects Arousal and Cognitive Load During Transitions Between Novel Interior Locations in Films. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, 13(3443). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2019.00003>
- Brkljačić, M. (2024) 'The Culture That Can't Anymore: Ari Aster's Midsommar (2019) as Pilgrimage of a Traumatized Society', in *Culture Wars and Horror Movies: Gender Debates in Post-2010s US Horror Cinema*. Springer, pp. 55–76.
- Bruckert, A., Christie, M., & Le Meur, O. (2022). Where to look at the movies: Analyzing visual attention to understand movie editing. *Behavior Research Methods*, 55(6), 2940–2959. <https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-022-01949-7>
- Butler, J. (2024). Paganism (pp. 505–521). oxford university. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198868699.013.6>
- Carrasco, D. (2013). Sacrifice/Human Sacrifice in Religious Traditions (pp. 209–225). oxford university. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199759996.013.0011>
- Chan, J. (2013). Individual Autonomy and Civil Liberties. princeton university. <https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691158617.003.0007>
- Cruz, D. T. (2014). Blurring Genres: Dissolving Literature and Film in Blade Runner (pp. 50–59). palgrave macmillan uk. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137439734_4
- David Sutton. (2022). The Horror/Beauty of the Hårga: Midsommar as Western Imaginary of a Screen-Free Life, *Visual Anthropology*, 35:4-5, 448-468, DOI: 10.1080/08949468.2022.2129256
- Edgecomb, S. F. (2023). Performing Midsommar: Sweden Nationalism, Folkloric Pageantry, and the Political Power of Symbolic Divergence. *Theatre Survey*, 64(3), 324–353. doi:10.1017/S0040557423000169
- Fanani, A. Z., Nugroho, S. M. S., & Hariadi, M. (2016). Virtual Camera Control Based on Cinematographic Rules of Camera Shot and Camera Angle. *International Review on Computers and Software (IRECOS)*, 11(6), 557. <https://doi.org/10.15866/irecos.v11i6.9474>
- Fatimah, Y. K., & Febriana, P. (2023). Representasi identitas seksual gay di YouTube. *Satwika : Kajian Ilmu Budaya Dan Perubahan Sosial*, 7(1), 90–102. <https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v7i1.24860>
- Finjan, H. T. (2024). Customs and Traditions in the Mamluk State. *International Journal of Religion*, 5(10), 276–283. <https://doi.org/10.61707/rhbcv359>
- Foster, S. (2013). Human Rights and Civil Liberties (pp. 247–260). routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203485569-19>
- Franco, M., & Robin, D. T. R. (2011). Vaavubhali, a Traditional Festival for Remembering Ancestors. *Ethnobotany Research and Applications*, 9, 115. <https://doi.org/10.17348/era.9.0.115-128>
- George, A. (2020). May Day: Beltane Fires and the May Queen-Goddess (pp. 121–133). springer.

- https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-46916-0_7
- Hall, S. (Ed.). (1997). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. Sage Publications, Inc; Open University Press.
- Higginbotham, J. and Higginbotham, R. (2002) *Paganism: An introduction to earth-centered religions*. Llewellyn Worldwide.
