

# **THE FRATERNAL COMPLEX BETWEEN PSYCHOANALYSIS AND MYTH**

## **A LITERARY EXAMPLE: *STRANGE SHORES***

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### **Abstract:**

The field of siblings relationship, initially considered in psychoanalysis mostly in its interaction with the oedipal dynamics, knows today important developments so that the "fraternal complex" has achieved its own independence.

The paper aims to investigate the "fraternal complex" both in psychoanalytic area, from the Freudian perspective to contemporary authors, and in myth and literature. It is traced the birth and development of this concept showing how its different facets had been largely anticipated by the myth, especially Jewish myth. The second part of the article focuses on a literary example, "*Strange Shores*" by A. Indriðason, that offers many ideas to explore some of the dynamics of the fraternal complex in its intersection with fundamental issues in the field of psychoanalysis as the symbol, the double, the shadow, the guilt and the mourning.

**Keywords:** Fraternal Complex, Psychoanalysis, Myth.

## **The fraternal complex in Freud**

Freud never spoke openly of "fraternal complex" but in his work several times tackled the issue of the relationship between brothers highlighting its importance for fundamental primal fantasies such as incest and castration. In *Totem and Taboo* Freud (1912-13) describes the murder and subsequent devouring of the father by the horde of brothers and places it at the base of the incest taboo: *"Though the brothers had joined forces in order to overcome the father, each was the other's rival among the women (...). For there was no longer any one stronger than all the rest who could have successfully assumed the rôle of the father. Thus there was nothing left for the brothers, if they wanted to live together, but to erect the incest prohibition through which they all equally renounced the women whom they desired, and on account of whom they had removed the father in the first place"*. Freud therefore specifies that the feelings of "brotherhood" between those who have the same blood and belong to the same clan originate from the common hatred to the father of the horde: *"In thus ensuring each other's lives the brothers express the fact that no one of them is to be treated by the other as they all treated the father. They preclude a repetition of the fate of the father"*. In that way the brothers *"socially established prohibition against fratricide"*.

The father's cannibalism, consumed by the brothers, is placed by Freud at the base of both the cohabitation between men and the Christian religion, which he sees as the representation of the atonement of guilt of the (God) Father's killing and of a subsequent reconciliation with him<sup>1</sup>.

As for the founding myth the brothers are forced to overcome mutual hostility, but regarding ontological development Freud noted on several occasions such as the birth of a brother and the consequent fear of the loss

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<sup>1</sup> "The religion of the son succeeds the religion of the father. As a sign of this substitution the old totem feast is revived again in the form of communion in which the band of brothers now eats the flesh and blood of the son and no longer that of the father, the sons thereby identifying themselves with him and becoming holy themselves".

of the love of the mother induces in the child feelings of jealousy, rivalry and hatred towards his brothers and resentment towards her mother "infidel" eliciting specific dynamics. We must therefore accept the idea that the young child often "hear" the brothers, perceived as competitors of maternal love so that *"there is no doubt that in them he hates his rivals and it is known how frequently this attitude continues for many years until maturity, and even beyond, without interruption"* (Freud 1916).

In the case of siblings of the same sex are primarily issues of rivalry, while in the case of siblings of the opposite sex are also present phenomena of sexual attraction and seduction that influence the psychosexual development of the child. So in the famous case of "Wolf Man" Freud (1918) highlights the role that her sister exercised in complicate the picture Oedipus and the onset of the same obsessive neurosis. The sister is described as *"an inconvenient competitor for the good opinion of his parents"*: gifted and brilliant was the subject of strong envy by the patient that *"felt very much oppressed by her merciless display of superiority"* and above all, by the fact that his father *"had an unmistakable preference"* for her.

Besides when he was three years, the patient was seduced by his sister, and induced to sexual practices: as a result of this experience, the patient walks away from her sister, but then she masturbates in front of his Nanya which threatens him of castration. Therefore has the opportunity to see his sister naked, while urine, thus discovering the truth of that threat. As a result of these experiences he gave up masturbating and *"as a result of the suppression of his masturbation, the boy's sexual life took on a sadistic-anal character"*.

The seduction of his sister, then, intervened in the development of the Oedipus complex and heavily oriented the psycho-sexual fantasy of the child. He had lived such seduction as an aggression and, in order to compensate the consequent traumatic effect, has subsequently developed fantasies in which *"it was not he who had played the passive part towards his sister, but, on the contrary, he had been aggressive, had tried to see his sister undressed, had been rejected and punished, and had for that reason got into the rage"*. When, during puberty, he tried to have an intimate approach with her sister was rejected and then decide to turn to a peasant who had the same name. Since then the feelings of defensive devaluation toward his sister move on women in her stead, all of lower social class.

As can be seen through this case Freud gives utmost importance to the fraternal complex (without calling it in this way) both in the development of the patient's psychopathology and in the characterization of sexual life until

adulthood that remains fixed to the childhood experience and its consequences defensive centered in their relationship with his sister. Such relationship reinforces hostile impulses against parents and narcissistic feelings of loss related to lack of recognition of his skills that play a pathogenic power even more real and concrete as evidenced by comparison with an "other" so similar and yet so differently loved and admired.

Freud showed as the horizontal relationship, typical of the phratry, has a direct connection to the vertical relationship (parent-child) so the sister can be the other/similar rival as well as the representative of the Oedipal object (Mother) desired and at the same time devalued.

The birth of a brother calls for epistemological questions about the birth and the difference between the sexes thus soliciting major primal fantasies. Freud showed it clearly in the case of Little Hans (1908) in which dwells at length on the role of the sister's birth on the development of the child's fantasies and Oedipus. The patterns on the birth of children are stimulated and partly anticipated by the arrival of a brother, now stands to his mind "*the great riddle of where babies come from – a riddle no less than that of the Theban sphinx– already aware that his mother's body had swollen before she was confined and had become slim afterwards, making nonsense of the stork myth*". Although very little Hans connected the sight of the belly of the mother and the subsequent arrival of the child. This caused in the child thoughts and fantasies, which are not satisfied by the simplistic explanations of the parents. Hans initially seems to believe the words of the father of the coming of the stork, but later makes fun of him, letting him know that he knows that the birth of his sister was in some way connected to the pregnant mother. Moreover, he also knows that his father must have something to do with the birth of his sister, even though it was certainly the mother to put the world: these new questions disturb the child and make it even more mysterious than the position of the father element who will then have an influence on the oedipal dynamics as "*an unaccountable 'third'*" between him and the mother.

