HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

The Inner Exiles:

Outlaws and Scapegoating Process in *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar* and *Gísla saga Súrssonar*

Ritgerð til M.A.-prófs

Marion Poilvez

September 2011

Háskóli Íslands

Íslensku- og Menningardeild

Medieval Icelandic Studies

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Acknowledgments

This master thesis would not have been possible without a great deal of support from many people. I wish to express first my deep gratitude to Dr. Hélène Tétrel from the University of Western Brittany who granted me the possibility to come and study at the University of Iceland. My gratitude goes also to the Medieval Icelandic Studies program and the teachers who provided the linguistic, historical and literary background of this thesis: Haraldur Bernharðsson, Jóhannes Bjarni Sigtryggsson, Kolfinna Jónatansdóttir, Svanhildur Óskarsdóttir, Terry Gunnell and Viðar Pálsson. Likewise, I am depthful to the Stofnun Árna Magnússonar and its staff who welcomed me over a whole semester and gave me access to important documents needed for my researches. Many thanks go in particular to the advisor of this thesis and director of the MIS program, Dr. Torfi H. Tulinius, whose constant support, encouragments and thoughtful comments gave me both inspiration and motivation to achieve this study. A very special thanks to my collegues and dear friends, Véronique Favéro, Miriam Mayburd and Pierre de Lépinay, for providing a stimulating environment and always sharing inspired discussions. Finally, my deepest thanks to Santiago for his daily care, past and to come.

Trugarez d‘an holl.

Abstract

Was Icelandic outlawry exceptional? The legal and historical aspect of Icelandic outlawry has been widely studied and commented by scholars (Spoelstra, 1938), either by following indications from the *Grágás* or through the use of literary examples spread in the sagas (Frederic Amory, 1992). As main characters of a narrative, Grettir and Gísli were allusively compared through the theme of home and homelessness in medieval Iceland (Miller, 2004), or connected with other tales about outlaws from Europe gathered in the so-called « Matter of Greenwood » (Maurice Keen, 1987), or even supposed to belong to a large Anglo-Norse common tradition on outlaws (Joost De Lange, 1935). However, the two stories have been so far mainly discussed in connection with other tales on outlaws from Europe, but surprisingly not very often together. Grounded on historical, literary and anthropological views, this thesis will attempt to relocate the two sagas in their specific Icelandic context and underline the specific nature of the Icelandic full outlawry as well as its consequences in the narrative. While being banned from the community in continental Europe allowed a man to start a new life in another place, Icelandic outlaws were excluded from the social space of the island, yet kept inside (*oferjanði*). Why keep trouble-makers inside the enclosed space of the island instead of forcing them to leave the place definitely, as it was the case with sentences to lesser outlawry? The fact to be stuck on the island but out of the public scene leads to the creation of new original and individualized narrative spaces: the haunted wilderness for Grettir, the haunted dreams for Gísli. Through the analysis of the concepts of exile and liminality, this study defines the space the outlaw is forced to occupy (*out* and *under*) and teases out the picture of an "inner-exile", both cause and consequence of outlawry. This inner exile is revealed through a contrastive narrative process, a common structure in the two sagas. From this analysis, the theory of the scapegoat (René Girard, 1982) is discussed and will help to understand the ambiguity held towards outlaws: hunted down and feared, they are nevertheless admired by and useful for the society.

"*Men do not accept their prophets and slay them,*
but they love their martyrs and worship those
whom they have tortured to death."

Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, The Brothers Karamazov*, bk. 6, ch. 3

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1.-Introduction

1.1. The specificity of Icelandic outlawry

"Hrørnar þöll
sú er stendr þorpi á,
hlýra henni börcr né barr;
svá er maðr,
sá er mangi ann,
hvat scal hann lengi lifa?[1]

Why should he live long? This cruel but nevertheless wise rhetorical question sounds like an echo of the condition of Icelandic outlaws. In a society where social ties and solidarity were needed in order to endure the unwelcoming weather and landscape, exclusion and isolation appear as the worst punishment that man can inflict to man, even worse than death. Indeed, being excluded from the social space, the Icelandic full outlaws were still forbidden to leave the island (*oferjanði*), while other remarkable medieval outcast figures from continental Europe were not. For example, when Tristan is suspected of being improperly close to queen Yseut, he is banned from the court, but with the possibility to go away and start a new life under the protection of another lord, and wishing to be one day reintegrated.[2] On the other hand, when he is found guilty of sexual intercourse with the queen, he is directly sentenced to death with his beloved one. He succeeds in escaping and inhabits the marginal space of the forest for a time, but in the end, he achieves his goal and joins another court[3].

That very possibility is theoretically denied to the Icelandic full outlaw, and a direct death penalty only applied in few cases[4]. Other well-known outlaws (like Robin

1 *Hávamál 50:24.* All quotations from eddic poetry are taken from: Neckel, Gustav (ed.) (1962), *Edda: Der Lieder der Codex Regius nebst verwandten Denkmälern*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter, by stanza and page number

2 "...Si m'en fuirai, n'i os ester. /Bien sai que j'ai si grant prooise/ Par tote terre ou sol adoise,/ Bien sai que u monde n'a cort,/ S'i vois, li sires ne m'avot." v 201 à 210, *Tristan et Yseut* from Béroul, Christiane Marchello-Nizia (ed.), *Tristan et Yseut, les premières versions européennes*, Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1995, p.8; Translation :"I will run away, for I do not dare to stay here. I know well my reputation, by all land the sun shines on. I know well that, if I go, there will be no lord from any court in the world that will not offer me protection."

3 According to Eilhart d'Oberg, first his court in Wales, then his court in Brittany. "Tristant" in *Tristan et Yseut, les premières versions européennes,* p.329

4 Many examples are spread throughout the sagas, especially regarding acts of witchcraft. In *Gísla saga, (*19, p.60, Auðbjǫrg is stoned to death for provoking an avalanche in which several men died. All quotations from *Gísla saga* are taken from Björn Þórólfsson and Guðni Jónsson (eds.),

Hood), decide to recreate an alternative society in order to threaten the power of the authority. The same applies to Hereward, who became a national figure of resistance against the invader William the Conqueror. Some Icelandic outlaws followed that path according to the *Landnámabók* and to *Harðar Saga ok Hólmverja*[5], yet those were not the ones who attracted the most attention from the *sagamen* and their audience. The geographical and social particularities of Iceland triggered a specific way to treat outcasts, as well as a special way to narrate their life. Surviving in such a harsh natural and (un)social environment makes the story of such men *söguligr.*

1.2. Previous scholarship, sources and authorship.

The legal and historical aspect of Icelandic outlawry has been widely studied and commented by scholars[6], either by following indications from the *Grágás* or through the use of literary examples spread in the sagas[7]. Those stories have been connected with other tales about outlaws from Europe gathered in the so-called "Matter of Greenwood"[8] where outlaw tales are said to be an expression of peasant discontent. The Icelandic outlaw sagas have even been supposed to belong to a large Anglo-Norse common tradition on outlaws[9] because they share similar motifs, especially regarding the English tradition of bands of outlaws from the Robin Hood type of tales. The paradoxical position of outlaws has already been stressed[10]. They have committed real crimes, but they are nevertheless admired and supported and instead of bringing shame on them, outlawry proves their superiority. This can be said of the two main figures of Icelandic outlawry, Grettir Ásmundsson and Gísli Súrsson, which we intend to define in this study.

Vestfirðinga sögur, Íslenzk Fornrít VI, Reykjavík, Hið íslenzka fornritafélag,1943

5 On the bands of *útilegumenn* see Jakob Benediktsson (ed.), *Landnámabók*, Íslenzk Fornrít I, Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1986, Ch.S37,S43, pp.74-75,2-83. Amory, Frederic, "The medieval Icelandic outlaw : life-style, saga, and legend" in G. Palsson (ed.) *From Sagas to Society*, London, Hisarlik Press, 1992, p. 195

6 Spoelstra, Jan, *De vogelvrijen in de ijslandse letterkunde: Academisch Proefschrift,* Tjeenk Willink & Zoon, 1938, quoted by Ohlgren, Thomas H., *Medieval outlaws: twelve tales in modern English translation*, Parlor Press LLC, 2005, p294

7 See Amory, Frederic, "The medieval Icelandic outlaw: life-style, saga, and legend" in G. Palsson (ed.) *From Sagas to Society*, London, Hisarlik Press, 1992

8 Keen, Maurice, *The Outlaws of Medieval Legend*,. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 2000

9 De Lange, Joost, *The relation and Developement of English and Icelandic Outlaw Tradition.* Nederlandsche Bijdragen op het Gebied van germaansche Philologie en Linguistiek 6. Haarlem : Tjeenk Willink, 1935.

10 Benecke, Ingrid. *Der gute Outlaw : Studien zu einem literarischen Typus im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert*. Studien zur englische Philologie, NF 17. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1973.

The two stories have mainly been discussed so far in connection with other tales on outlaws from Europe, but surprisingly not very often together. For its evident folktale-like elements, *Grettis saga* has been related to as much as contrasted with the Old English *Beowulf*[11], or with the *Gesta Herwardi*[12]. On the other hand, Gísli has even been denied the status of "authentic outlaw" in a comparative study[13], based on the fact that he does not explore wild spaces as the other outlaws do. Indeed, *Grettis saga* and *Gísla saga* might seem too different to be connected beyond the factual sentence to full outlawry given to both main characters. Gísli is a noble and sociable man, trying to build social relationships as lasting and solid as his craftsmanship, while Grettir is an impetuous and bad-tempered warrior. Joost de Lange summarized the contrast in this way: "Similarly it is brought out in the Grettir-saga that one of the causes of Grettir's misfortunes lies in his own character, in contrast to the other two sagas [*Gísla saga and Harðar Saga*], which are really tragedies of circumstance"[14]. Moreover, both sagas could be even considered as "outlawed" from the *Íslendingasögur* genre; *Grettis saga* for the uncommon amount of supernatural beings and supernatural adventures and *Gísla saga* for the recurrent and contradictory dreams developed in its second part.

More recently Grettir and Gísli, as main characters of a narrative, were allusively compared through the theme of home and homelessness in medieval Iceland[15], and through the relationship between Icelandic outlaws and women[16]. Following that trend, this study is an attempt to strengthen the comparison within the Icelandic outlaw saga genre, legitimated by the bridge of intertextuality thrown between the main outlaw figures Grettir and Gísli in *Gísla saga* : "Þat kemr saman með ǫllum vitrum mǫnnum at Gísli hafi lengst allra manna í sekt gengit annar en Grettir Ásmundarson"[17]. This shows that Grettir was probably already the center of many (oral) tales when *Gísla saga* was written.

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11 Margaret Arent, "The Heroic Pattern: Old Germanic Helmets: Beowulf and Grettis saga", in *Old Norse Literature and Mythology: A Symposium*, ed. Edgar C. Polomé, Austin,1969 ; Magnús, Fjalldal, *The Long Arm of Coincidence: The Frustrated Connection Between Beowulf and Grettis Saga,* Toronto, University of Toronto Press,1998.

12 Leach, Henry, Angevin Britain and Scandinavia, Kraus Reprint Co, 1975

13 Ólafur Briem, *Útilegumenn og auðar tóttir*, Bókaútgáfa Menningarsjóðs, 1983

14 DeLange, *Op.cit.*, p.103

15 Miller, William Ian, *"*Home and Homelessness in the Middle of Nowhere*"* in Nicholas Howe *(*ed.*), Home and Homelessness in the Medieval and Renaissance World*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2004, p. 125-42.

16 Ahola, Joonas, "Outlaws, women and violence. In the social margins of saga literature." 14th International Saga Conference, August 11th 2009. Uppsala, University of Uppsala. Published in Agneta Ney, Henrik Williams and Fredrik Charpentier Ljungqvist (edd.): Á Austrvega. Saga and East Scandinavia. Gävle, Gävle University Press, 2009.

17 *Gísla saga*, ch. 22, p.70.

This intertextual comparison between the two outlaws gives the legitimation for deeper investigations of the two sagas, despite their formal differences. We will focus only on those two sagas, for Hǫrðr from *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja* seems to be a more social kind of outlaw, whereas the exclusion of Grettir and Gísli is far more extreme. According to Guðni Jónsson's standard edition[18], *Grettis saga* is a 93 chapter long saga in the genealogical style of the *Islendingasögur* with a prologue (chapters 1-13), a central biography (chapters 14-84) and an epilogue (chapters 85-93). It is preserved in several manuscripts ("Eggertsbók" AM556 A, 4to, AM150, fol., AM551 A 4to, AM152, fol., Delagardie 10, fol., Uppsala), the oldest fragment dating from the 15th century. The saga is considered one of the latest of the *Islendingasögur,* written at the beginning of the 14th century[19]. Sturla Þórðarson[20] is supposed to be the hypothetical author or at least the main source for the saga, because of the numerous statements referring to his life and sayings all along the saga[21]. But it is more likely, according to evidence from manuscripts, that the priest Hafliði Steinsson (1253-1319) from the monastery of Þingeyrar wrote the version of the saga we know [22]

Gísla saga is much more concise with only 38 chapters[23] and is considered one of the oldest *Islendingasögur* composed about AD 1200[24], even if the complete text is only preserved in the manuscript from the 15th century known as *Eggertsbók* (AM 556 a 4to, which also contains *Grettis saga* and *Harðar Saga)*. Indeed, the gathering of the three main Icelandic outlaw sagas in the *Eggertsbók* underlines the fact that they might have been seen as a sub-genre already in the late middle ages. The *Complete Sagas of*

18 All quotations from *Grettis saga* are from Guðni Jónsson, (ed.), *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar, Bandamanna saga, Odds þáttr Ófeigssonar*, Íslenzk fornrit 7, Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1936.

19 *Grettis Saga,* prologue*,* pp. lxix-lxx. ; c.1320 for Anthony Faulkes, *Three Icelandic Outlaw Saga, "The Saga of Gísli", "The Saga of Grettir", "The Saga of Hord",* Viking Society for Northern Research, University College London, 2004, px.

20 Sturla Þórðarson (1214–1284) was an Icelandic chieftain and author of sagas and contemporary history during the 13th century involved in the political struggles of his time. He was the nephew of saga-writer Snorri Sturluson. He is the author of the large *Íslendinga saga* (*Sturlunga saga, Hákonar saga Hákonarsonar*) and supposed to have written *Sturlubók*, a transcript of the *Landnamabók.* He is often referred as Sturla lǫgmaðr, as in Grettis saga, for he held the position of lawspeaker in Iceland after the dissolution of the Icelandic Commonwealth.

21 Three mentions are made."...þat spjót fannsk á ofanverðum dǫgum Sturlu lǫgmanns Þórðarsonar", ch. 49, p157,"... at því sem Sturla Þórðarson hefir sagt." ch. 69, p. 226,"Hefir Sturla lǫgmaðr svá sagt...» ch. 93, p. 289. Those statements are not found elsewhere according to Anthony Faulkes, *Op.cit.,* pxii

22 *Grettis Saga,* prologue, pp. lxxii-lxxv.

23 There are two versions of *Gísla saga* preserved and used nowadays side by side. A longer version, called L, is defective, and a shorter version, called S, is complete and generally preferred for studies, even though the longer one is thought to be closer to a lost and hypothetical original version. For the current study, we will mainly use the shorter version normally used by scholars, but we also took the longer one in consideration.

24 DeLange, *Op.cit.,* p.88, c.1230 for Anthony Faulkes, *Op.cit*., px

Icelanders[25] agreed with that classification and gathered them in the "Outlaws and Nature Spirits" section.

We also have to bear in mind a double context for our study: the time of writing and the time of the narrative both imply different social problematics. *Grettis saga* goes from 860 to 1047 for the whole saga and from 996 to 1031 (according to Guðni Jónsson ´s chronology[26]) for the life-time of Grettir. On the other hand, *Gísla saga* takes place during the first generations of the settlement of Iceland, from Gísli´s arrival in 964 to his death in 977. By crossing references from other sagas, we can deduce that the temporal spectrum is only 27 years[27] for *Gísla saga*, but almost a century for *Grettis saga*. Therefore, the time of action of both sagas stand at opposite extremes of the *söguöld*, with the Conversion at the turn of the millennium standing between.