- Hu, J. C. (2023). Freire in Midsommar (2019): performative critical consciousness as social ritual. *ILCC*, 3(2), 174-182, <http://dx.doi.org/10.21622/ILCC.2023.03.2.174>
- Kasselstrand, I. (2018). 'We Still Wanted That Sense of Occasion': Traditions and Meaning-Making in Scottish Humanist Marriage Ceremonies. *Scottish Affairs*, 27(3), 273–293. <https://doi.org/10.3366/scot.2018.0244>
- Keisen, Y., Kobayashi, Y., & Fujii, H. (2019). A Study on Interior Light Environment in Japanese Teahouse and its Relation with Tea Ceremony. *caadria*. <https://doi.org/10.52842/conf.caadria.2019.1.463>
- Kelly, B. (2020). *Designing Shots for Storytelling* (pp. 80–103). oxford university. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190054328.003.0006>
- Khairiah, I., Prihatini, A. and others (2023) 'Kritik Sosial dalam Animasi Tekotok: Analisis Wacana Kritis Van Dijk', *Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial*, 7(2), pp. 328–348. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v7i2.26549>
- Lascarides, D. L. (1967). Shortening the dormant period of spring-grown seed potatoes for midsummer planting. *European Potato Journal*, 10(2), 100–107. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02364526>
- Lesiv, M. (2014). The return of ancestral gods: modern Ukrainian paganism as an alternative vision for a nation. *Choice Reviews Online*, 51(08), 51–4528. <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.51-4528>
- Letourneau, L., & Pigeon, L.-E. (2023). Questioning Customs and Traditions in Culinary Ethics: the Case of Cruel and Environmentally Damaging Food Practices. *Food Ethics*, 8(1) pp.6-17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41055-022-00116-0>
- Li, B. (2024). Gaging "JoJo Rabbit " Skies - Film Deconstruction and Reshaping of Literature. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 50(1), 103–107. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/50/20240900>
- Liadi, F., Jasiah, J., Qudsiyah, U., Harun, M., Madi, M., Agon, A., Yanti, N. I., & Andriyani, E. (2024). Cultural Representation of Babukung Dance Funeral Ceremony Ritual of The Dayak Tomun Tribe as a Media for Character Building through Local Wisdom. *Millati: Journal of Islamic Studies and Humanities*, 9(1) pp.81-102.. <https://doi.org/10.18326/millati.v9i1.893>
- Mascelli, A.S.C, Joseph V. (1987) *The Five's of Cinematography (AngleContinuity-Editing-Close Up-Komposisi dalam Sinematografi)*. H.M.Y, Brian. Jakarta: Yayasan Citra.
- Marshall, L. L. (1999). Effects of Men's Subtle and Overt Psychological Abuse on Low-Income Women. *Violence and Victims*, 14(1), 69–88. <https://doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.14.1.69>
- Moleong, Lexy J. (2012). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung : PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Parrish, J. M. (2010). Education, Erasmian humanism and More's Utopia. *Oxford Review of Education*, 36(5), 589–605. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2010.514437>
- Petrogianni, A., Giannakopoulos, T., & Koromilas, P. (2022). Film Shot Type Classification Based on Camera Movement Styles (pp. 602–615). *springer*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04881-4_48
- Rabinovitch, S. and Lewis, J. (2002) *The encyclopedia of modern witchcraft and neo-paganism*. Citadel Press.
- Rachmawati, J. I. (2019). Selling Sacredness: Representation of Sedekah Gunung Ritual in Lencoh Village, Boyolali in New Media. *MOZAIK HUMANIORA*, 18(2), 178–188. <https://doi.org/10.20473/mozaik.v18i2.9660>
- Reidinger, M. (2018). Paganism as Practical Spirituality (pp. 293–313). *springer singapore*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-0803-1_18
- Sagaran, A., Sayahdikumullah, D., & Muksin, M. (2024). Analysis of Lighting Arrangement in the Film "Buried" (2010) by Director Rodrigo Cortez. *Artchive: Indonesia Journal of Visual Art and*

- Design, 5(1), 15. DOI: [10.1080/08949468.2022.2129256](https://doi.org/10.1080/08949468.2022.2129256)
<https://doi.org/10.53666/artchive.v5i1.4098>
- Smith, T. J. (2012). The Attentional Theory of Cinematic Continuity. *Projections*, 6(1), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.3167/proj.2012.060102>
- Strmiska, M. (2005) *Modern Paganism in world cultures: comparative perspectives*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA.
- Sutton, D. (2022) ‘The horror/beauty of the Hårga: Midsommar as western imaginary of a screen-free life’, *Visual Anthropology*. Taylor & Francis, 35(4–5), pp. 448–468
- Wahyuni, E. A. et al. (2022) ‘Konstruksi gender dalam sastra anak Sunda Nala karya Darpan’, *Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya dan Perubahan Sosial*, 6(1), pp. 35–49. <https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v6i1.2025>
- Wingate, S. (2016). Watching Textual Screens Then and Now: Text Movies, Electronic Literature, and the Continuum of Countertextual Practice. *CounterText*, 2(2), 172–190. <https://doi.org/10.3366/count.2016.0051>