Secondly, the arrival of a sibling leads to a natural jealousy conditioning and strengthening the relationship with parents: it implies in fact a "deprivation" of the primary object which now appears dedicated to the care of the younger brother. In general, this jealousy is replaced by a feeling of early protection against the new born: "*some six months later he had got over his jealousy and his brotherly affection for the baby was only equalled by his sense of his own superiority over her*". Protective attitudes or tender, however, are just a way to mask the jealousy that returns both consciously

and unconsciously, in the form of dreams and fantasies. A few years later Hans fantasized many times about a possible sister's death in an accident such as a fall from the balcony or in the water, and admits that he would prefer that she wasn't born, even though at the same time claims to love her. Later also the desire of his sister's death is part of an Oedipal dynamic: "*in his unconscious he treated both persons (father and sister) in the same way, because they both took his mummy away from him, and interfered with his being alone with her*".

Besides the birth of a sibling can induce a regression and to remind the libidinal aspects of the primary relationship: the child relives the pleasure he felt in being cared for by his mother and this can lead to a stimulation of its erotic needs. Freud: "*as he watched the way in which the infant was looked after, the memory-traces of his own earliest experiences of pleasure were revived in him. This influence, too, is a typical one: in an unexpectedly large number of life-histories, normal as well as pathological, we find ourselves obliged to take as our starting-point an outburst of sexual pleasure and sexual curiosity connected, like this one, with the birth of the next child*".

The interest in sexuality is reinforced by the possibility to access to the difference between the male and female sexual organs. Such difference inspires awe because the female body is seen as a lack and so as a castration signal from which the subject defends himself through the denial. In fact, Hans cannot tolerate the absence of the "widdler" because it makes credible the castration: If females are deprived of them "they could take his own widdler away, and, as it were, make him into a woman!". How do we know this element has had then an essential importance for the development of Hans' phobic neurosis and oedipal dynamics.

We can therefore conclude that in Freud the fraternal complex appears as a kind of Oedipus displacement for which the feelings toward the brother have the role of representing oedipal dynamics that take place so on a double scene interweaving between them and, in general, reinforcing each other. In "Introduction to Psychoanalysis," Freud (1916) clarifies his point of view highlighting how the birth of a sibling produces an enlargement of the Oedipus complex that leads to a "*family complex*". As said the child has clear negative feelings towards the brothers and, in imagination as in dreams, do not hesitate to eliminate them. It is important to note that these negative feelings are similar to those that, during the Oedipus complex, are brought into play against the parent of the same sex, with the difference that can be expressed more freely. This overlap between the fraternal and the oedipus complex may allow further developments and complicate to such an

extent as to generate a confusion of roles and generations. The attitude towards the brothers, in fact, may be subject to different fates and different changes over time: *“As these brothers and sisters grow up, the boy’s attitude to them undergoes very significant transformations. He may take his sister as a love-object by way of substitute for his faithless mother. Where there are several brothers, all of them courting a younger sister, situations of hostile rivalry, which are so important for later life, arise already in the nursery. A little girl may find in her elder brother a substitute for her father who no longer takes an affectionate interest in her as he did in her earliest years. Or she may take a younger sister as a substitute for the baby she has vainly wished for from her father”*.

### **The fraternal complex after Freud**

Although several authors, following the Freudian approach, didn’t focused on the specificity of the fraternal complex, some important contributions opened a different path laying the foundation for modern conceptions of the fraternal complex.

The relationship between brothers occupies a vital significance in Adler theory , especially in the declination of the issues related to the will to power and the inferiority complex that, in his approach, are crucial for the development of personality. In the child the natural need for affirmation is counterbalanced by the feeling of inferiority and the complicated interplay between these two elements is strongly influenced by the fraternal relationship.

Unlike Freud, Adler sees the man turned toward the future rather than to the past and in his theory assumes particular importance the concept of lifestyle that determines the way in which the subject acts to achieve their aims, their goals. It is determined in early childhood and is strongly influenced by the subject's response to the family environment and in particular to the relationship between brothers.

Adler examined the so called "*family constellation*" giving particular importance to the place that every brother takes in his family. In one of his last work, "The Problem Child" (1930), Adler, while underlining the importance of the individual response of the subject, showed that the order of parentage assume an essential role in the ambitions and desires of the individual, heavily influencing his goals.

In his opinion the firstborn is generally favored and more valued by the parents: in consequence he typically shows a sense of responsibility, discipline, and early maturity. At the same time the high expectations may generate anxiety and fear or a strong sense of competitiveness that is expressed in particular towards brothers, on which he has to excel. The birth of the second child often generates strong feelings of hostility as he is perceived as a usurper and this can lead to aggressive behavior or aspects of regression. Sometimes the aggression, however, is disguised as a kind of protective attitudes towards his brother and the subject appears responsible and early adult. The feelings of rivalry also characterize the second son but in this case such feelings come from a sense of inferiority: the resulting "style of life" is characterized by a strong enterprise due to the desire to overcome his older brother, but also, if there is a third child, from hostility toward the latter, due to the fear of being overcome in turn.

Finally, the last born, in turn, wants to emulate and then surpass the brothers, at least initially, because if this becomes too difficult often falls back on a lazy and defeatist attitude characterized by a strong sense of inferiority. Moreover usually the parents are more lenient towards him fomenting self-centered and narcissist attitudes.

In his theory Adler put the desire of supremacy at the basis of fraternal relationship. He had the merit of having shown the psychological consequences that the birth of a sibling produce in child's mind. However we had to wait until Lacan to see a recovery and a redefinition of Freudian theories about Oedipus and sibling rivalry up to define a real complex he called "intrusion complex".

In the work "*family complexes in the formation of the individual*" (1938) Lacan implements social and anthropological analysis of the family highlighting how it is determined not only by biological bonds but also by the culture. In contrast to the ancient family, which was based on the relationship of parenthood, the modern family, which Lacan recovering Durkheim calls the "conjugal family", is founded on the centrality of marriage and the alliance of the spouses. This restriction of the family has led to a greater influence on the individual who is born and grows inside: hence the importance of all its members, mother, father and siblings. They are "the profoundest figures of his destiny" since it is the encounter with each of these figures that created the first bonds, the first identifications, the first reports. It is from this base that Lacan defines the concept of complex as something that "links in a fixed form a group of reactions" and that produces a series of mental images in the psychic apparatus. At the base of

the complex is placed “*an unconscious representation that is known as the imago*”. Here then, if inside the conjugal family there are three fundamental figures, even the complex can only be three: the complex of weaning (maternal imago) the intrusion complex (brother/similar imago) and the Oedipus complex (paternal imago).