1.3 Problematic

Beyond the aforementioned apparent differences of style and characters, we argue that the same specificity, connected to the Icelandic landscape, underlies their outlawry. While being banned from the community in continental Europe allowed a man to start a new life in another place, Icelandic outlaws were at the same time excluded from the social life of the island yet kept inside. This specificity triggers our main question: Why keep trouble-makers inside the enclosed space of the island instead of forcing them to leave the place definitely, as it was the case with sentences to lesser outlawry? Why not ban them from the island or give them a swiftand permanent punishment by the death penalty? Snorri goði grasped the contradiction and expressed it during Grettir's trial: "Vili þér nú, Hrútfirðingar," sagði hann, "at niðr falli fégjald þetta, ok verði Grettir sykn, því at ek ætla, at hann verði sárbeittr í sekðinni?" […] Snorri kvað þetta óvitrligt, at bekkjask til at hafa þann mann í sekðum, er svá miklu illu mætti orka, ok kvað þess margan gjalda mundu."[28]. What was the function of this apparent contradiction?

In order to answer these questions we will begin by defining the medieval

25 This is the edition we will use for translations into English. Viðar Hreinsson, *The Complete Sagas of Icelanders: including 49 tales, vol.II,* Leifur Eiríksson Pub., 1997

26 *Grettis Saga,* Tímatal, pp. lxvii-lxviii.

27 The birth of Þorgrímr, later called Snorri the goði, is related in *Gísla saga* ch.18, p. 57-58 and *Eyrbyggja saga* chapter 12, pp. 19-20. See Einar Ól. Sveinsson and Matthías Þórðarson (eds.), *Eyrbyggja Saga*, Íslenzk fornrit 4, Reykjavík: Hið Íslenzka Fornritafélag, 1935.

28 *Grettis Saga*, ch. 51, p. 164-165

Icelandic outlawry and its links to the concepts of exile and liminality. Those preliminary definitions will help to understand the condition of the outlaw in a specific Icelandic context, in order to throw light on the spaces of outlawry generated through the narrative. Our aim is to tease out the picture of an "Inner-exile", which is at the same time geographical and spiritual. A systematic look at the relationships between the outlaw and his society, before and after the outlawry condemnation, will then reveal a contrastive narrative process, which is a structure common to both sagas. The contrastive narrative analysis will support the idea of a strong process of individualization which will be the very first clue serving the possible scapegoating process in the two sagas. This analysis will finally conclude with an anachronistic picture of the outlaw figure excluded from its time in *Gísla saga* and *Grettis saga* and the definition of a particular kind of outlaw: the sacrificial outlaw.

2.-Exile, liminality and outlawry

2.1 Definitions of exiles

Some preliminary definitions are needed in order to use properly several concepts along this study. Exile has been historically a procedure which removed trouble-makers or punished for a time men who did not respect the established authority. For example, the Frankish word **bannjan* referred to a legal condemnation which forbade a man to stay in his country for a certain number of years. This Germanic root stayed in modern French language as well as in English in the words "bannissement/banishment" or "abandon". The so-called *Friedlosigkeit* ("loss of peace")[29] -meant as a legal exclusion caused by treason- is said to be the most fundamental Germanic legal punitive concept[30].

In the Mediterranean, the Romans were using the *proscriptio* which originally meant the display on the *forum* of a debtor's valuables for sale, and later was expanded to mean expulsion from society. This was mainly used against political opponents[31]. In Ancient Greece there were two kinds of legal exiles. The *atimia* implied withdrawing the rights of a citizen, and therefore he was no more able to defend himself legally in a court (which in practice meant that anything could be done to him without reparation). On the other hand, *ostracism* was the expulsion from the city of Athens for ten years, but the citizen preserved his rights during the whole time. In Classical civilizations, exile aimed then either to forbid a delimited territory for the exile, to withdraw legal rights, or both.

Regarding the Icelandic context, the English word "outlawry" seems to be semantically adequate because "Outlawry" is a Scandinavian loan-word from *utlaga*[32] with the same literal meaning of being out-of-the-law. In the context of the Middle Ages, practices of separation from society were often used by the Church, either as an

29 Zaremska, Hanna, *Les bannis au Moyen Age,* Paris*,* Aubier Collection historique,, 1996, p. 34, Laura Napran, "Exile in Context" in *Exile in the Middle Ages. Selected Proceedings from the International Medieval Congress*, University of Leeds, 8–11 July 2002 (International Medieval Research, 13.) Turnhout: Brepols, p. 4

30 Van Houts, Elisabeth, "The Vocabulary of Exile and Outlawry in the North Sea Area around the First Millennium" in NAPRAN L. and E. van HOUTS (eds), Exile in the Middle Ages. Selected Proceedings from the International Medieval Congress University of Leeds, 8–11 July 2002, Turnhout: Brepols p. 13

31 Zaremska, *op.cit*., p. 32

32 "The word outlawry, as is well known, is a Scandinavian loanword deriving from *utlaga*, meaning "outside the law". Van Houts, *op.cit.*, p. 13

exclusion from the law of God (excommunication) or a voluntary reclusion from the secular world (monasticism)[33]. Then exile (from latin *exilium*-banishment) can be forced, as by condemnation, and at the same time the situation of a person living elsewhere than where he used to or would like to. The exile is at the same time the situation, the place and the person. From forced to voluntary, this legal and often geographical fact opens wide perspectives in works of literature: wanderings, exploration, loneliness or even creativity. From a literary point of view, Ovid -exiled in Tomis on the Black Sea by authoritarian decision made by Augustus-, can be considered as the father of the self-consciousness of exile in literature, for he was among the first ones to express the consequences of exile on a man in *Tristia* and *Epistulae ex Ponto*.

2.2 Exile in the sagas

Exile is a constant thematic element in the saga corpus and can take different shapes in the narrative. Most of the sagas from the *Islendingasögur* genre have as a prologue a story about an exile. The first actions depicted in many sagas are about how and why the first settlers left Norway for Iceland. Both *Grettis* saga and *Gísla saga* agree that King Haraldr fairhair[34] was held responsible at the time for the massive departures *fyrir vestan haf*[35]. Even if historically speaking those departures had less clear-cut causes, the narrative stresses that specific reason. The same applies to *Egils saga*[36], *Eyrbyggja saga*[37] and *Laxdœla saga*[38]. Moreover, in *Grettis saga* the word "utlaga"[39] is even used to refer to those who resisted Haraldr. The consequences in the narrative are clear. The "outlawry" from Norway is at the origin of the new Icelandic society. But beyond the settlement itself, the consequences of this move on the exiled figure are barely expressed in the saga, with an exception *in Grettis saga*, where Grettir's ancestor expresses his discontent upon his arrival in Iceland by means of a verse[40]. The beginning of a new life, freed from a growing oppression in Norway, and

33 Napran, "Exile in Context", *op.cit.*, p. 2-3
34 Haraldr, first king of Norway between 872 and 931 AD.
35 Vocabulary is taken from Cleasby, Richard, and Gudbrandur Vigfússon, *An Icelandic-English Dictionary*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 187, "Ver ". This meant first the British Islands, and then as an extension Iceland.
36 *Egils saga*, ch. 26
37 *Eyrbyggja saga*, ch.3, pp. 6-7
38 *Laxdœla saga*, ch.2
39 "...því at hann gerði alla útlæga....» *Grettis saga*, ch. 3, p.6
40 "Réttum gengr, en ranga/ rinnr sæfarinn, ævi,/ fákr, um fold ok ríki/ fleinhvessanda þessum;/ hefk lǫnd ok fjǫlð frænda/ flýt, en hitt es nýjast,/ krǫpp eru kaup, ef hreppik/Kaldbak, en ek læt akra", *Grettis Saga*, ch. 9, p.22.

ownership of a brand new land are in general perceived as a positive consequence.

After these preliminary chapters, another exile appears as a recurrent motif in the saga corpus. In the first days of adult life, the time comes for young men to show their potential. For that purpose, they often decide to go abroad. We can refer for example to the young Kjartan in *Laxdœla saga* who says "I have set my mind on going abroad," and delays his marriage with Guðrún, the promising woman of the district, despite her opinion on the matter[41]. Glúmr from *Víga-Glúms saga* states openly the reason behind that voluntary exile: "Glúmr segir móðr sinni að hann vill utan ráðast: "Sé ek at þroski minn vill engi verða en þat má vera at ek hljóti gæfu af gǫfgum frændum mínum […] Þá var Glúmr fimmtán vetra er hann fýstist útan."[42] Snorri goði utters the same demand, as much as Grettir and Gísli[43]. They want to accomplish what we may call a "rite of passage" by a trans-generational return to Norway. The language kept that dependence on the "native" country by using the adverb *útan*, literally "from the outside" when talking about traveling to Norway. This voluntary and positive departure was an *initiatic* exile, a symbolic transition from young man to accomplished man. This move was almost socially mandatory. By contrast, a man who stayed at home was *heimskr*, which has the second meaning of "idiot"[44].

The anthropologist Arnold Van Gennep defined what a "rite of passage" is. The rite is connected to any change of place, state, social status and age. Each rite of passage is made of preliminal rites (separation), liminal rites (transition) and postliminal rites (incorporation)[45]. In Iceland, in the time of separation, the young man asks help from his parents, and could be given symbolic objects such as a sword or practical ones like a boat, in order to be prepared for his trip. Later, the liminal state shows a change of status (which ranges from being integrated to the *hirð* of the Norwegian king to being under-estimated abroad[46]). Finally, they always want to return to Iceland. They often do, and possess more valuables and glory than before[47]. Logically, that time of transition needs

41 *Laxdœla saga*, ch. 40.

42 *Viga-Glúms saga*, ch.5

43 "Við þetta urðu glaðir margir ungir menn ok fýstusk til útanferðan. Ok svá sem Grettir spurði þessi tíðendi, gerðisk honum hugr á at sigla..." *Grettis saga*, ch. 37, p. 125; *Gísla saga* from ch. 7 to 8, p.27-29.

44 "People always suspected that the risk of too much home was a kind of childish idiocy. In Old Norse the word for foolish is *heimskr.* There are proverbs to that effect : *heimskt er hemalit barn* : the home-bred child is an idiot.". Miller, *op.cit.*, p. 135.

45 Van Gennep, Arnold, *The Rites of Passage,* London, Routledge, 1960, p.11.

46 See *Eyjólfr* in *Viga-Glúms saga*, ch.3, who is insulted for being an Icelander and considered slow, before showing what he is capable of.

47 We can point out the return of Kjartan with very rich goods and specially the headdress which will be a matter of dispute between his bride and Gúðrun, *Laxdœla saga*, ch. 45-46

to be dedicated to some activities related to business or to achieve glorious deeds. They often go together in the "viking way of life". This stage might be also be an opportunity to rehabilitate a family at the Norwegian court[48], but it is mainly an opportunity for the figure of the *kolbítr* (like Glúmr, Egill or Grettir) to leave a tense situation at home[49].

Any kind of exile involves a wish of return, either factual or symbolic[50]. A large part of the *Íslendingasögur* corpus ends on an exile too, a religious one, performed through pilgrimage[51] or definitive auto-exclusion from the secular world[52], as in *Grettis saga*'s epilogue, the *Spesar þáttr.* On their own behalf, Þorsteinn and Spes decide to go to Rome and finally leave their possessions to build individual cells where they will pray for their union after life[53]. As a consequence, exile in the sagas is generally depicted positively and gives a rythm to the narrative. Moreover, the regular exiles and meetings with historical key-figures like King Haraldr, Jarl Sveinn, King Eirikr or Oláfr gives to the audience the tools to trace a precise chronology the narrative is not giving, and makes the reader able to judge the accuracy of the author. Positive exiles in the sagas can thus be said to be liminal and transitory, means of social or spiritual progression.

The "evil twin" of exile is condemnation. It is a negative type of exile, for it is used as a punishment against a member of the society who failed to follow its basic rules. On that aspect, we might refer to the legal system in Iceland. The laws were written down around 1116[54], and gathered later on in the *Grágás*[55], the "Grey Goose", preserved in the manuscripts *Konungsbók* and the *Staðarhólsbók*, both supposed to be written in the second half of the 13th century[56].

In the laws, exile as a condemnation is referred to in two different shapes. The

48 *Egils saga*, ch. 35, Þorólfr, son of Grímr, tries to repair the mistakes of his grand-father and is enrolled in Eiríkr's guard.

49 "... en ek nenni eigi at þola ágang Sigmundi en ek sé mig enn vanfæran í mót honum.". *Víga-Glúms saga*, ch.5

50 "Jusque dans la nostalgie et le malheur, l'exil reste dynamique. Il se double de l'image du voyage. Il implique l'espoir, ne fût-ce que minimal, du changement, du retour ou de l'utopie. "; Petruta Spanu, *Exil et littérature,* Acta Iassyensia compationis 2005, p.165.

51 *Gísla saga,* ch.38, p. 117; Also in *Njáls saga*, ch. 159, pp. 462-464. See Einar Ol. Sveinsson (ed.), *Brennu-Njáls saga*, Íslenzk fornrit 12, Reykjavík: Hið íslenzka fornritafélag, 1954

52 *Laxdœla saga* ch. 78., *Grettis saga*, ch. 92, p. 289

53 "...skilðu þau sína stundliga samvist at sjálfráði sínu, at þau mætti því heldr njótandi verða eilífrar samvistu annars heims**"**. *Grettis saga*, ch. 92., p. 289

54 Van Houts,*op.cit.*, p 21 -22

55 *Laws of Early Iceland: Grágás I & II* Translated and Edited by Andrew Dennis, Peter Foote and Richard Perkins, The University of Manitoba Press, 2007.

56 Gudmund Sandvik and Jón Viðar Sigurðsson,"Laws" in Rory McTurk, *A Companion to Old Norse Literature and Culture*, London, Blackwell, 2005, p. 225.

first one is a three years exile, called *fjörbaugsgarðr*[57]. Like for the Greek ostracism, the *fjorbaugsmaðr* preserves his rights, but has to leave the island for a time and move regularly. For example, Grettir is *sekr* (sentenced*)* to lesser outlawry when he kills Skeggi on the way to the assembly and sent *útan*. In theory, exile as a rite of passage as we described earlier and the lesser outlawry are totally different, but in practice there is not such a large difference. In both cases, the man is leaving Iceland for Norway where he is totally free of his actions. He does some business or joins the court of the Norwegian king and accomplishes some deeds, waiting to be reintegrated and be given back his status. It follows the same pattern of a rite of passage: separation-liminality-reintegration. Their main difference is in the sphere they belong to. One is mandatory by law, the other promoted by social norm. Literarily, Greenland owes its discovery to the Icelandic lesser outlawry, for this gives Eírikr the Red the opportunity to discover and settle the place[58]. On that matter, lesser outlawry looks very similar to the *ius exilii* of the Roman Republic, which was a privilege of the Roman citizen to leave the capital before the condemnation was made official. Outside the capital, he was free to circulate. The lesser outlawry then appears more like a way to re-educate a bad-tempered man, pushing him away for a time, and giving him the opportunity to make some accomplishments that will transform him into a better member of society.

All the different kinds of exiles we have described so far have one aspect in common: the possibility of return. But for important crimes, mainly murder(s), the condemnation was stronger and definitive: an exile *ad vitam æternam* from the social space called *skóggangr* (literally "going-by-the-forest"). The *skógarmaðr* (man-of-the-forest) is made by law a total stranger to his own society. He becomes *óæll* (cannot be given food), *óferjanði* (cannot be transported by boat, which means that he cannot leave the island) and *dræpr fyrir hverjum manni* (that anyone can kill without legal consequences)[59]. The step from lesser outlawry to full outlawry is not only a change of degree, but a radical change in nature. The horizon of possibilities is growing smaller. The full outlaw is expelled from the law and the places where the law is ruling, which means the settled spaces, but not from the island, and has then to occupy marginal spaces with no apparent possibility of return. The full outlaw seems then to be trapped in a constant liminal status. His situation is helpless: any person who will help the

57 *Fjörbaugr* is a fee paid in compensation, and *garðr* a fence : "within a fixed space (*garðr*), the convict was safe, having paid the life-money".