Lacan connects the intrusion complex to the mirror stage. The mirror stage on the one hand allows the child to perceive oneself as "unit", and on the other hand, since the image is at the same time something different from himself, puts him in touch with the feelings of aggression and rivalry. In fact the subject, while being what it sees, not completely coincides with that image: this makes possible the establishment of a subjective identity but simultaneously produces a alienating effect since there is the intrusion of another in himself. In the essay “Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis” (1948), Lacan underlines how during the mirror stage the child “*identifying with the other (...), experiences the whole range of bearing and display reactions*”.

Paradoxically, the subject can reach his narcissistic perfection only through a double which, although extremely similar, is in some way other than himself: hence the alienation and the intrusion that subsequently characterized the relationship with their peers, primarily the brothers. The mirror creates the illusion of achieving an ideal unit that instead escapes to the subject: he must then experience the frustration of seeing outside of himself that realization that it cannot have. This experience is so fundamental that he defines it as “*a sort of structural crossroads to which we must accommodate our thinking if we are to understand the nature of aggressiveness in man and its relation to the formalism of his ego and objects*” (1948). It follows that the imago of the intrusion complex becomes the brother/similar which may subtract the subject's privileges and therefore becomes object of jealousy and envy: he is the usurper who can enjoy, without merit, what has subtracted. The brother is the one who steals the love object and prevents the subject from enjoying it. Envy is not only for the object stolen, but also for the very existence of the intruder, by the mere fact that he is other than himself. To represent this Lacan cites St. Augustine when he describes the gaze of the baby looking his brother at the mother's breast: “*Vidi ego et expertus sum zelantem parvulum non dume loquebatur amaro aspectu conlactaneum suum*” (“I myself have seen and known an infant to be jealous even though it could not speak. It became pale, and cast bitter looks on its foster-brother”).

The little child, already weaned, apparently has no reason to want the breast, but looking his brother sucking the breast recognizes himself, review his



body image, but knows that he is not the one who enjoys it, he is not the one who experiences the unity with her mother. He again needs to suck the mother's breast as he needs that completeness that the image showed him: he sees his own ideal, but cannot have it, on the contrary it is foreclosed. Hence the anger, jealousy and envy that is no coincidence that etymologically means "*look askance*": the little child cannot bear to see that image that reveals the lost object of desire renewing the pain of separation from the mother. Just when it has before him the founding image of his desire, there is another, another that has already taken his place: the other, the brother, and so the one who at the same time possesses the desire object and represent the ideal.

After Lacan the interest about fraternal complex had not the developments that might have been expected, probably because most of the authors have preferred to follow the Freudian mark considering it a kind of derivative of the Oedipus complex. Recently, however, this issue has attracted the interest of modern authors such as Kaes and Kanciper.

Kaes (2008 a) takes up the idea that the fraternal complex is related to the Oedipus complex, but at the same time shows as both have their own specificity and a role in determining the psychic functioning of the subject, especially in relation to identifications and internal objects. In fact, while the Oedipus complex is a vertical organizer, as it concerns the relationship between the parental couple and the children, the fraternal complex is a horizontal organizer, which concerns the bonds between individuals that belong to the same generation: the articulation between these two axes regulates psychic life of the person and the family.

Kaes then resumes the Freudian idea that the relationship between brothers further complexifies the Oedipus complex. In fact, the feelings of hostility, anger and even hatred toward the brother and the subsequent violence, real or imagined, are primarily derived from his will to be the sole holder of maternal love, the center of his world and, also, the mother's phallus. Moreover, these hostile feelings also come from a displacement of the hatred towards the parents, who are thus spared from child's attacks. This on the one hand complicates the Oedipus framework because is a "*magic solution*": in fact, in this way, the child avoids to accept and overcome his negative feelings and to represent himself as a third, distinct from the parental couple. On the other hand when the child manages to overcome the negative feelings he can carries important acquisitions and find himself through the other, transforming hatred, jealousy and envy in love, tenderness and generosity. Returning to Winnicott, Kaes notes that it is

necessary that hatred is expressed so that love can have a chance. This also feeds a boost to learn, a curiosity to know: first of all it concerns the origin of life and the consequent development of infantile sexual theories.

Kaes's conception of fraternal complex, however, goes far beyond these considerations. He defines the complex as a whole of unconscious representations and investments about fantasies and interpersonal relationships, which revolves around a core and which is characterized by irreconcilable conflict between psychic forces: if in the case of the Oedipus the conflict concerns the presence of ambivalent feelings for parents, in the case of fraternal complex it concerns not only the coexistence of love and hate, but also of similarity and difference, mirroring and otherness.

The fraternal complex contains in fact deep narcissistic values, since the other is seen as a reflection of himself, but at the same time opens the way to otherness, diversity and, therefore, to object investment. It will be the intersection of the fraternal complexes and their investments to determine the quality of the bond of brotherhood.

Kaes, in fact, distinguishes between fraternal complex and fraternal bond: the first organizes the second, the effects of which are particularly sensitive, not only in the family but also in groups and institutions (2008, b).

The resolution of the fraternal complex implies that the child waives any of his incestuous desires (this time against their brothers and sisters), exceeds the negative feelings of aggression and hatred towards his brothers and agree to share with them mother's love. In this way he can move from feelings of jealousy and rivalry to acceptance and sharing of the other. For this to be possible beyond the identification with the parent of the same sex, is also necessary the identification with the similar of the same generation. This complex places the subject in front of a conflict between generations that will be critical to his mental development as it compares him with different identification models allowing him to experiment with essential experiences such as collaboration, comparison, and solidarity, but also difference and autonomy.