58 *Eiríks saga rauda,* ch.2.

59 Turville-Petre, Gabriel, "Outlawry" in *Sjötíu ritgerðir*, Reykjavík, Stofun Arna Magnussonar, 1977 p.770.

outlaw will be outlawed himself[60]. Though they have been expelled from social life, they are not dead yet, and as a consequence they still have the needs of any human being. In difficult times, standards are logically lowered and reduced to basic needs: food, shelter, personal safety and -if possible- company.

The first action of Grettir as a full outlaw is to steal a horse before systematically performing robberies with one main target: food[61]. But the only way to fulfill those needs is to steal and occupy lands illegally, which is forcing the outlaw into a vicious circle of crimes from which he cannot escape. Being out-of-the-law, those deeds cannot be strictly labeled as "crimes", but they are still seen as a transgression of social norms. Indeed, Grettir (already a full outlaw) is asking Skapti lǫgmaðr for protection, and is rejected: "Þat er mér sagt, at þú farir heldr óspakliga ok grípir fyrir mǫnnum góz sitt, ok samir þér þat illa, svá stórættuðum manni. Nú væri allt betra um at tala, ef þú ræntir eigi;"[62]. His answer reveals a contradiction: how can Grettir stop robbing, for he is no longer a member of the society yet he is still in need for food, clothes and tools to survive? By this device, they are forced to stay in a liminal status. On the other hand, Gísli is never mentioned as a robber during his outlawry, for he does not need to be one: he stays safe under the protection of his wife Auðr. However, it is highly probable that he -as an historical person- had to rob or commit some felony at some point during his successive moves, but the narrative chooses not to record it.

Moreover the need for company (which is an important issue in both *Grettis saga* and *Gísla saga*) is hardly fulfilled, for the law tries to make impossible any solidarity between outlaws. Indeed, an outlaw can free himself by killing another outlaw[63], and this is exactly what Grettir's fellows, who are themselves outlawed, hope for by betraying Grettir and attempting to his life. On different levels, everything seems to be done to prevent the outlaw from escaping the margins. Full outlawry appears to be "virtually a death penalty"[64], but figures like Grettir and Gísli succeed at survival. Nevertheless, their exceptional longevity leaves them stuck in liminality.

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60 Grettir is asking for help from Skapti lǫgmaðr, but he refuses: "...þá stendr mér eigi at taka við útlegðarmǫnnum ok brjóta svá lǫgin." *Grettis Sag*a, ch. 54, p. 178

61 See *Grettis saga*, Ch. 47, 52, 54, 60. The need for shelter and safety is submitted to the need for food, as Grettir has often to abandon his shelter and safety to fulfill it.

62 *Grettis saga*, ch. 54, pp. 177-178.

63 Frederic Amory, *op. cit.,* p. 94

64 "Lesser outlawry meant confiscation of property, dealt with by a confiscation court held at the outlaw's home, and exile for three years but with temporary rights of residence and passage – reasonable arrangements in a remote island with unreliable sea traffic. Full outlawry meant loss of all goods through a confiscation court, loss of all status, and denial of all assistance – virtually a death penalty." *Laws of Early Iceland, Grágás, I,* Introduction, p.7-8.

The liminality is not only in the places the outlaws have to occupy, but in the names they are given as well. If we refer to the vocabulary used to name outlaws, we can say that, being out of the law, they are no more human, and outlawry change their ontological status. In Old Norse, the same word, *vargr*, was used to designate both an actual wolf and an outlaw in the legal vocabulary[65]. Grettir is called by this name while settling in Drangey: "Sogðu þeir heraðsmǫnnum, hverr **vargr** kominn var í eyna"[66]. The word comes from the proto-Germanic **wargaz*, which is used with the shape "wargus" as early as in the *Pactus Legis Salica*[67] (507-511). There is then a common cultural trait between the Germanic and Norse culture to equate an outcast with a wolf. The wild outlaw is even considered unholy through the expression *vargr í veum ("A wolf in the sacred space"),* or the adjective *oheilagr*. Living in wild places, they are then assimilated to the creatures living in those places (real ones or supernatural ones), like the wolf. This image fits with the situation: the banishment inside an island takes the shape of a hunt-to-death and outlaws are hunted down like wild beasts. An outlaw might be called as well *urðarmadr*[68], or more formally *skógarmaðr*[69], which both keep the association with wilderness, even if in practice the outlaw is not really living in the depths of a wild forest (as it was not truly possible in Iceland). The image of the wolf might come from the scary aspects and the crimes he is committing to live, and the fact that he is living in the wilderness, a margin the outlaw is joining. It might be connected to the fact that the wolf was considered an enemy of justice on a mythological level, with the myth of Týr and Fenrir, compiled in the *Edda*[70]. Týr, god of justice, has the monstrous wolf Fenrir, son of Loki, as an antagonist. In the well-known myth, Týr struggles to find the proper way to tie him in order to control him. To succeed, he is

65 "a law phrase, metaph. *an outlaw,* who is to be hunted down as a wolf, esp. used of one who commits a crime in a holy place, and is thereon declared accursed ", according to Cleasby "*Varg*(r): 1. Wolf (…); 2. Thief, Robber, Miscreant (…) 3. Outlaw ", Zœga.

66 *Grettis saga,* ch. 56, p. 229.

67 Zaremska, *op. cit,* p.36.

68 "An outlaw was outside the bounds of society, a nonperson. Some terms for outlaw denote non-human status by equating the individual with a wild animal. The word *vargr* means both wolf and outlaw. *Skogarmaðr* ('forest man") and *urðarmaðr* ("man of the wilds") are words for outlaws that refer to their hideouts in the wilderness, far from human habitations, but also point up their likeness to wild beasts.", Byock, Jesse, “Outlawry”, in *Medieval Scandinavia: An Encyclopedia*. (New York and London, 1993), Phillip Pulsiano and Kirsten Wolf, ed. Paul Acker and Donald K. Fry. Garland Encyclopedias of the Middle Ages I. New York: Garland,1993.

69 "Skógarmanninn" is used while he is on the island of Drangey with no forest or trees around. Grettis saga ch. 82, p258; other mentions : "er ok meira fé lagt til hǫfuðs honum en nǫkkurum ǫðrum skógarmanni" ch. 59 p189;"...ok látum skógarmanninn þat sjá..." and "Hér er mér sagt til skógarmannsins upp í tindunum þessum" p.190.

70 *Gylfaginning.34,* in Faulkes, Anthony (ed.), *Edda: Prologue and Gylfagnnning*, London, Viking Society for Northern Research, 2005

bound to sacrifice his right hand. Later Fenrir will be one of the chaotic forces of destruction during the *Ragnarök*. Without surprises, the outlaw can be considered as a potential chaotic figure, as Fenrir is. Those semantic aspects of outlawry then reveal, from a legal and geographic liminality, that the status of the outlaw is ontologically liminal as well.

2.3 Flexibility and literature

We must however bear in mind that the Icelandic context is specific and there is a gap between the law-books preserved and the practices embodied in the sagas. First of all the *Grágás*, even if precious as a historical testimony of what were the laws of medieval Iceland, are a collection of laws and not strictly a code. As a result some provisions might be in conflict with others, as the laws were never written down at that time but recited by law-speakers at the assemblies (*þing*) every year and were subject to regular reform. Then, private settlements and conciliations (*bót*) were privileged, often with the help of trusted figures (often prominent in sagas, like Snorri goði or Njáll). Lawsuits were only the second option in case of failure of private settlement. In case of lawsuits, the annual assembly (*Alþing*) was in charge of the debates. Unlike Norway, where the king is described as taking decisions on his own authority (three examples in the sole *Grettis saga:* in chapter 19 the king outlawed two *berserkir*, and in chapter 14 and 19 two different kings outlawed Grettir from Norway), the Icelandic condemnation to lesser or full outlawry is a collective decision.

As a consequence of the non-hierarchic social system that ruled Icelandic society during the saga-time and the lack of penal executive power, the law was a large matter of private interest. The prime example of the deep interest of the Icelandic society in legal matters is the long debate on procedure held in the end of *Njáls saga*, from chapter 142 to 145, which results in a bloody fight. But that system has as a consequence to make the law flexible and dependent on the context and emphasizes the importance of the persons willing to defend or to accuse. Both Grettir and Gísli's outlawries are said to result from a bad procedure or bad defense from their relatives[71]. Skapti the lǫgmaðr tried to stick to the law, saying that with no defense, Grettir cannot be outlawed[72].

71 *Gísla saga*, ch. 21, p. 67; *Grettis saga*, ch.46, p.146. Moreover, Grettir has no one to defend him: his father died and his brother just got killed in the previous chapter.

72 *Grettis saga,* ch. 46, pp. 46-147.

Grettir is nevertheless sentenced to outlawry because of the power held by the accusers[73], as is Gísli. But at the end of the saga[74], Grettir's performance of surviving to the prescription of his penalty was judged so exceptional that he retrieved the possibility of escaping his liminal status of outlaw. The *lǫgmaðr* decides that no one should be longer in outlawry than twenty years in all[75]. Unfortunately, Grettir dies the year before, after nineteen years of wanderings. It is impossible to know if this legal debate ever happened or if it is an invention of the author to add to the dramatic dimension of Grettir's life.[76]

Nevertheless, it shows that what has been preserved of the law and what is happening in the sagas is not the same, for they have different purposes. The full outlawry and the fact that outlaws could be killed without any consequences for the slayer, shows a primary and practical function of the full outlawry: to stop the endless vicious circle of revenge and retaliation. Yet, both Grettir and Gísli are avenged by a member of their family[77].

Another example of literary adaptation is the case of Þorbjǫrn, Grettir's killer. He is outlawed from Iceland as long as Grettir's relatives are still alive, so it is a long-term outlawry but with a (small) possibility of coming back one day. This gives the possibility to narrate the epilogue of *Grettis saga*, the so-called *Spesar þáttr*. Narrative is not submitted to the laws as historical facts, but can stretch them and adapt to serve the narrative.

This is what we suppose to have happened in the two outlaw sagas, for Grettir and Gísli are often helped, or Grettir buried in a church when he is not supposed to, or both are avenged (but not on the Icelandic territory). The law is giving the condemnation, but its flexibility in practical application gives works of literature such as *Grettis saga* and *Gísla saga* the possibility to explore the consequences of exile on individuals, on their relatives and on a whole society.

73 "Þórir var maðr héraðsríkr ok hǫfðingi mikill, en vinsæll af mǫrgu stórmenni; gekk hann at svá fast, at engu kom við um sykn Grettis. Gerði Þórir Gretti þá sekjan um allt landit ok var honum síðan þyngstr allra sinna mótstǫðumanna, sem opt bar raun á. Hann lagði þá fé til hǫfuðs honum sem ǫðrum skógarmǫnnum ok reið við þat heim. Margir mæltu, at þetta væri meir gǫrt af kappi en eptir lǫgum, en þó stóð svá búit." *Grettis saga*, ch. 46, p. 147

74 "Þetta sumar á alþingi tǫluðu frændr Grettis mart um sekð hans, ok þótti sumum, sem hann hefði úti sekð sína, ef hann hefði nǫkkut af inu tuttugasta ári;" *Grettis saga,* ch. 77, p244-245

75 "Þá sagði lǫgmaðr, at engi skyldi lengr í sekð vera en tuttugu vetr alls, þó at hann gerði útlegðarverk á þeim tímum..." *Grettis saga*, ch. 77, pp244-245

76 "Hvergi er heldur í lögunum gert ráð fyrir því, að skógarmenn gætu losnað úr sekt eftir ákveðinn árafjölda, og auðvitað hafði lögsögumaður ekki vald til þess að úrskurða um sektartímann upp á sitt eindæmi. Frásögnin um Gretti hlýtur því, ef sönn er, að byggjast á sérstakri undantekningu." Guðni Jónsson in *Grettis saga*, note 2, p. 245.

77 *Grettis saga* ch. 86, pp.271-274; *Gísla saga,* ch. 38, pp.117-118.

3.- Narrative spaces of outlawry : from geographical exile to inner-exile

One of the consequences of a non-voluntary exile is wandering. Unlike exile as a rite of passage or the very similar situation of lesser outlawry, the full outlaw has no goal except trying to survive for some more time. As has already been said, his needs are basic, and as a consequence his movements are connected with them. To quote Dillman about magicians in medieval Iceland, the outlaw inhabits "impossible places" ("lieux impossibles"[78]). The outlaw is excluded from the social space, which means he cannot share the same space with "standard" members of the society. He becomes "out of sight", out of what Joonas Ahola calls the "public", or Kirsten Hastrup the "inside".

Then we might ask: Where is he going? Which spaces are generated through the narrative in order to compensate the lack of sociability and how to interpret them? Even if Grettir and Gísli are both condemned to full outlawry, they react to it in very different ways. In the following, I will analyse the different but connected wanderings in *Grettis saga* and *Gísla saga* in order to find a common structure. This will lead to an analysis of repetition in the narrative, which I believe can be interpreted as hauntings. Finally, a study of the behaviour of this outlaw inside the new narrative spaces will conclude on a transposition of their legal and spatial exile to an inner exile.

3.1 Wilderness and the supernatural in *Grettis saga*

"...vera varð ek nokkur"[79] Grettir

Societies have different ways of dealing with their criminals. Some send them to specific places made for the sentenced: prisons, working camps or galleys. Those places are dedicated to them. But in Iceland, those who have been sentenced do not have a specific place to go. They are sent to what is the antithesis of the society. They are sent to a "non-place ".

In the early years of his outlawry, Grettir seems to move according to the potential protection some of his relatives might be willing to offer him. From chapter 47

78 *La sorcière* by Jules Michelet, quoted by Dillmann, François-Xavier *Les magiciens dans l'Islande ancienne*, Uppsala, Kungliga Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur, 2006, p. 406.
79 *Grettis saga*, ch. 52, p.169.

to 53 he is moving from his mother's place to other possible helpers: Grímr, Snorri goði, Þorgils, Þorbjǫrn and Þorsteinn. But the help they are willing to offer decreases quickly: "...leitaði til margra gǫfugra manna, ok bar jafnan eitthvert við, þat er engi tók við honum."[80] Each of them sends Grettir to someone else, for none of them is powerful enough to endure the risks of giving him shelter for a long time. Logically, Grettir carefully "fór lítt með byggðum."[81] Thanks to his ancestors and fame, he is able to find temporary shelter[82]. The social network of an Icelandic man is therefore not only useful during the trial to avoid condemnation or to accuse, but as well in the wanderings after the sentence, when the stronger supporters reveal themselves.

As a result, Grettir is quickly forced to inhabit other spaces. He is progressively going deeper in marginal ones. He stays first in a *sel*[83], a remote shed used by shepherds in the summer, but quickly moves to the woods ("ok lá þar í skógum"), as he supposes that the marginality of the place would guarantee security ("...ok svaf ok uggði ekki at sér."). The deserted aspect of the asocial margins, regardless of the discomfort, provides security to the outlaw. Grettir then occupies places of temporary passage like roads[84], and afterwards caves (*helli stóran*[85]) or what can be transformed in a stronghold (*vígi*[86]) on the edge of a mountain.

Once Grettir finds a place to stay, he needs to adapt to it, and to make the place suitable for his stay because those areas are usually not meant to be inhabited. Björn, a *bóndi*, gives him precious advice to go to the mountain "...ok þó fylgsni, ef klókliga er um búit."[87] Grettir needs to call upon his crafting skills in order to live in those remote but safe places. The transformation of the natural landscape can be interpreted as a way to take possession of the margin and humanize it. Grettir also looks sporadically for shelter in actual houses among other people, but slowly decides to live completely on his own. This can be thought as the mark of a strong will to achieve more independence from the social space, for the margins only exist by referring to the center. This tendency becomes clear when Grettir decides to cease robbing after his bad experience

80 *Grettis saga*, ch. 52, p. 172.
81 *Grettis saga*, ch. 53 p. 174.
82 "Þórhallr kenndisk við Gretti sakar forellra sinna, ok þá var Grettir nafnkunnigr mjǫk um allt land af atgorvi (o barre) sinni." *Grettis saga*, ch. 53 p. 174.
83 *"ok fór þar til sels" Grettis saga*, ch. 52, p. 166 ; translated by "shieling" in *The Complete Sagas of Icelanders,* p. 129.
84 *Grettis saga,* ch. 54, p. 175.
85 *Grettis saga* ch. 57, p. 184.
86 *Grettis saga* ch. 58, p. 186.
87 *Grettis saga* ch. 58, p. 186.

with a group of *bœndr*[88], builds himself a hut and catches his food by his own means: "Grettir fór upp á Arnarvatnsheiði ok gerði sér þar skála, sem enn sér merki, ok bjósk þar um, því at hann vildi nú hvatvetna annat en ræna, fekk sér net ok bát ok veiddi fiska til matar sér."[89] The repetition of the reflexive "sér" (three times) concerning the hut (for himself), the net (to take for himself) and the fish (to kill for himself) underlines the fact that Grettir wants to be rid of his dependence on society and own the new space assigned to him. For that purpose, he has to tame the natural environment (caves or the cold winters) and exploit its potentialities for the production of vital resources.

Yet, complete independence is impossible. He is able to take possession of marginal places thanks to deals made with the nearest person in charge. For example,in chapter 52, Grettir is attacked by a band of farmers he was robbing from and saved by Þorbjǫrg[90], a powerful woman of the area, under one condition: ""Þú skalt vinna eið", sagði hon, "at gera engar óspekðir hér um Ísafjǫrð; engum skaltu hefna, þeim sem í atfǫr hafa verit at taka þik.""[91]. Some characters seem to prefer to cohabit with the outlaws rather than to create tensions with them. Later on in *Grettis saga*, Bjǫrn, another *bóndi*, refers to the law and reminds Grettir that "...hann ætti svá sǫkótt um allt land, at menn myndi forðask bjargir við hann um þat, er sekð nemr;". Here again we have an example of the gap between the law and the practices depicted in the sagas, because Bjǫrn offers right away a deal to Grettir: "en heldr skal ek þér gagn gera, ef þú lætr þá menn vera í friði, sem í minni vernd eru, hversu sem þú gerir við aðra menn hér í byggð.""[92]. The deal with the outlaw is in first place made in order to avoid damages in the district (robberies, devastation or even murders) and second to use the potential threat he represents against others. From the margins, an outlaw might then have a strategical function for those who inhabit the "inside". At the same time, using him from the margins provides them an easy way to avoid suits: they can indirectly commit illegal actions through the outlaw without being charged.

This way, Grettir begins to learn how to survive as an outlaw (which might be the key of his longevity) and to try to keep good relationships with the neighbors for he "átti jafnan vingott við þá, sen næstir honum váru."[93], something he failed to achieve when he was living in the same space. As a consequence, Grettir is not earning a full

88 *Grettis saga* ch. 52, p. 168.
89 *Grettis saga* ch. 55, p. 178.
90 On the relationships between outlaws and women, see Joonas Ahola*, op.cit.*
91 *Grettis saga* ch. 52, p. 169.
92 *Grettis saga* ch. 58, p. 186.
93 *Grettis saga*, ch. 58, p. 188

independence, but at least a division of space, a "contract of cohabitation". This leaves him in a relative peace in the wild margins, while it still allows him some sporadic incursions into the social "inside" to spend some cold nights inside a warm house.

Therefore the margin is not only a"non-place" in opposition to the social space. The outcast "belongs to the space beyond the social space"[94]. What is social is human, and as a consequence what is beyond the social space is beyond the human space. We do not have to consider *where the margin is* but *what is inside the margin* with the outlaw, for he is not entering an empty space.

Mircea Eliade argued that mankind was repeating the cosmography of the gods in the microcosmos of the society[95]. If we follow Hastrup on that point as well[96], then the social structure of *Grettis saga* is the same as the cosmography described in the *Edda*. The center would be *Miðgarðr*, the "middle" world, and beyond that protected space "Útgarðr ", the "outside "."Cosmologically and mythologically the boundary between society and non-society is reflected in the opposition between humans and non-humans, such as trolls, giants and ghosts."[97]. According to the *Snorra Edda*[98], *Útgarðr* is the place where the giants and non-human creatures are living. To follow this logic, Grettir is not only going to a natural world without men, but to a world already inhabited by creatures. The wild, the non-humanly organized space, is the condition for the surpernatural. Indeed, in the margins which he explores even before being outlawed, Grettir is meeting not only supernatural trolls but also natural bears, who in addition share the same space as he, since those creatures dwell in caves as he does. Moreover, he encounters other creatures like revenants (Kárr and Glámr), who are no longer human, yet not totally dead. Being former humans, they are not totally supernatural; for example, they keep their names (as opposed to the nameless trolls of the saga). But as liminal figures stuck in the "limbo ", they occupy the margins as well. The exploration of the (natural) wilderness opens the world of the supernatural and the semi-natural.

In this context, it is important to stress that the connection with the marginal and supernatural places is only possible through Grettir. The meetings between other characters and supernatural creatures are never described. The death of Glámr and the

94 Kirsten Hastrup, "Tracing Tradition-an Anthropological Perspective on *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar.*" in Lindow, John et al (eds.), *Structure and Meaning in Old Norse Literature: New Approaches to Textual Analysis and Literary Criticism*, Odense: Odense University Press, 1986. p.292

95 Mircea Eliade, *Le mythe de l'éternel retour : archétypes et répétition*, Paris, Gallimard, 1969, p.22

96 Kirsten Hastrup, *op.cit,* p. 283

97 Kirsten Hastrup, *op.cit.,*p.280

98 "eN firir iNan aiorþvnni gerþv þeir **borg** vmhverfis heím firir vfriþi i**o**tna, en til þeirar borgar havfþv þeir brar Ymis iotvns, ok kavllvþv þa borg Miðgarþ". *Edda Snorra Sturlusona*r, p. 16

second shepherd, even if caused by strange events in the wilderness at night, are not described by the narrative but only mentioned as facts[99]. The mystery of their death stays in the margins, whereas Grettir's fight with Glámr is fully and skillfully described[100]. Grettir is the only one to dare encounter him, while others run away or abandon him (the meeting with Kárr, the bear or the trolls[101]). As Torfi H. Tulinius suggests[102], it might be a reluctance from the author to describe close contact with the supernatural because of the historical time in which the sagas occur (unlike the *fornaldarsögur* genre, where the non-defined time of narration opens a world of possibilities to a creative mind) or a technique to create more tensions for the more relevant meeting between Grettir and Glámr. It might also be that the author does not have the opportunity to develop those aspects in general, for most of the *Íslendingasogur* are about conflicts between clans and events in the "public" space. Once outlawed, Grettir is no more a public character, unlike Snorri goði or Njáll who are constantly involved in the "public" issues. Grettir spends his time in a space that is not usually shared with others. The exploration of the margin triggered by the outlawry opens literary perspectives, as it is an unknown space which needs to be fulfilled. There is not more historical information to rely on: the author is left with a space that he has to bring to life.

Following this thread of spatial thought, we can say that the last dwelling Grettir occupies before his death is the extreme "non-place" *par excellence*[103]. After being denied protection for the last time[104], Grettir heads for the island of Drangey in the Skagafjörðr. The place is the extreme symbol of his condition: it is a stronghold that can be easily controlled (it is surrounded by the sea and cliffs) with sheep and fish available for food. The time of compromise is over. Grettir has reached the most independent marginal place possible to own, and merges with it to become "the island-like

99 "Eigi kom Glámr heim", *Grettis saga* ch. 32, p. 111. "Því var Þorgautr vanr, at koma heim, þá er hálfrøkkvat var, en nú kom hann ekki heim í þat mund."*Grettis saga* ch. 33, p. 114.

100*Grettis saga* ch. 35, p. 118-123.

101*Grettis saga*. ch.18, 21, while he is in Norway. *Grettis saga,* ch. 65 and 66, while in Iceland.

102"The fact that the sagas take place in historical time and in places their authors knew seems often to have inhibited them from allowing such events in their stories, even though they are more frequent than in contemporary sagas and there are distinct differences in this between individual sagas. But there remains a reluctance to describe direct contact with the supernatural. " Torfi Tulinius, "Saga as a myth: the family sagas and social reality in 13th-century Iceland*"*, in Barnes, Geraldine and Clunies Ross, Margaret (eds.), *Proceedings of the 11th International Saga Conference, 2-7 July 2000, University of Sydney*, Sydney, Centre for Medieval Studies University of Sydney, 2000, p. 531.

103"a non-place in social terms" Ástraður Eysteinsson, "Traveling Island. Grettir the Strong and his Search for a Place" in *Beyond the Floating Islands*, University of Bologna, Cotepra, 2002, p 92.

104*Grettis saga* ch. 59, p. 225.

character"[105], a living metaphor of exclusion. It is worth noting that islands could have been mysterious places where outcasts like magicians or witches might have lived.

Indeed, François-Xavier Dillmann remarks that islands were never used as a motif for magical figures[106]. On the contrary, it is the victims of magicians and witches who look for shelter on islands. Grettir is killed on an island because of a curse sent by an old woman[107], and Gísli finds protection in an island because Þorgrímr forgot to include islands in his *seiðr* spell against him[108]. In his last moment, though not on an island, Gísli reaches before dying a similar liminal space. Wounded to death, he jumps on a rock, *Einhammarr,* which is separated from the cliff[109]. Like Grettir, he is in a sort of "non-place" when he dies. To add a final sign of their liminal status, they are both buried next to their place of death, where the ground and the sea meet[110]. Grettir and his brother are buried on the island: "Þeir dysjuðu þá brœðr báða þar í eyjunni"[111]. The verb *dysja* is specifically used for marginals, criminals or witches[112], as much as *gǫtva* which is referring to Gísli's burial[113]. Both have the underlying idea of an improper way to bury, in a geographical "in-betweeness".

Thanks to the marginal spaces he is not only occupying but tries to self-appropriate, Grettir is depicted as earning a progressive singularity. Moreover, he is the one who dares to visit the marginal spaces and fight their inhabitants. As a consequence, those places only belong to him and his new role becomes to function as the connection between the "non-places" and the social space. The "non-places", being out of sight, need to be fulfilled, and the author of *Grettis saga* chose to associate in the non-place wilderness and supernatural. The theme of outlawry appears as an explanation for the amount of supernatural motifs in a genre that is usually more concerned with public and historical biographies.

105Ástráður Eysteinsson, *op.cit*.. p.92.

106Dillmann, François-Xavier *, op.cit*., p. 406.

107*Grettis saga* ch. 82, pp. 258-264.

108*Gísla saga* ch. 26, p. 84.; The curse was made *hér á landi* but not extended *til um úteyjar.*

109Ok er minnst er vánin, vizk Gísli við ok hleypr upp á hamar þann, er heitir Einhamarr, ok af kleifunum.". *Gísla saga, ch.* 35, p. 113.

110As it is said in the Gulaþing, chapter 23, quoted by Davidson, Hilda*The Road to Hell :A Study of the Conception of the Dead in Old Norse Literature,* Greenwood Press, 1968, p.34; Régis Boyer, *Les Sagas Islandaises*, op. Cit., note 1 p. 1704.

111*Grettis saga* ch. 82, pp. 258-264.

112"dysjaað: [Dan. dysse = to hide], to bury in a cairn, heap stones over a witch, criminal, or the like, never used of a proper burying " Cleasby.

113"Nú daga þeir hann ofan ok taka af honum sverðit, gǫtva þeir hann þar í gjrótinu ok fara ofan til sjávar." *Gísla saga*, ch. 36, p115; *gǫtva* "[akin to gata, *a way dug* or *bored through;* the characteristic *v* is preserved in Goth. gatvo = platea] :-- to dig, bury; gǫtvaðr (part.), *buried* (in a cairn)." Cleasby.

3.2 Contradictory dreams in *Gísla saga*

"The waking have one common world, but
the sleeping turn aside each into a world of his own."[114]

From the description of Grettir's wanderings in the wild and his incredible meetings, we can affirm that he fits the *skógarmaðr* archetype. Unlike Grettir, the situation of Gísli seems -at a quick glance- far more limited. It seems fair to deny him the status of "authentic outlaw" and *skógarmaðr* along with Ólafr Briem, for Gísli does not explore dangerous places as Grettir does. He is not sent "out" to a wild and supernatural "non-place". This difference is made obvious in *Gísla saga*, when in chapter 29, Vesteinn's sons are outlawed: they starve, sleep in the forest and meet difficulties an "authentic outlaw" is supposed to face[115] . Nevertheless, the narrative develops for him another kind of "non-place", mental and intimate, in the shape of an oniric "non-place ".

Gísli is not wandering so widely around Iceland and stays very close to social spaces, what is familiar or what Joonas Ahola calls "private" from his tripartite division of space[116]. His movements are cyclic. He is always going back to what is familiar and familial. In the time after his condemnation, Gísli is reported to stay twice in Þorgarðr's house in Barðastrǫnd[117] (a woman who used to welcome outcasts), three times (for long periods) with his wife Auðr in Geirþjófsfjörðu[118], and once in an island with Ingjaldr (his cousin who came to Iceland with him[119]) and another with Refr and his wife[120]. Moreover he goes regularly to visit his brother Þorkell who fails to give him the support Gísli expected[121]. His stays are not obtained through deals, for Gísli does not seem to be a serious threat for the society (as Grettir was). Characters from the social space do not

114 Heraclite, fragment 89, quoted by Le Goff, Jacques, *L'imaginaire médiéva ,* Gallimard, 1991,p 314.
115 "Nú fara sveinarnir í skóga þá, er þeir megu eigi finnask, ok neyta matarm því at þeir hǫfðu lengi matar misst, ok leggjask síðan niðr at sofa, er þeir váru mettir, því at þeir váru mjǫk syfjaðir.". *Gísla saga* ch. 29, p. 93.
116 Joonas Ahola, *op.cit.,* p 24. He expands the binary division of space made by Kristen Hastrup inside-outside (innan-flan) by a tripartite one private-public-outside, which we follow here.
117*Gísla saga* ch. 23-25.
118*Gísla saga* ch. 21-22,24-25, 27, 30 and 33.
119*Gísla saga* ch. 24, p. 78.
120In chapter 27 Gísli meets Refr in the woods and explains him his situation. Refr agrees to help him on one condition: Gísli does not interfere. This condition is the opportunity for a comic scene where Gísli has to hide in their bed and Refr's wife lets her volcanic temper speaks.
121 *Gísla saga* ch. 23-24, p. 73-78.

have to deal with him and divide the space in order to be in peace, but they are willing to help him without setting conditions, as Ingaldr does: "Ok er þeir hittask, býðr hann Gísla allan greiða ok alla bjǫrg, þá er hann mátti honum veita..."[122]. Gísli goes again to what is familiar and familial to him. His relatives welcome him in the "private" space of their houses, or in hideouts near their dwellings.

Among the expected needs of an outlaw (food, shelter, safety and company), Gísli seems in a far more comfortable situation than Grettir. It is not mentioned that he has to take care of his food or his shelter nor the company because he mainly stays with his wife Auðr and their foster-daughter, or with caring hosts[123]. He is not betrayed by his allies (as it happens to Grettir, betrayed by his fellow outlaws[124]) nor by his wife even when the possibility is given to her. In chapter 32, she throws to the face of Eyjólfr the purse of silver he offered her to hand over Gísli. She stays faithful to Gísli until the end[125]. His safety is far more stable than Grettir's, even if it is still a worry. As a consequence, Gísli do not have urgent daily preoccupations as Grettir.