Kaes also develops the Lacanian conception of the brother as a narcissistic double. He distinguishes various models ranging from the double as an ideal, the consolatory double up to the double as a persecutor. The most important function of the double is to avoid the separation from the mother and, in particular, from the maternal body. The brothers become "*objects of drive deflection in relation to the mother*": the child, through the brothers, preserves both himself and the mother from the rift which would result by the bodily separation. That may be denied differentiation by the brothers as

long as they are attached to the body of the mother to be part of their means to prolong this contact: the person is then "glued" to his brother in an incestuous relationship that sottointende a similar "stick" to the mother. The differentiation from the brothers may be denied because, as long as they are attached to the maternal body, being a part of the brother means to prolong this contact: the person is then "glued" to his brother in an incestuous relationship that represents the "cling" to maternal body.

The mother's body is the set of the most archaic variants of the fraternal complex: it is represented as a space that is, psychically, "full" of children and therefore of brothers and sisters. This explains the intensity of feelings, both positive and negative, towards brothers, intensity linked to having occupied the same place: hence the deep union but also the desire to drive out the rival remaining the only owner, protecting the mother from further invasions. In this regard Kaes notes as the denial of otherness, originally linked to avoidance of separation from the mother in order to get back the original unit symbiotic, also implies the denial of sexual difference and thus is at the base of psychic bisexuality. Only when the body of the mother is recognized as distinct from that of the brothers this "archaic form" of the fraternal complex can be overcome and replaced by a "symbolic form".

The fraternal complex then comes in two opposite forms. In the first form (archaic), the brother or sister is a partial object, an appendix or the maternal body or of one's own imaginary body. Kaes underlines the importance of the archaic, in particular for the clinic for its declination in the compulsion to repeat: "*The archaic designates a non-subjective and unconscious defense mechanisms. It is characterized by its repetition effects without transformation*". The second form of the fraternal complex is placed into a triangular rivalry: the figures of the double, of narcissistic homosexuality, and of psychic bisexuality are sketched out.

The fraternal complex is not a displacement or avoidance of the Oedipus Complex. The triangular rivalry of fraternal complex is distinguished from the oedipal one: there are different objects, different love and hate investments and different feelings (jealousy, envy, violence etc.). Actually the Oedipus complex is a transformation factor of the archaic fraternal complex leading to open different solutions.

Kaes examines the fraternal complex also from the side of the parents showing how they narcissistically invest differently in children, according to the gender and to the order of birth: this heavily impacts on their psychic world and on the unconscious alliances the brothers realized.

Besides Kaes shows how the incestuous dimension is an intrinsic part of the fraternal complex and distinguishes between a real incest, when inside the family there is a lack of differentiation of intra-generational and transgenerational boundaries, and symbolic incest when takes place a displacement that leads to search the object of love depending not on the similarity with the parent of the opposite sex, but on the similarity with the brother. This explains why often between spouses sexuality is not acted.

Kaes, then, showed that the fraternal complex goes beyond the dynamics of love and hate, jealousy and rivalry, but it goes beyond even the same bond that takes place between the brothers going to affect all the relational world: the inner group of brothers and sisters, in fact, influence every social subject's experience.

### **The fraternal complex in the myth**

The myth full of references to the relationship between the brothers and the matters of the fraternal complex, in its various hues, have been largely anticipated by legends and mythological tales.

#### **Cain and Abel**

The first relationship between brothers ends with a murder. The first murder of humanity is thus a fratricide. This is because of envy of the love of God, who prefers, apparently with no reason, Abel: where Cain offers do not please the Lord, those of Abel are very welcome, making it the favorite and elevating it to a level of superiority compared to the first-born<sup>2</sup>. From here the feelings of hatred and jealousy of Cain who feels usurped his role: the myth therefore anticipates the Lacanian theory on the complex of the intruder. The brother is a danger to his own existence and the fear of being supplanted and assaulted unleashes the aggressive drive is something else, but it's also a mirror of himself. Everything in the myth is even more exaggerated because, as noted by Siracusano (1993), Cain is the first to experience these feelings and these interior conflicts: "*then Cain represents*

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<sup>2</sup> "The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast" (Genesis 4; 4-5, New International Version).

*and is each of us who has the experience of knowledge, freedom, authenticity and ambivalence” .*

Abel sees Cain as the one who deprives him of the love of the God / father, but also that humiliates the fruit of his work that, unlike that of his brother, is not appreciated, not worth in the eyes of the Father. Although technically the father is Adam symbolically this figure is assumed by God who, in His omnipotence, perfectly embodies the infantile narcissistic investments that give character to the perfection of parental figures. Moreover, as noted Kancyper (2004), in the Bible is sometimes attributed to Cain a divine origin: *“Cain is the first human being born of a woman, but through that kind of coupling with divine forces that usually generates heroic figures”*. Cain, therefore, should be the beloved: he is the eldest son and the son of God. God, however, prefers his brother and this choice, apparently arbitrary, unleashes his anger and stimulates the fratricide impulse.

As we see the myth allows us to observe the interplay between the fraternal field, the oedipal and narcissistic.

Kancyper also assumes that the beloved Abel can feel guilty for this predilection. How Cain became the prototype of the jealous fratricide, Abel can be the beloved that is subject of reproaches and laments of the damaged brother: he feels remorse for his esteemed success.

Cain and Abel both offer their first fruits: the first fruits of the earth, and the first of the animals. An essential difference is that Cain's offering lacks the sacrificial dimension, while in that of Abel there is a clear connection with the oldest sacrifice: the firstborn sacrifice. Siracusano writes (ibid): *"It is clear that the first-born of man and the firstborn of the animal have in common, for the symmetrical logic of the unconscious, some essential elements that make them identical and included in various subclasses and especially in that of sacrifice, of life and death and of blood"*.

Abel's offering is more primitive, while Cain's offering is most advanced as it implies a greater use of the symbol by which a thing can stand for another, even if it is very different from the original: it implies the introduction of a difference. Cain marks an evolution, a discovery, but at the same time exceeds a limit. When God does not appreciate his offer, Cain feels the anguish of having lost his love and, therefore, the envy and hatred toward

his brother and nothing worth the superego reminder of God<sup>3</sup>: *“Super-ego cannot alleviate the anguish that has infiltrated into the ego, rather aggravates it demanding a solution. The human story of Cain must be done, he must eliminate the man who is now his enemy, the obstacle to his comfort, his persecutor”* (ibid).

Cain, who was a farmer and therefore belonged to a sedentary world, is condemned to wander for eternity. The Lord gives also a brand that protects him punishing his attackers: he must wander forever, away from his lands, with guilt, guilt from which not even God can forgive him.