In line with my previous comments, *Gísla saga* is thus not supposed to have uncommon supernatural features, for Gísli never takes over the wilderness, the condition for what the French medieval literary production called "la merveille" (Chrétien de Troyes and the Arthurian cycle). Nevertheless, we can notice that a division of the space is still mandatory for safety reasons. Gísli is not really *out* of the social space but choses to inhabite *under* the social space at several occasions (4 times) in a *jarðhús*[126]. This underground is giving him shelter and at the same time keeps him close to the private but still social life of a house. He cannot perform the step Grettir is crossing by humanizing an unwelcoming space. Even if his reintegration is impossible, he did not renounce what is familiar to him[127], a common trait of the exiled figure. He is then staying in well-known places with familiar faces, and he is not settling the expected wild space as an outlaw should do. However, if he is not willingly taking over

122 *Gísla saga* ch. 24, p. 79.

123 Þorgerðr offers her "woman's help" without conditions (ch.23, p. 75) and Ingjaldr, without clear reasons, defends Gísli to death, ch. 36, p. 114

124 *Grettis saga*, ch. 55-56, pp.179-182.

125 In chapter 34 35, she comes with him to his final fight and face the enemies with him. On the strong relationships between women and outlaws and their "reciprocal solidarity" see Joonas Ahola, *op.cit.*, p.26

126"Hon var opt vǫn at taka við skógarmǫnnum, ok átti hon jarðhús; var annarr jarðhússendir við ána, en annarr við eldahúsit hennar, ok sér enn þess merki." With Þorgerdr in *Gísla saga* ch. 23, p. 75. Same with Ingaldr : "Gísli er ávallt í jarðhúsi þá er menn koma í eyna." *Gísla saga* ch. 25, p. 79, then with his wife "...var þar jarðhús undir niðri..." *Gísla saga* ch. 29, p. 92; "Líðr nú svá sumarit, at Gísli er í jarðhúsum sínum..." *Gísla saga* ch. 33, p. 102.

127"Þegar várar ferr Gísli aptr í Geirþjófsfjǫrð ok má þá eigi lengr vera í brott frá Auði, konu sinni; svá unnask þau mikit." *Gísla saga* ch. 24, p. 75.

the "outside" space, he is taken over himself by another one: the oneiric space.

Indeed, Gísli is said to be "vitr maðr ok draumamaðr mikill ok berdreymr."[128]. Dreams are common motifs of the *Islendingasögur* genre and men like Snorri goði, Njáll or Gestr the Wise are said to have prophetic dreams too, which give them the place of counselor (or even wise leader) for social issues. The function of dreams in the sagas is usually straightforward: they announce the death of a man, either the dreamer or a relative. They often have a supernatural aspect for men are represented by doubles (animals or spectral ancestors like the *hamingja*[129]). Most of the dreams are connected to fate and are often inevitable. The two first dreams Gísli has, before his outlawry, are of that type. He dreams about the death of his beloved blood-brother and brother-in-law Vésteinn: "Þat dreymði mik ina fyrri nótt, at af einum bæ hrokkðist **hoggormr** ok hjoggi Véstein til bana. En ina síðari nótt dreymði mik, at **vargr** rynni af sama bæ ok biti Véstein til bana."[130] The strangeness of those dreams is not in their narrative but in the fact that Gísli shares them *after* the murder of Vésteinn. Gísli admits that he willingly kept them for himself because he did not want them to become true[131]. A clear opposition appears between fate and Gísli's own will. This opposition is present all along the tale, and is connected to his denial of his own outlawry (as he stays with his wife) and to his death (he hides from his enemies for years before facing them in his last fight).

But the very unusual aspect of the dreams occurs after the sentence of outlawry for "…once outlawed, his dreams become self-referential"[132]. Indeed, Gísli gets tormented with his own death and his after-life expectations. Two women (*draumkonur tvær)* appear successively or together in his dreams, and contradict one another. The first one is said to be a good woman "betri" ("the better woman" would be the proper translation of the comparative "betri", syntaxically used as a superlative in the context) and is first announcing him his death in seven years, symbolized by seven burning fires[133]. However she also tells him about the pleasures that he will enjoy with her in the

128 *Gísla saga* ch. 22, p. 52.

129 Kelchner, Georgia, *Dreams in Old Norse literature and their affinities in folklore*, Cambridge, Cambridge University press, 1935, pp. 17-31.

130 *Gísla saga*, ch,14, p. 46.

131" Ok sagða ek því hvárngan drauminn fyrr en nú, at ek vilda at hvárrgi réðisk. "*Gísla saga* ch. 14, p.46.

132William Ian Miller, *op.cit*, p. 135.

133"Þeir sátu við elda ok drukku, ok váru sjau eldarnir, sumir váru mjǫk brunnir, en sumir sem bjartastir." *Gísla saga* ch. 22, p. 70.

after-life[134]. She promises him an "annan heim at kanna"[135], a safe place where the familiar will not be threatened by fear of death. The "worse woman" (*verri*) comes in second, but becomes more present as the time of death is approaching, washing him with blood and threatening him about his afterlife.

The next dreams are just a variation in intensity of the two first ones. Through the years, the bad woman wins over the good woman: "...ok koma aptr draumar hans allir ok harðar svefnfarar, ok kemr nú jafnan at honum draumkonan sú verri ok þá hin stundum, in betri."[136] The two women are constantly connected in each dream by the use of the superlative, creating a chronic antagonism. The duality of the dreams is abnormal, as much as their contradiction. Two characters can of course be one against another in a dream, but a dream cannot give two prophecies exclusive of each other. The two women clearly contradict each other: "Nú skal ek því ǫllu bregða, er in betri draumkonan mælti við þik, ok skal ek þess ráðandi, at þér skal þess ekki at gagni verða, er hon hefir mælt."[137].

Many hypotheses have been proposed about the nature of these women. They were assimilated to *valkyrjur* because of the after-death concern and the presence of an image of the good woman riding a gray horse[138]. They might be the image of the *fylgjur* warning about an imminent death, or even the Norns who manage fate, mentioned in the *Gylfaginning*[139]. This last hypothesis makes sense with the contradictory message of the dreams because the bad woman seems to have power over Gísli's destiny for she can reverse what the good woman says. A compromise would be to say that the good woman is Gísli's *fylgjur* warning him about his death but caring for him in his after-life, and the evil woman the image of fate, or a Norn, responsible for his situation.

Those hypotheses give a clue on the motifs used to depict the two dream-women, but not on the reason why they are used in such an original way. Their Manichean aspect might be a sign of important Christian influence, and Gísli's dreams the oniric battle-field between Christianity and paganism (as it is depicted in the

134"Þau koma nú at húsi einu, því er nær var sem hǫll væri ok leiðir hon hann inn í húsit, ok þóttu honum þar verða hœgendi í pǫllum og vel um búit. Hon bað þau þar vera ok una sér vel, "ok skaltu hingat fara, þá er þú andask," sagði hon, "ok njóta hér fjár ok farsælu." *Gísla saga* ch. 30, p. 94. According to Guðni Jónsson, one of the manuscripts adds "...með mér", which is a way of insisting on the closeness between Gísli and his good dream-woman in the after-life.

135Verse 29 in *Gísla saga*, ch. 33, p. 102.

136*Gísla saga* ch. 30, p. 94.

137*Gísla saga* ch. 33, p. 102.

138Langeslag, Paul "*The Dream Women of Gísla saga." Scandinavian Studies 81.1 ,Spring* 2009, p.65.

139Faulkes, Anthony (ed.*), Edda: Prologue and Gylfagnnning*, London, Viking Society for Northern Research, 2005, pp.31-32.

medieval allegoric *Psychomachia* and later on in *Le Roman de la Rose*). Indeed, the good woman asks Gísli to adopt a behavior close to Christian ethical imperatives. She asks him to give up on his former beliefs and to be good towards the deaf, crippled, poor and indigent[140]. Moreover the bloody visions connected to the bad woman and the tortures she performs can be a glimpse of what Hell might be. But at the same time, Lönnroth interprets that bloody ritual as a Christian purification[141]. Moreover it is suggested that Gísli will enjoy pleasure and good food in a rich house in the after-life with the good woman[142], which is closer to the description made of Valhöll[143]. Anyway, dreams were a medium used in both pagan and Christian times for superior forces or God himself to communicate. It is predictable that at a time of transition, they appear mixed and blurry.

The contradiction and fight between the good and the bad woman are not solved by the narrative. Gísli dies as predicted, but we do not know how his after-life is. In fact, the contradiction does not need to be solved, for we think that those dreams might be an exploration of the condition of the outlaw. The supernatural meetings between the outlaw and the creatures are mainly expressed through the dreams in *Gísla saga*, instead of through wilderness as in *Grettis saga*. *Gísla saga* has an original and impressive exploration of the dreams: self-referential, numerous and repetitive, dual and contradictory, progressive, and with an eschatological care for the after-life. Dreaming seems no more to be the medium of fate but the inner-voice of Gísli in crisis. Those dreams overwhelm Gísli's existence, and are the core narrative of the second part of the saga (from chapter 22 to 35). Gísli's years of outlawry are not dedicated to wanderings and deeds. The first six years are totally hidden from the narrative, and the story makes a jump to the time of the dreams. The switch from a narration of facts to a narration of dreams underlines the focus and the priority given by the story to those dreams and not in deeds made in order to survive as an outlaw.

The last particularity of Gísli's dreams resides in his behaviour towards them. He refuses to share the first ones[144], and then only shares them with Auðr, his wife. No one

140 "...ok hon réð mér þat, meðan ek lifða, at láta leiðask forna sið ok nema enga galdra né forneskju ok vera vel við daufan ok haltan ok fátœka ok fáráða." *Gísla saga* ch. 22, p. 70

141 Lars Lönnroth, "The Noble Heathen: A Theme in the Sagas", *Scandinavian Studies*, vol.41 no. 1, 1969, p 461

142 "Þau koma nú at húsi einu, því er nær var sem hǫll væri, ok leiðir hon hann inn í húsit, ok þóttu honum þar vera hœgendi í pǫllum ok vel um búit. Hon bað þau þar vera ok una sér vel, "ok skaltu hingat fara, þá er þú andask," sagði hon, "ok njóta hér fjár ok farsælu.""*Gísla saga* ch. 30, p. 94.

143 Faulkes, Anthony (ed.), *Edda: Prologue and Gylfagnnning*, op. Cit., p.31-32.

144*Gísla saga* ch. 13, p. 59.

else in the saga is dreaming, and Gísli is the only one (as far as we know) among the "great dreamers" of the *Íslendingasögur* corpus, to have those kinds of dreams. This specificity turns his dreams into a highly private matter. He is holding the key to what Homer called the gates of horn and ivory in his Odyssey. The private aspect of his dreams is also expressed through the possessive pronoun "mín" he uses to refer to the dream-woman[145] .

Moreover, he first says his dreams through cryptic skaldic verses, before re-telling them in the prose to his wife. She is his confidante, and through her the reader is able to access the dreams. Out of the public and social place and instead of running into the wild, Gísli occupies (or is occupied by) the oneiric space, battlefield of his own inner-tensions and preoccupations.

Beyond the obvious interest of the *sagnamaðr* for Icelandic geography, full outlawry is an opportunity for him to describe further spaces that are usually not relevant for the story. Indeed, for highly social figures like Njáll or Snorri goði, or feminine ones like Guðrún, the main part of the plot needs either a public place (assemblies for example), either a half-private half-public one (farmstead). The impossibility of a social life caused by outlawry forces the *sagnamaðr* to imagine highly fictional places. “The less that is known of a person's life the easier it is to make up stories about him. Nothing is simpler than the transformation of such a person into a being with supernatural powers, or one who associates with supernatural beings"[146]. It results in a union of the wild and the supernatural in *Grettis saga*, and a union of the dreams and torments in *Gísla saga.* The exploration of those new narrative spaces is original (both in quantity and quality) and common trait of outlawry in the two sagas. Moreover those spaces are not just original in their exploration, they denote a sense of exclusivity and privacy, for Grettir and Gísli are the only ones to have access to them.

145" draumkona mín", *Gísla saga* ch. 22, p. 70.
146 Sandbach, Mary, "Grettir in Þórisdal"*, Saga-Book 12 (1937-8),* pp. 93-106.

3.3 Hauntings and repetition

To be the only one to master the wilderness and its creatures, as much as to be a great dreamer and predict the future, can be seen as privilege, for not all characters in the sagas have that power. This is the reason why Grettir and Gísli are outstanding characters. But this exclusivity has a terrible consequence: loneliness. Both characters have to go alone through what is the most extreme experience (being it dangerous meetings for Grettir, and psychological torture for Gísli).

Despite the different ways of dealing with their condemnation and the radically different places they take over, both surprisingly develop the same common fear of the dark. This weakness is mentioned many times in both sagas. Its first occurrence is in chapter 35 of *Grettla* when Grettir notices that some changes came over him after his meeting with the *draugr* Glámr: “Á því fann hann mikla muni, at hann var orðinn maðr **svá myrkfælinn,** at hann þorði hvergi at **fara einn saman**, þegar myrkva tók."[147] But we have to wait until his return to Iceland and his condemnation to full outlawry to see this mentioned again[148].

The fear then grows exponentially and it seems connected with the impossibility to be alone. From chapter 54 to 55, his fear is mentioned four times: "Grettir kvazk þat gjarna vildu, en sagði þó, at hann þóttisk varla **einn saman** vera mega fyrir **myrkfælni**."[149] "Honum þótti daufligt mjǫk á fjallinu, því at hann var mjǫk **myrkfælinn**."[150], "...en illt þœtti mér **einum saman** at vera, ef annars væri kostr."[151], "Ok leið svá vetrinn. At engu þótti Gretti meira mein en **myrkfælni**"[152]. It is once again mentioned in chapter 67[153] and finally reaches its highest level in chapter 69: "Þá gerðisk svá mikit bragð at **myrkfælni** hans, at hann þorði hvergi at fara, þegar er røkkva tók"[154]. This fear is then the cause of extra trouble for Grettir, for he is moving irrationally and accepts companions he knows would betray him eventually: "eru þér ok vansénir, skógarmenninir, en illt þótti mér einum saman"[155]. Gísli faces exactly the same repeated and growing fear, as it is mentioned in chapter 33 : Nú gerðisk svá mikit um

147*Grettis saga*, ch.35, p. 122-123.
148 "er svá **myrkfælinn**, at hann gerði eptir skapi sínu.". *Grettis saga*, ch .51, p.163.
149*Grettis saga,* ch. 54, p. 178.
150*Grettis saga,* ch. 55, p. 178.
151*Grettis saga,* ch. 55, p. 179.
152*Grettis saga*, ch. 55, p. 180.
153"Reynt skal þetta vera," segir Grettir, "en svá gerumk ek **myrkfælinn**, at þat má ek ekki til lífs vinna mér at vera **einn saman**.". *Grettis saga,* ch. 67, p. 218.
154*Grettis saga,* ch. 69, p 222.
155*Grettis saga,* ch. 55 p179.

drauma Gísla at hann gerir **svá myrkhræddan**, at hann þorir hvergi **einn saman** at vera, ok þegar hann leggr sín augu saman, þá sýnisk honum in sama kona"[156].

The overwhelming fear of the dark expressed by both outlaws might find an explanation thanks to repeated events in the saga. The darkness seems to be one of the conditions of possibility for connections between different worlds. When Grettir visits marginal spaces like grave-mounds (Kárr inn gamli in chapter 18) or caves (the bear in chapter 21 and the troll-woman in chapter 66), he always goes *down* in a place inside the earth and lacking light[157]. He always needs a rope to be able to come back from these chthonic spaces[158]. The relationship between the inside and the margins are then not only horizontal, but vertical as well, from a world of light to a world of darkness. The favorite place of the creatures from the margins is what is antithetic and not comfortable for human beings, as darkness is.

This is confirmed by a reverse example, for marginal creatures do not like the daylight. When Grettir says that a "hamartroll" killed Skeggi the slave, men answer him that "[...] ekki mundu troll hafa tekit manninn um ljósan dag"[159]. It seems this was a common belief of that time: "… en Bárðardalsmenn segja, at hana dagaði uppi, þá er þau glímðu, ok sprungit, þá er hann hjó af henni hǫndina, ok standi þar enn í konulíking á bjarginu"[160]. The same avoidance of light applies to wild creatures (which are, as we argued, in a deep connection with the supernatural for their share the same space)[161] *and* to the revenants[162]. Supernatural, wild and dead creatures are all bound together in the same category.

As a consequence, when the darkness spreads everywhere during the night, the creatures from the margins are able to move and leave them temporarily. During the night, the world is changed and the *garðr* which marks the "inside ", the "human world ", can be broken. Therefore, the night-time is the moment chosen by Glámr to ride (*ríða*) the house and literally break into it. The troll from Saudhaugar does exactly the same and comes along with the darkness. Many other examples can be found in the saga corpus, like the repeated hauntings at Fróðá in *Eyrbyggja saga*. The same

156*Gísla saga,* ch. 33, p. 104.
157 "...síðan hljóp hann af bjarginu ok niðr í forsinn." *Grettis saga,* ch. 66, p. 215; ch. 18, p. 57.
158 "Grettir bað hann geyma festar...". *Grettis saga, ch.* 18, p57-58; "Nú er frá Gretti at segja, at hann lét stein í festaraugat ok lét svá síga ofan at vatninu". *Grettis saga,* ch.66, p. 214.
159 *Grettis saga*, kap 16, p. 47.
160"… en Bárðardalsmenn segja, at hana dagaði uppi, þá er þau glímðu, ok sprungit, þá er hann hjó af henni hǫndina, ok standi þar enn í konulíking á bjarginu". *Grettis saga*, ch. 65, p.213.
161 "Lá bjǫrninn í híðinu á daginn, en leitaði á brott jafnan, er náttaði;". *Grettis saga* chap. 21 p.74.
162"...tók þá at minnka aptrgangr, meðan sólargangr var mestr;". *Grettis saga* chap. 33, p113.

condition corresponds to Gísli, for his dreams are invading the private and supposed safe space of his bed at night. Grettir has a "reciprocal" relationship with the margins: he looks for them as much as they look for him. Gísli seems instead far more passive and a victim of the invading margins because the dreams are said to come to him.

However, in *Grettis saga*, if the meetings are possible in the dark, it does not mean that the two worlds merge easily. We can note that the marginal spaces try to keep or bring in both those that visit them and those they visit. When Grettir is about to leave Kárr's mound, the revenant wakes up and catches Grettir's leg to drag him inside. The same movement of "dragging" happens when Glámr tries to get Grettir outside of the house , "þrællinn ætlaði at koma honum **út ór bœnum**"[163], as well as the troll woman in Saudhaugur who "...vildi draga hann **út ór bœnum**"[164]. But Grettir knows he has more chances to fight inside than on the creature's play-ground. Both spaces are meeting, but both are looking for temporary connections and aim to spend the shortest time possible in the world of the others. Moreover, their meetings often end with the death of a man at least.

The second condition of possibility for those hauntings, repeated over and over, is the time of the year. In Saudhaugar, a man is kidnapped during *Jól*-time two years in a row. The same time of the year, the murder of Glámr[165] and his incursions for the next two years[166] take place. The revenants are in that way celebrating the "birthday of their death" in coming back each year to the last place they inhabited. In the same way, the fight against the *berserkir* happens during the feast organized for *Jól*[167], as well as does the fight between Grettir and the wild bear in Norway[168].

Gísla saga shows a similar situation. Gísli's dreams come with winter with its endless dark nights. The first dreams are mentioned in chapter 13, but nothing is said about the time of the year. Those were the "standard" dreams about Vésteinn and as a consequence they are not part of Gísli's hauntings. The specific dreams with the two women first appear in chapter 22, and they are said to happen in autumn. Chapter 24 tells that the nights are longer and then dreams come back (which means that during the summers without darkness they are not there). In chapter 30, the dreams are again said

163*Grettis saga* chap. 35, p.120.
164*Grettis saga,* chap. 65 p. 212.
165"Nú leið svá þar til er kemr atfangadagr jóla...". *Grettis saga,* ch. 32, p. 111
166 "Nú fór svá fram um vetrinn allt til jóla. Atfangakveld jóla fór sauðamaðr til fjár.". *Grettis saga*, ch. 33, p114.
167"Nú kemr atfangadagr jóla...". *Grettis saga*, ch. 19, p. 63
168"Á jólum fór Þorkell sjálfr til híðsins ok þeir átta saman; þar var þá Bjǫrn ok Grettir...". *Grettis saga,* ch. 21, p. 75.

to be back in autumn, and chapter 34 indicates that they come on the last day of October at night. Moreover, it is said that during the summer (with plenty of daylight) everything is quiet. The only dream which does not come during the winter nights but in the summer is in chapter 33. This one tells that all the life-fires are gone for Gísli. This is the important dream when the bad woman changes all that the good woman promised, and the fact that it did not happen in the same way as the other might underline that it is more relevant, that the soon-coming death creates deeper torments, or both.

Repetition and hauntings are a narrative technique aimed to produce fear, as shown by Freud's analysis of the uncanny, *Das Umheimliche*[169]. The uncanny comes from a fusion between what is familiar and what is foreign, from which the fear is created. A very uncanny figure in the *Íslendingasögur* corpus is depicted in Skarphedinn (from *Njáls saga*) and his evil smile[170]. The incontrollable laughter of Glúmr when the wish to murder submerges him is another example[171]. Both constitute memorable moments of saga narrative because of the uncanny feeling they trigger. In those strange moments their behavior appears improper. They do not belong any longer to the "normal" world and become strangers to the reader who was used to follow their evolution in the narrative. The Glámr episode also triggers that feeling, for he used to be human and comes back "changed". Added to the fusion of the familiar and the foreign, the repetition is what completes the uncanny feeling on a double level: inside the narrative for the character that has to face it, and outside the narrative for the reader who experiences a kind of *catharsis* through the frightening experiences of the main characters.

The consequence of the fear of the dark finds its most evident expression during Grettir's stay in the Utopian valley of Þórisdalr in chapter 61. Þórisdalr is a dream-place for the outlaw, surrounded by glaciers, with plenty of food and the company of another liminal figure, the "blendingr" Þórir (a half-troll[172]) and the "entertaining company" of his daughters[173]. This idea is supported by the description of the place as being full of positive attributes, with the help of adjectives and superlatives: "Hann komsk ofan í einhverjum stað; hann sá þá **fagrar** hlíðir **grasi vaxnar ok smákjǫrr**; þar váru **hverar**,

169Freud, Sigmund*, L'inquiétante étrangeté et autres textes [Das Unheimlich und andere Texte],* Paris, Gallimard, NRF, Folio bilingue, 2001, pp. 111-113

170*Njáls saga,* ch. 128, p.327

171*Víga-Glúms saga*, ch. 7 and 18.

172 According to Guðni Jónsson's footnote. *Grettis saga*, note 3, p. 200

173 "Dœtr kvað hann Þóri eiga, ok hendi Grettir gaman at þeim, enda tóku þær því vel, því at þar var eigi margkvæmt" *Grettis saga*, ch. 61, p.200

ok þótti honum sem jarðhitar myndi valda, er eigi lukðusk saman jǫklarnir yfir dalnum. Á **lítil féll** eftir dalnum ok **sléttar eyrar báðum megin**."

The place is idyllic. However, one single depreciative aspect is noted: "**Lítill var þar sólargangr**, **en** þat þótti honum ótal, **hve margr sauðr** þar var í dalnum". However, this is immediately compensated by the conjunction "en" and the outstanding number of sheeps in the valley. The description then continues in the same vein: "þat fé var **miklu betra** ok **feitara en hann hefði þvílíkt sét**. Grettir bjóst nú þar um ok gerði sér skála af þeim viði, sem hann fekk þar til. Tók hann sér nú sauði til matar; var þar **betri einn sauðr til niðrlags en tveir annars staðar.** Ein ær mókollótt var þar með dilki, sú er honum þótti **mest afbragð** í vera fyrir vaxtar sakar. Var honum forvitni á at taka dilkinn, ok svá gerði hann ok skar síðan dilkinn; hálf vætt mǫrs var í dilkinum, **en hann var þó ǫllu betri.**"[174]

That place contrasts with the caves Grettir is used to inhabit as an outlaw. This is the only time in *Grettis saga* where the margins are described in such a positive way. It is the first time as well that the meeting with the marginal and the supernatural do not create either tensions or fights. Given those antecedents, it appears quite unbelievable that Grettir decides to leave the place: "Þá þótti Gretti þar **svá daufligt** at hann mátti þar eigi lengr vera"[175]. Yet, the fear of darkness (for the sun is not shining enough over the valley) has such a power over Grettir that he makes irrational choices regarding his safety. But the narrative leaves clues which allow us to follow the chain of causality.

The cause of Grettir's fear of the dark is his encounter with the *draugr* Glámr. Indeed, before dying, Glámr put a curse on Grettir: "Þú munt verða útlægr gǫrr ok hljóta jafnan úti at búa einn samt. Þá legg ek þat á við þik, at þessi augu sé þér jafnan fyrir sjónum, sem ek ber eptir, ok mun þér þá erfitt þykkja einum at vera, ok þat mun þér til dauða draga."[176] A little further, Grettir is said to be scared of the dark and to see "hvers kyns skrípi, ok þat er haft síðan fyrir orðtœki, at þeim ljái Glámr augna eða gefi glámsýni, er mjǫk sýnisk annan veg en er."[177] However, the narrative does not state when and where Grettir has those "visions". He is not said to have dreams like Gísli, or to have moments of hallucination. Nevertheless, the narrative shows situations when we can guess that something is happening in front of Grettir's eyes, like in the Utopian valley. As a consequence, Glámr reappears as some kind of "persistent visions"

174 *Grettis saga*, ch. 61, p. 200
175 *Grettis saga*, ch. 61 p. 200-201; *"dau-fligr", deaf-like. Cleasby dictionary*
176 *Grettis saga,* ch.35, p. 121
177 *Grettis saga,* ch.35, p.121

triggered by the repetition of the context of the traumatic meeting (darkness, *Jól*, or simply in the guise of a sheep on a roof).

We suppose that the reason of his irrational departure is more likely related to the traumatic experience Grettir endured when encountering Glámr's eyes, for "Grettir [hefur] sagt sjálfr, at þá eina sýn hafi hann sét svá, at honum brygði við."[178] During his stay, it is said that Grettir killed a lamb. After that, the ewe comes repeatedly on the roof of Grettir's hut at night and prevents Grettir from sleeping. As Laurence De Looze has suggested, the scene is a comic echo of Glámr's hauntings and his scary "rides" on the roof of the house.[179] We may even add to that argument that this scene echoes the crime Grettir is accused of. Back in Norway, he killed accidentally the sons of Þórðr. Being the archetype of a harsh tempered man, Grettir never expressed directly any regrets concerning the accident. It is therefore meaningful that he regrets having killed the lamb in similar circumstances because of the troubles it caused to him[180]. Similarly, the distress of the ewe echoes Þórðr call for revenge for the death of his sons. Both social (outlawry) and psychological (Glámr) traumatic experiences are then reflected in the valley-episode, and this reveals indirectly Grettir's inner experience of his own situation.

Glámr's curse follows Grettir to his death. Laurence De Looze argues for an "association between the remote and the immediate cause of Grettir's death" based on a linguistic similarity between Glámr and Glaumr, the outlaw fellow who betrays Grettir in the end.[181] Regarding the hauntings of Glámr, Laurence De Looze and Torfi H. Tulinius complement each other and combined they provide a full picture of the hauntings in *Grettis saga.* Based on the same argument of similarity of names, Torfi H. Tulinius stretches the chain of causality and looks for the cause of Glámr himself: "Á þessu stigi er áhugavert að gefa því gaum að nafn Gláms mætti líta á sem styttingu á nafni Ásmundar hærulangs, því allir stafirnir í nafni smalans eru í nafni föðurins, eins og sjá má: GLÁMR/ÁsMundR hæruLanGr"[182]. On a more primordial and familial level, Glámr would be the embodiment of the hauntings of Ásmundr, Grettir's father.

Repetitions in *Grettis saga* can be all connected with the paternal figure that died when Grettir is abroad (chapter 42). Their relationship was problematic, because

178 *Grettis saga,* ch. 35, p. 121
179 De Looze, *op.cit.,* p. 91-92
180 "þess iðraðisk hann mest, er hann hafði dilkinn skorit, fyrir ónáðum hennar. ". *Grettis saga*, ch. 61, p.200.
181 De Looze, *op.cit*., p. 91-92.
182 Torfi H. Tulinius, "Framliðnir feður. Um forneskju og frásagnarlist í Eyrbyggju, Eglu og Grettlu ", *Heiðin minni*, ritstjórar Baldur Hafstað og Haraldur Bessason, Heimskringla, Mál og menning, Reykjavík 1999,p. 306.

Ásmundr had a sadistic way of educating Grettir who was an unruly child. Nevertheless Ásmundr's death is among the three traumatic events Grettir acknowledges as such when he arrives in Iceland: the death of his father, the killing of his brother and his own outlawry. As often in the sagas, he expresses his affliction through a *vísa*[183]. On the contrary, Gísli's good relationship with his father[184] doesn't seem to lead to repetitions in the narrative (his death is only mentioned as a fact, with no warnings or sickness as for Ásmundr[185]). We can conclude that troublesome paternal relationships are narratively more relevant and productive (*Grettis saga*) than good paternal relationships (*Gísla saga*).

Gísli's haunting dreams are not due to a curse. As is the case with Grettir, he has a curse put on him through a *seiðr* spell performed by Þorgrímr nef. But this curse says that he will not find shelter in Iceland (it is not really efficient, for Þorgrímr forgot to take into account the islands, where Gísli is able to find shelter). Therefore, the curse cannot be the cause. As for Grettir, we will argue for a traumatic experience being the cause of the repetitions and hauntings of Gísli's nights, which in turn are connected to the place where those hauntings happen: the marital bed.

The motif of the bed, as much as the motif of the dream, is repeated an unusual amount of times in Gísla saga. The bed-scenes are a particular motif in the sagas and are often of a very intimate nature (Egill when he is crushed by sorrow by his son's death and does not want to live, or Njáll, his wife and grandson preparing to die in the fire of their house). The stabbing in the bed is a stock motif according to Joonas Ahola[186]. We can indeed find that motif in *Droplaugarsona saga* (chapter 13) and in *Bandamanna saga* (chap 12). But the originality of *Gísla saga* is that it seems to explore the consequences of that stabbing on a traumatic level by echoing it repeatedly throughout the narrative. Bed-scenes reappear regularly in the saga, first as a marital scenes in chapter 9, when the couple Ásgerðr-Þorkell fights and then reconciles in bed, and in parallel the couple Gísli-Auðr who resolves a conflict without fighting (Gísli forgives Auðr when she is honest with him). In chapter 13 the intimate bed turns into a crime-

183 "Þessi tíðendi kómu ǫll senn til Grettis, þat fyrst, at faðir hans var andaðr, annat þat, at bróðir hans var veginn, þat þriðja, at var sekr gǫrr um allt landit. Þá kvað Grettir vísu þessa :...". *Grettis saga*, ch.46, p. 147.

184 Gísli and his father have the same opinion: "...en Gísla var óþokkat um tal þeira sem fǫður hans.". *Gísla saga,* ch. 2, p.7; After Gisli killed the seducer of his sister, his father is satisfied : "...en Gísli ferr heim ok segir fǫður sínum, ok líkaði honum vel.". *Gísla saga*, ch. 2, p. 8

185"Nú eptir þetta andask Þorbjǫrn súrr ok svá Þóra kona hans.". *Gísla saga,* ch. 4, p. 16; *Grettis saga,* ch. 42, p.138-139

186Joonas Ahola, *op.cit.*, p. 26

scene with Vésteinn's murder, and in chapter 16 the symmetrical revenge murder of Þorgrímr is performed by Gísli. On the other hand, in chapter 27, the bed is turned into a comic scene: Gísli has to hide in Refr's bed along with Refr´s hysterical wife in order to escape from Helgi the spy. There the meeting of the comic and the horror of the crime creates a tragic situation.