### **Jacob and Esau**

Kancyper (2004) notes that Jacob’s story illustrates the interplay between the fraternal complex and the oedipal and narcissistic levels. Here we find topics, relating especially to the second-born and to the sense of guilt, that seem to go beyond the descriptions of Freud and Lacan. The myth starts from the sterility of the mother, Rebecca, and the petition of Isaac greeted by God, who, in his generosity, gives even twins. The mother perceives the rivalry between his sons already in her womb as she hears that " the babies jostled each other within her " (Genesis 25:22) and asks the Lord why receiving a prophecy: *"Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger"* (Genesis 25:23). At the moment of the birth first comes Esau, with a reddish color, and then Jacob, who was holding the heel of his brother. The name Jacob, in fact, derives from aqeb which means heel, but the same root Aqab also means deceive and supplant. Jakob is therefore the brother's supplanter, the trickster, the one who by deception appropriates what belongs to his brother. Later Esau affirms: *"Isn't he rightly named Jacob? This is the second time he has taken advantage of me"* (Genesis 27:36). Esau was the firstborn, the eldest and therefore he should supplant the brother. Jacob is jealous of the brother's

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<sup>3</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it” (Genesis 4: 6, New International Version).

status and manages to steal the birthright<sup>4</sup>. Later, with the help of his mother Rebecca, Jacob deceives his father, who was more attached to his brother, and pretending to be Esau makes sure to have the father's blessing, which was in line with the God's prophecy<sup>5</sup>. Esau, then, is also defrauded of the father's blessing and decides to kill his brother, but the mother warn Jakob inviting him to flee. In fact, Jacob appears as a narcissistic object for the mother who, taking advantage of the rivalry between the children and in particular of the desire of Jacob to take the place of his brother, claims in turn the supremacy over her husband Isaac. Here again the fraternal complex intervenes to complicate oedipal dynamics and is intertwined with narcissistic phenomena of both brothers and parental figures.

The question of the twin leads to the extreme the theme of the double as it makes it even more difficult to distinguish between self and other. In this case not only is it shared the same space, but it was done at the same time: there was a fight for it, as illustrated by the story of Jacob and Esau, that contend the womb and the breast. Hence the fantasy that there is only one space, one time and one chance for each of them and that only one can thus conquer them: this can lead to the fight, but also to give up its own realization to avoid remorse and sense of guilt: *"the sacrifice of one of the twins derives from the stratification of symbiotic phantasies of fusion and*

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<sup>4</sup> Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in from the open country, famished. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!". Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright." "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?" But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. (Genesis 25: 29-33, New International Version).

<sup>5</sup> When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed. May God give you heaven's dew and earth's richness an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed." (Genesis 27: 27-29, New International Version).

*confusion, theft of the roles and function of other, and gives rise to violent remorse and resentment that usually end up inhibiting any kind of competition and rivalry. We should keep in mind that the term rivalry comes from the Latin rivalis, which means to have the right to the same body of water" (Kancyper, 2004).*

After all, Freud had already shown that between siblings, especially if twins could be waived authentic expression of the fundamental parts of personality to avoid not only the contrast, but also the confusion with the brother, the "retires in favour" of the brother can be done in the choice of study, career profession, pastimes and even in the choice of love. Citing the case of twins Freud (1920) writes: "*One of them was very successful with women, and had innumerable affairs with women and girls. The other went the same way at first, but it became unpleasant for him to be trespassing on his brother's preserves, and, owing to the likeness between them, to be mistaken for him on intimate occasions; so he got out of the difficulty by becoming homosexual. He left the women to his brother, and thus retired in his favour*".

In exile at Carran, Jacob fertility and wealth and prosperity, but he has to return to the country that God has promised and, to this end, he has to face his brother. Facing his brother Jacob faces himself and so regain his identity: "The brother is the necessary step, (...) he is inscribed in his being, he is as himself, he is himself. The escape from my brother is illusory, because, even assuming that it can keep him away physically, I risk of being even more obsessed because I am my brother, and to get away from him, I should run away from myself "(De Gasperis & Carfagna 1998) .

Jacob sends to Esau a message of peace but the messengers report that his brother is coming with four hundred men. Jacob knows he is in the wrong, he feels guilty for what he has done and he is afraid and anguished. He prays God and then sends gifts to his brother, but remained in the rear. He still cannot face him directly, but he does not even want to retire: he sends his men forward, remaining alone in the night. Here is the visit of a man, who then reveals himself an angel of God and there is a struggle: this time, though wounded, Jacob does not retreat, does not let the battle ends before he has his blessing. This fight, which precedes the dreaded meeting with his brother, indicates the resolution of the fraternal complex. After the fight, there is the recognition of his identity: Jacob is now Israel, the one who fought with God. Only then, when he met his true Self, he can let go the other. Only then the conflict and rivalry with his brother, but also the fear and the guilt he feels for him, can be overcome: the confrontation with the



angel allows the subjectivity of Jacob who became Israel and avoids the Cain's fratricide solution. In the moment in which he recognizes himself and recognizes the other Jacob is ready to meet his brother and take his own destiny.

### **A literary example: Strange shores**

Besides the classical myth even fiction has often showed interest to the relationship between brothers and sisters. We take for example a recent novel, "Strange shores" by A. Indriðason<sup>6</sup>, that offers many ideas to explore some of the dynamics of the fraternal complex in its intersection with fundamental issues in the field of psychoanalysis as the symbol, the double, the shadow, the guilt and the mourning. On a closer inspection the entire novel can be understood as a representation of a psychotherapeutic process.

#### **The story**

The novel deals with the investigation of Erlendur, a police inspector who, from the capital, comes back to the places of his childhood in the heart of Iceland to face a story that troubles him since he was a child: the disappearance of his younger brother Bergur in a storm.

During his investigation he comes across Matthildur's story, woman missed in a blizzard during the Second World War, that has many connection with his personal story.