It then makes full sense that the bed is the place where Gísli's dreams haunt him. The death of his best friend Vésteinn[187] and the crime Gísli had to commit in order to avenge him haunt his nights, while Gísli is in the same familiar and (theoretically) safe place where Vésteinn and Þorgrímr were when they died: the bed. The dreams are coming in wintertime (the same season Gísli committed Þorgrímr's murder, i.e. the shoes full of snow that Þorkell hides). The blood the bad woman washes Gísli with gives a persistent traumatic image of the blood spread during the successive murders. These dreams come even when he shares the bed with his wife Auðr. This is once more an uncanny in Freud's meaning of the word: the deepest fears come from the most familiar and safe place. The fact that the haunting figures are women can be interpreted as Auðr, -his beloved and faithful wife who is lying next to him in the bed- turned into a kind of *banshee,* revealing Gísli's trauma through the uncanny experience of the dreams.

We can then conclude that both outlaws are both suffering from traumatic experiences that continue to haunt them. This argument is supported by the similarity between Grettir's hallucinations (*glámsýni*) and Gísli's condition, who: "...- þegar hann leggr sín augu saman, þá sýnisk honum in sama kona."[188]. Both see things in front of their eyes that others do not see, and this leads them to risky choices and finally death. The narrative explores the inner-consequences of trauma through analoguous scenes, both outlaws being haunted by the shock that caused their outlawry: the meeting with Glámr and the killing of Gísli's foster-brother in the marital bed of his sister.

187 We could think of the well-known coin cut in halves as a metaphor of their friendship in *Gísla saga,* ch.8.p. 28.
188 *Gísla saga*, ch. 33, p.104.

3.4 Mimetism and inner exile

From his exclusive and repeated incursions into the margins, Grettir might have been contaminated and assimilated to the creatures he is used to fight. Joonas Ahola called him a "dead man walking"[189], making a reference to the slang used in jail for those waiting for execution. As we said, the outlaw is stuck in a liminal state with no other options but waiting for death to grab him. He is then in a position of "almost-dead" or "good-to-be-killed", which brings him closer to a dead man or a revenant.

This liminal state seems to be reflected on an ontological level several times in *Grettis saga*. Grettir shares some similarities with his main enemy in the saga, the draugr Glámr. For example, in chapter 32, Glámr is said to be so heavy that he cannot be transported, so the men "...**dysjuðu** hann þar, sem þá var hann kominn."[190] ". The same verb denoting an improper way to bury is used for Grettir (and his brother): *Þeir **dysjuðu** þá bræðr báða þar í eyjunni*[191]. Moreover, the difficulties encountered to move Glámr's body to church in the same chapter sounds like an echo of the transportation of Grettir (*Grettisfærsla*) in chapter 52, when the *bœndr* who captured him have trouble moving him[192]. Moreover, Grettir's head is cut off after his death, as Glámr's head was in an apotropaic meaning. In the same way, Grettir's right-hand is cut as well by Þorbjǫrn Ongull like the hand of the troll-woman killed by Grettir[193].

Finally, Grettir takes the position of the "invader" of the "inside" in chapter 38. Looking for a fireplace, he crosses the water and arrives to a camp at night. He is then mistaken for a troll by the men of the camp: "Kuflinn var sýldr allr, þegar hann kom á land, ok var hann furðu mikill tilsýndar, sem trǫll væri."[194] We can imagine that he looked similar to a troll or revenants: he is big, strong and totally wet from swimming. This is more or less how the troll-woman from Saudhaugar must have looked like, for she came at night and had to cross a waterfall to leave her cave. Moreover, Grettir is invading the "inside" of supernatural creatures in the same way as supernatural creatures invade the "inside" of human beings. He is perceived as "er kominn var"[195] entering a

189 Joonas Ahola, *Op.cit.*, p. 23.
190 *Grettis saga*, ch. 32, p. 113.
191 *Grettis saga*, ch.82, p263.
192 *Grettis saga*, ch. 52, p. 168
193 *Grettis saga,* ch. 65, p.212 ; ch. 82, p. 261.
194 *Grettis saga,* ch. 38, p. 130.
195 *Grettis saga*, ch. 66, p. 215, translated by "intruder" in the *Complete Sagas of Icelanders,* p. 154, and in *Three icelandic outlaw sagas,* p. 214.

fire-place where a creature is lying[196]. This dynamic is reversed when the creature is the one to enter when Grettir lies in the house, waiting for her[197]. Finally, Grettir arrives often in a new place in the period of *Jól*, like the creatures[198]. Those echoes between Grettir and the creatures show a process of identification: the supernatural and the margins become a part of Grettir's ontological being.

On a similar matter, Gísli can be considered responsible for the death of a slave. In chapter 20, Gísli asks a slave to exchange clothing in order to escape. Gísli manages to escape, but the slave disguised as Gísli is killed. This underlines a duplicity in the outlaw's behavior. Both Grettir and Gísli express a talent for imitation, which adds another element explaining their longevity.

The ease with which outlaws change their identity can of course be considered a mandatory attitude for the outlaw in order to survive, or even more generally, a necessary tool for individuals in challenging situations. A good example is provided by Hervör from *Hervarar Saga* who needs to change her gender identity in order to achieve her goal. Indeed, as Joost De Lange indicates in his large study on medieval outlawry, the theme of disguise plays a major part in the English traditions and can be sparingly found in the Icelandic outlaw sagas[199]. For example, Grettir introduces himself to a group twice under the name "Gestr"[200]. But there is a difference between hiding (under a black coat like Grettir does in chapter 47 or wearing slave's clothes like Gísli in chapter 20, or changing a name) and actively performing an imitation of someone else in order to hide.

Gísli is said to be gifted for imitation and proves it with brio: "...ok mun Gísli þar verit hafa á bátinum hjá oss ok mun hafa látit eptir fíflinu, því at hann er við hvárttveggja brugðinn ok er in mesta hermikráka"[201]. Indeed, like an actor on a scene, he mimics the idiotic behaviour of Helgi, the fool on the island of Hergilsey, and even manages to entertain his own enemies[202]. Earlier in the saga, he stages his own death on a boat (chapter 24). While other characters mock the idiot, Gísli decides instead to imitate him. His choice echoes what the good dream woman told him, to be good to the

196 "Grettir sá, at þar sat jǫtunn ógurliga...", *Grettis saga,* ch. 66, p. 215.
197 *Grettis saga*, ch. 65, p. 212.
198 "...þá gerði hann ferð sína til Bárdardals ok kom atfangadag jóla til Sandhauga.". *Grettis saga, ch.* 64, p. 210.
199 De Lange, *op.cit.,* p. 105.
200 "Hann dulðisk ok nefndisk Gestr". *Grettis saga*, ch. 64 p.210; "Gestr heiti ek.", ch. 72, p. 231
201 *Gísla saga,* ch. 27, p. 85.
202 "Gaman þykkir oss at fíflinu -ok horfa á þat- svá sem þat getr œriliga látit.".*Gisla saga,* ch. 26, p. 83.

deaf, the lame, the helpless and the poor[203]. Taking over the identity of an irresponsible person (from a Christian perspective) as Helgi the Idiot (or even the slave) might be seen as a way to discharge himself from what his imitation skills produced: Þorgrímr's murder.

Indeed, in the slang of criminology Gísli would be called a "copycat" murderer, when he follows precisely and carefully the *modus operandi* of Þorgrímr, entering at night and stabbing the victim in the bed next to his wife, committing a "secret murder" (*launvíg*)[204]. Gísli already had adopted a mimetic attitude before his outlawry, for he stoned Þorgrímr nef to death (the one who performed the *seiðr* spell on him) just after Auðbjörg (a witch) from his clan was stoned to death by Þorgrímr nef[205]. Gísli sticks to the *lex talionis,* by which giving back exactly the same discharges the second murderer. However, Gísli cannot repress a trauma from the actions this "eye for an eye" forced him to accomplish.

On another occasion, Grettir seems to be very comfortable in performing an ambiguous role. During his lesser outlawry exile in Norway, he stays on an island owned by Þorfinnr, a prominent man in the area. Þorfinnr and his men gather to go to a feast for *Jól*, but Grettir decides to stay home with the women and slaves. Soon, twelve *berserkir* arrive on the island looking for Þorfinnr. Grettir welcomes them warmly[206]. He then gives orders to the women to take care of the new hosts, and serves them food and drinks. Grettir is "málreifr mjǫk"[207] literally "cheerful in his speech", which contrasts radically with his attitude in the same place just one chapter before: "Grettir var eptir hjá Þorfinni ok lét lítit um sik; hann var **fátalaðr** lengstum."[208] (literally "few-speaking"). Usually very silent and keeping to himself during social gatherings and feasts, now Grettir seems eager to speak and share with the berserkers. He offers to help them, and even confesses his wish to join their crew. The women start to weep and scold Grettir for being ungrateful to Þorfinnr. Grettir spends the night among the berserkers, drinking

203 *Gísla saga,* ch. 22, p.70.

204 *Gísla saga* is giving the precise difference between a murder “morð” and a secret murder : "Þat var þá mælt, at sá væri skyldr at hefna, er vápni kippði ór sári; en þat váru kǫlluð launvíg, en eigi morð, er menn létu vápn eptir í beninni standa.". *Gísla saga,* ch.13, p. 44.

205 "En er Bǫrkr frétti þessi fákynstr, þá ferr hann upp á Annmarkastaði ok lætr taka Auðbjǫrgu ok ferr með hana út á Saltnes ok berr hana **grjóti í hel.** [...]ferr Gísli heiman ok kemr á Nefsstaði ok, tekr Þorgím nef hǫndum ok fœrir á Saltnes,[...]ok er barðr **grjóti til bana**...". *Gisla saga*, ch.19, p. 60.

206 "Gæfumenn miklir munu þér vera, því at þér hafið hér góða atkvámu, ef þeir eru menninir, sem ek ætla.bóndi er heiman farinn með alla heimamenn, þá sem frjálsir eru, ok ætlar eigi heim fyrr en á bak jólunum; húsfreyja er heima ok bóndadóttir; ok ef ek þœttumk nǫkkurn mótgang eiga at gjalda, þá vilda ek þann veg at koma, því at hér er hvatvetna þat, er hafa þarf, bæði ǫl ok annarr fagnaðr.". *Grettis saga,* ch.19. p. 63-64.

207 *Grettis saga,* ch.19, p. 64.

208 *Grettis saga,* ch. 18,p. 56.

and talking. Fortunately for the ladies of the house, all this was staged by Grettir in order to gain the *berserkir'*s trust. Full of food and drinks, they soon want to go to bed with the women of the house, but Grettir suggests they take a bath first. They accept then to be enclosed in a room and Grettir kills each of them as they try to get out. Afterwards, he is rightfully considered a hero by everyone[209].

However, this act triggers a question: Is his success coming from his extreme talent for comedy, or from the fact he is playing a role that suits his own personality? Regardless of the answer, Grettir appears as an ambiguous figure in his actions and choices. As Kathryn Hume pointed out, Grettir is “overbearing and arrogant to one person, kind and helpful to another”[210]. He is in the category called by mythologists a "trickster", a creator and a destroyer at the same time, the one who brings troubles and the one who fixes those troubles. He has as well features of somebody who “cleanses the land”, “landhreinsun”, a border-keeper helping the society to stay safe from intrusion, but who helps it from the margins[211].

The disguises are a mandatory tool for the outlaws to survive, but the disguises they choose reveal how Grettir and Gísli perceive their own identity after their condemnation to outlawry (to continue the parallel, as Hervör from *Hervarar Saga* chooses to incarnate a male-figure). It betrays a troubled identity and relation to the self. The emptiness left by the lack of function and social status, along with the traumatic experiences both outlaws have gone through leads logically to a problematic inner-life. As a result, we might argue that the uncertainty of their social status is reflected in an "ontological uncertainty"[212], which might explain some of their irrational actions or duplicity.

Any kind of exile has a metaphorical expansion which can be expressed through a narrative[213]. From an exile to an inner exile, from a fact to a feeling, the consequences

209 "Vér vissum eigi, at þú værir slíkr afreksmaðr sem nú hǫfu vér reynt;". *Grettis saga,* ch.19, p. 69.

210Hume, Kathryn, "The Thematic Design of Grettis Saga", *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 73, 1974, p.469.

211 "...þótti Grettir þar gǫrt hafa mikla landhreinsun.". *Grettis saga*, ch. 67, p. 218.

212 "This will reveal what I believe to be a specific trait of these sagas distinguishing them from the others : their predilection for what I have called ontological uncertainty, i.e the uncertain religious, supernatural and social status of their protagonists." Torfi H. Tulinius, “Saga as a myth: the family sagas and social reality in 13th-century Iceland”, *op. cit*., p. 52.

213 "L'exil peut également s'entendre dans un sens métaphorique". Spanu, Petruta, *Exil et littérature*, Acta Iassyensia compationis 2005,p. 164; "...du point de vue phénoménologique l'exil intérieur désigne une expérience subjective qui instaure une coupure et une distance à soi et aux autres, évocatrice d'un sentiment d'étrangeté pouvant être produit par l'impossibilité à trouver un lieu à soi, par la conscience d'être là tout en n'y étant pas, par la recherche et la passion d'un Ailleurs inaccessible ou perdu qui exile de l'espace et du temps présents." Douville, O. et Huguet, M., "L'exil intérieur", *Psychologie clinique* 4, winter 1997, Paris, L'Harmattan, p. 7.

of outlawry are explored through the subjectivity of Grettir and Gísli. Made strangers from their own society, the outlaws are strangers to themselves as well, for they do not fit anymore in their own society. Taking over new spaces, the privilege of the margins comes with the curse of loneliness. Caused by both social force and psychological trauma, we can conclude that loneliness produces an inner exile in the two outlaw figures Grettir and Gísli (See Annex 1.a). As a consequence, the two narratives seem to emphasize a strong and similar individualization process, from which the inner-exile on an island which is first geographical, is doubled and repeated inside the two outlaws in their own identity.

4.- The contrastive narrative

Grettir and Gísli are fascinating and omnipresent characters. They are the center of gravitation in their sagas, if we compare them to more balanced sagas like *Njáls saga* or *Eyrbyggja saga*. However, this focused individualization might make the reader forget about what is not about *them* in the sagas.

The inner exile is a consequence of outlawry. But, going back to the time before the condemnation (to childhood and the first stages of the adult life), it seems that the future outlaws were already considered as strangers in their own society. The narrative brings situations where a decision can be made, and there both outlaws are depicted as choosing contrary to what their society expects. A systematic comparison between the outlaw and his sociocultural horizon, from different angles (conflicts, work, social events, burials and preoccupations), will establish the constant contrastive process in the narrative, which proves that the inner exile is not only a consequence of the outlawry, but at the same time its cause and prefiguration.

4.1 Relationship to conflicts.

Joost De Lange rightfully states about Gísli: "He is brave and dauntless, when the occasion demands it, but he does not abuse his strength"[214]. Indeed, Gísli displays a tendency to avoid conflicts on several occasions and uses his strength only if he is forced to (as in the murder of Þorgrímr.). He is said to be more patient and better than other men[215], and shows his gratitude to the slaves who helped him by giving them freedom[216]. He looks for reconciliation with his brother Þorkell, asking him to be calm and offering to exchange weapons with him[217]. His foster-brother Vésteinn is said to reconcile two slaves in chapter 12. This event is not a consequence or a cause of another event in the narrative, so we can infer that it is presented to highlight a trait of Vésteinn ´s personality. Being the other element of a "pair" with Gísli (they go together to Norway in parallel to the other "pair" Þorgrímr/Þorkell and share a token of friendship), this trait can be associated with Gísli's own characterization. In chapters 8 and 10 Gísli

214 De Lange, *Op.cit*., p. 89.
215 "Ólikr er Gísli ǫðrum mǫnnum í þolimœði, ok hefir hann betr en vér". *Gísla saga*, ch. 15 p. 52.
216 "...ok seg þeim, at þau gefi þér frelsi, ok ber þetta til jarteigna. Ek vil ok, at Svarti sé frelsi gefit." *Gisla saga*, ch. 27,p. 85.
217 "...ok skiptu vit sverðum, ok haf þú þat, sem betr bítr". *Gísla saga*, ch. 2, p. 8.

even has troubles to be separated from Þorkell or Vésteinn. Finally, Gísli expresses an ideal conception of friendship in the foster-brotherhood oath (chapter 10), aiming to make his allies his blood-brothers. Unfortunately, Þorgrímr does not share that ideal and refuses to be associated with Vésteinn, Gísli's brother-in-law. Þorkell, Gísli's own brother, joins Þorgrímr and their farm is divided against Gísli's will. Gísli's own words reveal what his ideal is: "Saman er brœðra eign bezt at líta ok at sjá"[218] Nevertheless, Gísli maintains his belief in fraternity, for he never gives up on his brother and visits him regularly during his outlawry.