In his research, the main character sees himself in the characters who gradually meet, reliving his relationship with his brother and the

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<sup>6</sup> Arnaldur Indriðason was born in Reykjavík on 1961. He graduated with a degree in history from the University of Iceland (Háskóli Íslands) in 1996. He worked as a journalist for the newspaper *Morgunblaðið* and later as a freelance writer before he began writing novels. Outside Iceland, he is best known for his crime novels featuring Detectives Erlendur and Sigurdur Oli, which are consistent bestsellers across Europe. The series has won numerous awards, including the Nordic Glass Key and the CQA Gold Dagger. In 2006, his Erlendur novel *Mýrin* was made into a film, known internationally as *Jar City*.

ambivalence of such relationship. In particular it stands the figure of Ezra, Matthildur's lover, which gradually reveals his darker side. So Erlendur discovers that Ezra was a close friend of the Matthildur's husband, Jakob, he discovers how Ezra became her lover, and he discovers the terrible vengeance of Jakob: the murder of his own wife. With great tenacity Erlendur continues its investigations without hesitation to find out how Ezra has in turn avenged by Jakob burying him alive. Finally, he also finds Matthildur's body allowing Ezra to find some peace.

At the same time he continued his personal quest to discover the secret kept in the foxes lairs. A hunter brought together in his garage the contents of all foxes lairs and it is in this chaos that Erlendur finds the bones of his little brother, which can then finally lay in his parents grave.

### **The symbol**

The novel often used symbolic images, full of meanings. These are symbols in the Jungian sense of the word, not a sign that expresses something already known to those who observes the image, but rather a content that cannot be expressed otherwise<sup>7</sup>.

A first symbol, polysemic, often used in the fairy tale, myth and primitive religions, is the fox. Marcus Terentius Varro (1788) associated fox's etymology to the phrase "flying by feet" (*Volpes (...) quod volat pedibus*): in this sense it could be a symbol that is linked with Mercury, with the multiple meanings of messenger, healer, and element transformation. Classically, the image of the fox is associated with cleverness, cunning, stealth: it is a creature extremely skilled in difficult situations, not so much for its ability to solve problems, but to evade them, to circumvent them, as it does with traps and predators. It moves at night and uses his cunning to get

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<sup>7</sup> According to Jung (1916): "the symbol is not a sign that disguises something generally known. Its meaning resides in the fact that it is an attempt to elucidate, by a more or less apt analogy, something that is still entirely unknown or still in process of formation" ("the conception of the unconscious"). In *Psychological Types* (1921) he specifies that "the symbol is alive only so long as it is pregnant with meaning. But once its meaning has been born out of it, once that expression is found that formulates the thing sought, expected, or divined even better than the hitherto accepted symbol, then the symbol is dead, i.e. it possesses only a historical significance".

the better of creatures apparently more equipped. Its great capacity for adaptation is demonstrated by the shape-shifting skills that Eastern cultures, as well as Native Americans, attributed to the fox. At the same time the fox is also a symbol of chaotic and primordial strength, uncontrollable and ambivalent, acting on its own enigmatic purposes. It is a creature that is admired but to distrust, as can be seen in the image of the trickster, the deceiver, frequent in northern Europe mythology and folklore.

Dante (1300) highlights the ambiguity of the fox mentioning it sometimes as the personification of cunning<sup>8</sup> sometimes as a symbol of heresy and greed<sup>9</sup>. In the novel, the mystery aura around these animals is presented in the early chapters, and "*the habits of foxes*" are the subject of Erlendur's investigation in the search for both objective and subjective truth: the fox is a metaphor of his painful journey into the past and the unconscious. From here the contrast between the primordial and chaotic nature of this animal and its adaptive and rational aspects: like Erlendur that while proceeds methodically in its investigation has to face the looming shadow of the past. In fact it is in the contrast that it is possible to create something new, and it is the symbol that allows to overcome the tension between opposites uniting them (from the greek σύμβολον, an amalgam of σ σύμ- ("together") and βολή ("throwing") and so "put together", "join"). Here, as Jung says, the symbol is always the result of cooperation between consciousness and unconscious and so it can "*acts as a transformer of psychic energy*" (1928) providing new vital impetus to the person. This ability to put together the opposites and to overcome them showing new directions is essential to the discovery process that will lead to achieving the true self. The process by which Erlendur grieve and reaches his real identity matures through this capacity for symbolization through opposites: the day, the realm of the secondary process in which Erlendur investigates the relationship with reality, and the night, the realm of the primary process where the investigation expands according to the times and spaces of the unconscious.

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<sup>8</sup> So he describes the craftiness of Guido di Montefeltro: "my mother gave me, less my deeds bespake the nature of the lion than the fox. All ways of winding subtlety I knew, and with such art conducted, that the sound reach'd the world's limit" (The Divine Comedy, Hell, XVII;71-75).

<sup>9</sup> He compares the Church, far from correct doctrine and greedy for power and wealth, to the hungry fox: "Next, springing up into the chariot's womb, a fox I saw, with hunger seeming pined of all good food". (The Divine Comedy, Purgatory, XXXII:117-119).

Besides: the progress, the civilization as opposed to a wild and primitive nature that yet, not surprisingly, does not yield ground in the regions of Erlendur's childhood, on the contrary "*nature was conspiring to merge the property into its surroundings gradually obliterating all traces of human habitation*" (Strange shores, pag. 6).

In order to reconcile the two opposites it is necessary to do as the fox that contain in itself primordial and adaptive aspects: the fox in fact, as the hunter Boas reveals, is "the first settler of Iceland since it had arrived ten thousand years ago", but it still survives because it can adapt to the new reality, to the change.

The ability to hold together these conflicting elements arouses respect and admiration, but also suspicion and mistrust of its mysterious and devious nature. The fox could be capable of anything in order to survive and, in fact, "*you find the oddest things in foxholes*" (ibidem, 7).

The lair is another symbol of the unconscious: a primitive and dark place, but at the same time a safe place to keep what is most valuable, what it is not possible to expose to light. Erlendur has to fight for a long time to reach the truth in a constant opposition between the desire to know it and the desire to leave it buried, frozen. When his investigation is reaching the truth he cannot face it, as when he finds out that fox "is a scavenger", that "it eat carrion", even "human". Erlendur cannot still see the truth, he must leave: "*with those few, brief words the farmer had summoned up a picture so horrible that Erlendur would have given anything to be able to expunge it from his mind*".

So he is hesitant when it is a step away from knowing what there is in the foxes lairs and, therefore, from knowing the fate of his brother. Erlendur tries to avoid to look at that garage that reconstructs the foxhole and where are piled up / buried all remnants of a forgotten past, a past that now it is possible to bring to light.

The foxes and their habits, however, are not the only symbolic aspects of the novel. At the center of it there are two objects given by the father of the two brothers: the soldier and the toy car. Again they are two opposites. The soldier is immobile, static and submissive to authority, he is obedient and loyal to the rules, he does what is told and has specific responsibilities. The car, on the contrary, is dynamic, free to move where he chooses, free to travel and to make every adventure without having to account to anyone for his actions. In addition, this particular soldier was badly stained and poorly defined, "*his hands were green like his uniform and it was hard to make him stand up*". The car, however, was a "*small shiny perfection*". The soldier

was one among many, the toy car was unique. Erlendur craves that little car that symbolically demonstrates the parental preference. Here we get into the theme of fraternal complex and, in particular, the intruder complex: the brother is the usurper who steals the love object. Jealousy and envy for the younger brother moved and condensed on the red toy car that takes on it all the characteristics of an object intensely desired and idealized symbol of all that the younger brother got in his stead.

### **The fraternal complex and the guilt**

From the beginning of the novel the fraternal complex is intertwined with the guilt theme that hangs over the whole affair specifying more and more. As we have seen among the siblings it is frequent the fantasy, the unconscious belief, that there is a limited supply of love, that it has a fixed quantity and so the one who benefits of it automatically divest the other. It is therefore possible that Erlendur wishes that his rival disappeared, so that he could undisturbed access to the object of love. This fantasy is related to the so called "survivor guilt" (Modell, 1971). According to Modell there is "*an unconscious bookkeeping system (...) that take account of the distribution of the available "good" within a given nuclear family so that the current fate of other family members will determine how much "good" one possesses. If fate has dealt harshly with other members of the family the survivor may experience guilt, as he has obtained more than his share of the <good>*". In a more literal way Niederland (1961) speaks about survivor guilt as an "ever present feeling of guilt for having survived the very calamity to which their loved ones succumbed". In other words who survives a tragedy feels in some way responsible: the resulting guilt can be so intense and overwhelming to involve various self-punishment behaviors, both symbolic and concrete, up to suicide. In the novel both the symbolic and the literal "survivor guilt" are present.

The tragedy occurs two weeks after the episode of the toy car: "at the time he had still been feeling envious of Bergur's car". The tragedy makes real Erlendur's fratricidal desire (conscious or unconscious): thereof the survivor guilt. The two brothers were together in the storm: Erlendur was the older, he has the responsibility, but his hand escapes and he loses the brother. He was found and rescue, but there are no information of his brother: he hasn't answers to the questions put to him (where he lost the brother, what roads had traveled etc.). Like to Cain, to Erlendur is asked what happened to the younger brother, of which the unconscious expectation of the group, is that

he is both the responsible and the custodian. Erlendur has no answers, perhaps this is why he devoted his life to seek answers and to solve the other's riddles.

But there is something more. Erlendur's blame, and so Erlendur's guilt, is not only to have lived in the place of his brother, but also to be responsible for the presence of the little brother in the place of the storm. "*Then Bergur must come too*" he said when his father asked him to accompany him and, despite the protests of his mother, he gets what he wants: his brother went with them instead of staying to play with his beloved toy car. Since then that phrase will resound in his head, along with the idea that it was all his fault: "*a crushing sense of guilt oppressed him, mingled with a strange feeling that first crept up on him then grew relentlessly: that he did not deserve to be saved instead of Bergur*". He would like to talk about it, would confess everything to his mother but he isn't able to do it or, perhaps, he can't: "*from now on he will bear his guilt in silence*". The impulse to confess that accompanies guilt gives immediate relief, but it contains the germ of another fault: to involve another person to share the burden. Refrain from confession, as in this case, may involve the assumption of responsibility.

Here we see how the fraternal complex can be complicated by the parental role failure. The paternal function passes from the father to eldest son, who is forced to accept a burden of responsibility, and thus of guilt, that did not compete to him. Erlendur decides that his brother would go with them, he has to go back to look for him, he has escaped his grip, he assumes responsibility of losing him, he's got the guilt of surviving. The father remains in the background, watching the sky: he is the parent viewer who is not involved.

Moreover, in bringing his little brother with him, Erlendur separated him both from the mother and from the red car that, however, in a sense, represents her. In fact with the death of his brother Erlendur has not to compete with him for the mother's possession.

This interplay between fraternal and Oedipus complex can be also observed in the parallel story of Ezra, Jakob and Matthildur: it is in this case a love affair in which two rivals, close friends, secretly share the same love object. Again we find the themes of rivalry, jealousy, envy and hatred which, however, are taken to the extreme and transposed from a purely fantasy to a concrete floor. While in the case of Erlendur all the emotions remain at an intrapsychic level, in the case of Ezra they are acted in a dual, mutual revenge.

### **The double and the mirroring**

The brother is seen as the double, at the same time similar but also something else from self: a specular aspect of self that can take on different connotations. In the novel there is a continuous interplay of reflections between the "brothers" pairs: Erlendur and Bergur, Ezra and Jakob, but especially Erlendur and Ezra. The similarities between the two protagonists are numerous and significant. Not by chance at Ezra's home Erlendur incredibly finds the red toy car that gives life to memories and encourages the reconstructive investigation. They share the fratricidal desire, the guilt that goes with it (included the survivor guilt), the secret and the inability to reveal it.

We must not forget, however, Jakob's figure which seems to condense in himself all the negativity: he is described as treacherous, sneaky, unable to take responsibility and to recognize his own child. He represents the prototype of those who act instinctively putting in place their own instincts and denying their guilt: no processing is possible for him, no responsibility, no movement, no mourning.

Gradually, we see how the bad parts projected into the figure of Jakob are recognized as their own by the two protagonists: the unveiling of the truth with its secrets reveals also their dark side that can finally be shown.

Only now the two main characters can do the work of mourning that so far weren't able to execute.

### **The mourning**

Mourning is a key theme of the novel as it shows the different dynamics of the various protagonists. Jakob does not want to make any mourning: in his case the loss is denial and his blind revenge cancels any other possible feeling. Ezra is unable to go forward, every day drives away the memories of the past and the painful affects related to them. Unlike Jakob carries a burden and pays its price every day, but still cannot process and overcome it. Ezra remained anchored to the lost object: his loss leaves a huge void, becomes a narcissistic loss. Matthildur, moreover, was his only love's object and the theme of guilt further complicates the situation making impossible to implement a new investment: with Freud (1915), we can say that "the shadow of the object fell upon the ego" blocking any libido movement. Ezra's life was stopped in those fateful days of the death of his beloved, and then, of the discovery of her murder by her husband Jakob. Alone, he finds a precarious balance in the banality of everyday life, in the custody of the

secret and in the repression of memories and feelings that emerge continuously, but at least don't overwhelm him. When Erlendur almost forces him to remember, the memory appears sharp, as if he had remained in the ice, crystallized in an immobility that has preserved intact. That equilibrium, based on leave everything "frozen" and therefore "not occurred", is broken and opens the possibility of a painful mourning.

The theme of "freezing", "hypothermia" and their stages recurs in the novel and can be understood as a metaphor. Freezing preserves and maintains unaltered experiences, memories and emotions but it risks to block them forever relegating them in cryptic and inaccessible areas of the mind in order to avoid the pain that contact with them would entail. Then the novel narrates of an unfreezing of feelings and events encapsulated in a rigid silence that become available again through movement and dialogue, internal and external, that allow to psychic life to flow again thanks to the work of mourning.

Ezra has not forgotten, he is blocked even physically by his memories: "*I couldn't bring myself to move (...). I couldn't bear to leave her*". In this way, however, he is condemned to an eternal stagnation which so far has not allowed any processing. Even Erlendur didn't want to leave, but now he can go back just because before he leaves. The structure of the story suggests that he had deposited his mourning in his childhood places and that he had to return there to be able to process it: so, while he investigates, he also thaws his memories. Again we see a reflection in the two characters mourning and in their being complicated by the guilt: Ezra's words of at the end of his memory ("*I'm to blame. I've had to live with that ever since*") recall Erlendur's word about the death of his brother. Both, however, have to do their mourning without having the body of the person lost and it is no coincidence that the repair is possible only from this finding that allows them to finally get out of the stagnation. Emblematic are Erlendur's thoughts when he gives to Ezra, which appears at first incredulous, the information of the discovery of Matthildur's body : "*He had been overwhelmed with the same feeling when confronted by the small bones in Daniel's cardboard box. He realized that he had broken some unwritten law of immutability. He had cut its fetters and set the mechanism of life in motion again.*"

The difference between the two protagonists regards the activity in this work of mourning: Erlendur has chosen to execute this movement, Ezra is stationary, but is driven by the inspector's stubbornness. Erlendur implements two investigations, solves two cases and allows two mourning



works: "he had managed to unite them again, though death still stood between them . He had managed to draw a line under the story of Ezra and Matthildur".

At that point Erlendur can bury the bones of the brother in the parents grave and in this way, symbolically, he separates death from life, and he can then resume his life after the freezing that suspended mourning had imposed.

### **The traveller, the uncanny and the shadow**

At the end of the mourning process Erlendur can dream of meeting his brother and walk together. Nightmares are finished and the image of the mysterious traveler, appeared at the opening of the novel, is vanished. In the prologue Erlendur is alone, in the dark, in what remains of his childhood house. Between sleep and wakefulness he travels through space and time, and in this state feel that there is someone with him, sees the shadow walker who asks him why he is there. "Who are you?" answer Erlendur. On closer inspection it is on these two unanswered questions that runs the whole story. The traveller is initially a dark and disturbing presence. In Freudian terms, we could call it uncanny (1919) or "unheimlich", literally what is not known, what is not familiar, but at the same time that it also contains the well-known and familiar as "*Unheimlich is in some way or other a subspecies of heimlich*". The uncanny is therefore precisely this uncertainty, this stand in the border not only between familiar and unfamiliar, but also, for example, between the living and the nonliving, between the self and the other. No coincidence Freud connects this theme to that of the double, we have mentioned and which here takes the form of a continuous identificatory exchange, with the doubt on where resides the own self.

The traveler asks why Erlendur is back there in his childhood home, Erlendur asked the wayfarer who he is. Both know the answer, but need to find it.

The traveler is therefore a part of Erlendur. A party which initially appears anguishing and uncanny. Using Jungian words we could identify it as his personal Shadow (1928), "*the other side*" obscure and invisible of his person, but an integral part of the self. As Erlendur investigates and retraces past events, as he accept his own faults and accomplishes the work of mourning he comes closest to his shadow so that the traveler can finally get away.

### **The novel as a psychotherapeutic process**

The novel can be seen as a psychotherapeutic process: at the end of it the protagonist can do the work of mourning, solves the fraternal complex and complete his individuation process recognizing his dark side, his shadow. Erlendur's investigation of a past that almost everyone has forgotten but that he, with difficulty, manages to bring to light reminds the analytical work in his attempt to bring out the unconscious. Erlendur succeeds thanks to his motivation and determination in spite of the many resistances: all the persons he encounters appear, at least initially, reluctant to remember that dark and crystallized past. It is floating the fear of dire consequences for the desecration of what was buried, and it is no coincidence that the protagonist, twice, has to dig up corpses!

Erlendur digs into the past, pulled out the remains, brings to light what has been removed. "*You are the stubbornest bastard I've ever met,*" says Ezra when Erlendur's stubbornness pushes him to face his demons and his personal ghosts.

Traumas, fantasies, feelings, memories, conflicts, desires emerge one after the other to complete the picture and to reach at the truth. But here we touch on another important issue in the analysis: is the truth really what we seek? "*Now that Erlendur had got what he wanted, he was no longer sure if he had been justified in putting such pressure on Ezra. Or whether he had really needed to hear the whole truth*".

The essential point is probably what truth are we looking for in the analysis. It is not the objective truth, but rather the psychic reality of the subject. This is also true when we are faced with a historical truth, as we do not work on the material truth but on the subjective truth of the individual who remembers and who inevitably is affected by the modifications intrinsic to the act of remembering.

The analytic truth, however, also concerns the insight, those moments when it is possible to reach an awareness and clarity that was not there before and it is possible to access to psychic areas hitherto barred. The truth is then revealed for a moment, but in general this is not enough because

immediately after it veils itself again, then it is necessary to stay a long time in this preconscious space and implement continuous movement between consciousness and the unconscious before reaching the analytic truth. Often the access to the unconscious is not an archaeological dig in search of a lost treasure, but the recognition of something that is in plain sight but nevertheless the subject cannot see, at least by itself.

That's why Erlendur loses all his resolve when he is just a step away from the truth about him, a truth that, in his heart, he already knows: he is about to give up, but he finds someone who does for him what he has done for the others, someone who helps him to find the truth.

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