On the other hand, his social context is depicted in opposition. Through generations, there is a clear atmosphere of envy between brothers and kinsmen. It first concerns women. In the first chapter of the saga, Ari's wife says she wished she belonged to Gísli[219]. Again in chapter 2, Bárðr seduced Þórdís, Gísli's sister (and will pay for it with his life). Then in chapter 9, a conversation between Auðr and Ásgerðr, (respectively married to Gísli and Þorkell) triggers tensions inside both couples. Ásgerðr admits to be attracted by Vésteinn (Auðr's brother) and suggests that Auðr had a close relationship with Þorgrímr before wedding Gísli. Þorkell heard that conversation and has a fight with his wife, whereas Gísli forgives Auðr right away[220]. This fight will lead to Vésteinn's killing.

Later it is seen that the same theme of envy applies towards objects. The sword Grásiða is an object of conflict between a slave and Gísli's uncle -named Gísli as well- in chapter 1. Later on, Þorgrímr wants Vésteinn's tapestry for his feast (chapter 15) and Gísli agrees to give the valuable away in order to avoid conflicts. In *Gísla saga*, relationships, familial or not, are severely challenged. This is not only true for Gísli. For example, Auðr has to face the same kind of impossible choice when in chapter 30 she has to choose between avenging her brother and protecting her nephews.

A similar but reversed process happens in *Grettis saga*. Grettir is right away said to be a troublesome child, and specially "ódæll", "fátalaðr", "óþýðr" and "bellinn bæði í orðum ok tiltekðum"[221] whereas his brother Atli is "gegn maðr ok gæfr, hœgr ok hógværr" and specially: "líkaði hverjum manni vel"[222]. This characteristic finds numerous examples during all of his life. In chapter 21, Grettir is in conflict with Bjǫrn.

218 *Gísla saga*, ch. 10, p. 34.
219 "Eigi var ek af því Ara gipt, at ek vilda þik eigi heldr átt hafa.". *Gísla saga*, ch. 1, p. 5.
220 "...þó mun ekki kunna þik um þetta...". *Gísla saga*, ch. 9, p. 34.
221 *Grettis saga*, ch. 14, p. 36.
222 *Grettis saga*, ch.14, p. 36.

Þorkell, their host, wants to reconcile them and offers Grettir money as a settlement[223]. Grettir refuses the money twice, and prefers to kill Bjǫrn instead. In chapter 54, Grettir robs travelers on a road, and is said that he does not give money in exchange for their valuables[224]. In chapter 71, Grettir refuses again the conciliation offered by the *bœndr*, owners of the island of Drangey, even though they "[b]uðu (…) honum nú marga kosti, bæði með fégjǫfum ok fǫgrum heitum..."[225]. Finally, he refuses the last compromise offered to him by Þorbjǫrn Ongull before his death (chapter78).

We can conclude that Gísli has a tendency for conciliation and fraternity whereas his social context looks for conflicts. In a reverse situation, Grettir has a tendency to look for trouble and refuse conciliation, while his social context offers him settlements.

4.2 Relationship to work

Gísli is said to be "hagr", talented for crafting (cf. his characterization as a builder by Miller[226]), for he is the one who builds farms and boats[227]. This is the reason why his hiding place in Ingjaldr's island will be discovered, as his craftsmanship is noticeable there[228]. Besides being gifted for crafting, he is also said to be a hard worker. In chapter 9, he is said to work day and night on his farm, whereas Þorkell, his brother, is said to prefer comfort to working[229]. However, Gísli does not even ask his brother to work and enjoys doing almost all the work by himself, as long as it keeps everyone in good terms[230].

Grettir has the opposite attitude. In chapter 14, during his childhood, he already has a troublesome relationship to work that seems to be connected with his troublesome relationship to his father. His father asks him to work[231] and three times Grettir fails to

223 "Þat vilda ek, Grettirm" sagði hann, "at þú hefnir þín eigi á Birni, en ek mun bœta fyrir hann fullum manngjǫldum, ok sé þit sáttir.". *Grettis saga,* ch. 21, p. 78.

224 "Hefir þú eigi spurt þat, at ek legg ekki fé í móti, ok sýnisk þat þó flestum, at ek fá þat, sem ek vil?". *Grettis saga,* ch. 54, p. 175.

225 *Grettis saga,* ch.71, p. 228-229.

226 William Ian Miller, *op,cit.*, p. 134.

227 "Þar gerði Gísli bœ, ok búa þar síðan". *Gísla saga*, ch.4, p.15.

228 "Gísli er þar þann vetr ok s**míðar skip Ingjaldi ok marga hluti aðra.** En allt þat, sem hann smíðaði, þá var þat auðkennt, **því at hann var hagari en flestir menn aðrir**. Menn undruðusk, hví þat var **svá vel smíðat margt**, sem Ingjaldr átti, því at hann var ekki hagr." *Gísla saga*, ch.25, p. 79.

229"Þorkell var ofláti mikill ok vann ekki fyrir búi þeira, en **Gísli vann nótt með degi.**" *Gísla saga,* ch. 9 p. 29-30.

230 ""Ekki má svá lengr fram fara," segir Þorkell, "at vit eigim búlag saman, því at á því verðr stórmikill skaði, þar sem **þú hefir jafnan einn haft ǫnn ok erfiði fyrir búini**, en ek tek til einskis hǫndum, þess sem þrifnaðr sé í." "**Tel þú nú ekki at því,** "segir Gísli, "**meðan ek geri ekki orð á;...".** *Gísla saga*, ch. 10, p.34-35.

231 "Ásmundr bað hann starfa nǫkkut.". *Grettis saga,* ch. 14, p. 37; ""Þá skaltu svá at fara," sagði

accomplish the tasks: first to watch chicken, then to scratch the back of his father and finally to watch horses (chapter 14). Grettir depreciates the work: "Lítit verk ok lǫðrmannligt", "...en þó er verkit lǫðrmannligt"[232]. Then his father calls him a "mannskræfa" and says: "Aldri er dugr í þér"[233]. Later in chapter 17, Grettir refuses to work with the crew on the trip for Norway. When the ship sinks, he refuses to participate with the common effort[234]. He is again excluding himself, spending his time away from the others, *undir bátinum*. He even composes *níð* to mock his fellows[235]. His inability to work with or for others is still present after his outlawry[236].

As a result neither Grettir nor Gísli place themselves on an equal standing with the other members of the society in terms of function. Grettir refuses to do work that would grant him a place in the society, and Gísli refuses to give and share work with others. One embodies a position of exclusion by default, the other by excess.

4.3 Relationship to social events

As a child, Grettir refuses to do what others do. He does not sleep in the common fire-room, which underlines his exclusion[237]. In chapter 15, during the game of *knattleikr*, Grettir is not able to keep his temper under control. Grettir does not "graduate" from primordial events of socialization, as Russell Poole points out[238]. This expands to his adult life, for in chapter 29 he cannot participate in a horse-fight without triggering trouble.

By contrast, in the same situation, Gísli is said to play on the same terms his brother does (chapter 14-15) and to not abuse his strength on purpose (probably to not generate tensions as often happens in those games). Later, Gísli asks for a game to be organized in order to settle the tensions with his brother Þorkell: "Þat þykkjumk ek at

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Ásmundr, "sem ek býð þét.""p.39; "Nokkurri stundu síðar talaði Ásmundr til, at Grettir skyldi geyma hrossa hans."p. 39.

232 *Grettis saga,* ch. 14, p.38.

233 *Grettis saga*, ch. 14, p.38.

234 *Grettis saga,* ch.17, p. 50 "Grettir gerði sér grǫf undir bátinum ok vildi þaðan hvergi hrœra sik, hvárki til austra né at segli **at vinna ok ekki starfa**, þat sem hann átti at skipi at gera til jafnaðar við aðra menn; eigi vildi hann ok kaupa af sér."

235 "**Ekki fengu þeir af honum starfann**, en líkaði nú verr en áðr, ok kváðu hann skyldu taka gjǫld á sjálfum sér fyrir **níð sitt** ok lǫgleysu þá, er hann gerði." *Grettis saga*, ch.17, p.51.

236 "En er Þorsteinn frétti þat, sagði hann Gretti, at hann leitaði sér annars hælis en ver bar, "því at ek sé, **at þú vill ekki starfa**,...". *Grettis saga,* ch. 53, p. 174.

237 "Eigi lagðisk hann í eldaskála...". *Grettis saga,* ch. 14, p. 42.

238 "Games with other young males are classically an avenue towards socialization and they are depicted in this saga as an event for the whole wider community.". Russell Poole "Old Norse/Icelandic Myth in Relation to *Grettis saga*", p. 407.

þér eiga, bróðir, at nú sé okkart vinfengi sem þá, er bezt hefir verit, ok tǫkum nú upp leika."[239]

Gísli is said to have ceased sacrifices since he came back from Denmark[240], but he keeps organizing feasts (which are still moments of socialization that fit Gísli's ideal fraternity). This is contrasted with Þorgrímr (the man Gísli will kill for Vésteinn's slaying), whose feast includes sacrifices to Freyr[241]. Moreover, Þorgrímr is said to be on intimate terms with the god Freyr because his grave mound does not freeze in winter[242]. In contrast, Gísli is intimate with his dream-women who ask him to give up the "old faith" (chapter 22).

Grettir does not share with others during feasts (chapter 18). As was already mentioned, the only feast in which he is "talkative" and "sociable" is during the staged welcoming of the berserkir[243]. Moreover, Þorfinnr remarks that Grettir does not have respect for customs: "...ok spurði, hvat hann ætti svá nauðsynligt at starfa, at hann geymði eigi hátta með ǫðrum mǫnnum"[244].

As we have seen, haunting in *Grettis saga* happen in the period of *Jól*. In chapter 32, Glámr (when he was alive) does not respect *Jól*'s customs and utters a speech against Christianity. He insists on eating the evening before *Jól*, despite the housewife's warnings, and his non-respectful behaviour towards Christian customs is clearly underlined as the cause for his supernatural death[245]. In chapters 35 and 64, Grettir does not respect the custom of *Jól* either, but unlike his enemy, he avoids actively criticizing Christianity.

The two outlaws are depicted as having the opposite attitude to other members of society during social activities. Gísli is sociable and ceases sacrifices, whereas Þorgrímr is greedy and dedicated to Freyr. Grettir is unsociable and excludes himself from social events, in contrast with his successive hosts who organize feasts and follow Christian customs.

239 G*ísla saga,* ch. 17, p. 56.
240 "...en Gísl lét af blótum, síðan hann var í Vébjǫrgum í Danmǫrku.". *Gísla saga*, ch.10, p.36.
241 "Þorgrímr ætlaði at hafa haustboð at vetrnóttum ok fagna vetri ok blóta Frey...". *Gísla saga,* ch. 15, p. 50.
242 "...ok gátu menn þess til, at hann myndi Frey svá ávarðr fyrir blótin,at hann myndi eigi vilja, at frøri á milli þeira.". *Gísla saga,* ch. 18, p. 57.
243 See 3.5.Mimetism and Inner Exile.
244 *Grettis saga*, ch. 18, p. 59.
245 "Húsfreyja mælti : "Víst veit ek, at þér mun illa farask í dag, ef þú tekr þetta illbrigði til." *Grettis saga*, ch. 32, p. 111.

4.4 Relationship to burials

In *Grettis saga*, the Christian custom of burying corpses in cemeteries close to churches plays an important part in the narrative. In chapter 32, a group of men tries to carry Glámr to the church of Þórhallsstadir, but they cannot transport him. This is another example of impossibility of uniting what is connected to the supernatural and the sacred space of a church. However, the body of the second shepherd killed the second year is transported to the church successfully[246]. Ásmundr, Grettir's father, is buried in the church he built himself (chapter 42), and in chapter 48 corpses are brought to church as well. Grettir is never depicted following those customs or going to church. On the contrary, when he has to bring back the bones of the kidnapped men from the troll's cave, he does not enter the sacred space of the church and leaves the bones "í forkirkju"[247].

On the other hand, not a single church is mentioned in *Gísla saga* (at least as long as Gísli is alive). However, it gives two detailed examples of pagan burials. In chapter 14, Vésteinn is buried in a "mound", prepared (*heygja*) by many men and his body is decked according to the ways of that time. Then Þorgrímr binds Hel-shoes to Vésteinn's feet for his journey to Valhöll[248]. No other sources or archeological evidences confirm that custom[249]. The second burial described in chapter 17 concerns Þorgrímr. A mound is made and Þorgrímr laid in a boat, and they seal the mound. Then, Gísli put a big stone in the boat, to fasten it. The account of the use of a boat as burial is recorded by many written and archaeological sources[250]. Finally, in chapter 29, Þorkell (Gísli's brother) is said to be buried according to the old customs, without more details[251]. Gísli takes part in the burials. However, Þorgrímr is the one who explains to Gísli why he has to tie Hel-shoes. Afterwards, it is in front of Þorgrímr's mound that Gísli confesses his crime.

As a consequence, Grettir and Gísli do not have an equal and fair social position on conciliations and work compared to other characters. This contrast is extendedto religious practices during feasts and burials, and progressively emphasizes their

246 "Síðan fœðu þeir hann til kirkju, ok varð engum manni mein at Þorgauti síðan.". *Grettis saga,* ch. 33, p. 114-115.
247 *Grettis saga*, ch. 66, p. 216.
248 *Gísla saga,* ch. 14, p. 45.
249Davidson, Hilda , *The Road to Hel : A Study of the Concept of the Dead in Old Norse Literature*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1943, p. 34.
250 Hilda Davidson, *op.cit.*, p. 39.
251 "En Þorkell er heygðr at fornum sið...". *Gísla saga*, ch. 29, p. 92.

problematic relationship with paganism and Christianity.

4.5 Re-creating a stage and inner-exile

Gísla saga takes place before the official conversion to Christianity in AD 1000 (life-time of Gísli in Iceland: 964-977). As a result, the author needs to metaphorically set the stage, as in theaters, of what he thought was the pre-Christian life of the time. Many sentences show the author's efforts to inform his readers about pagan times, as for example: "Þat var þá margra manna siðr at fagna vetri **í þann tíma** ok hafa þá veizlur ok vetrnáttablót."[252]

Some other points can be relevant concerning practices from the pre-Christian past. The foster-brotherhood oath cannot be verified by archaeological sources, and the way it is described does not conform to other written accounts. Its description is probably a mixture of commonplace and personal imagination of the author. Moreover, the fact the author describes two different ways of burying victims of murders that are similar is maybe again a mark of his eagerness to share accounts he knew by using the two opportunities he has to report different forms of funeral rites. He seems to speak through Þorgrímr's voice when he gives what can be called an explanation ("Það er tízka") of Vésteinn's burial, for the audience is not supposed to know that custom. The same explicative tone is present in the declaration of Þórhallr's wife: "Ekki er þat háttr kristinna manna, at matask þenna dag, því at á morgin er jóladagr inn fyrsti" segir hon, "ok er því fyrst skylt at fasta í dag."[253]

The same process takes place in *Grettis saga*, but this time in order to set the stage of the early times of Christianity in Iceland. In chapter 13, Christianity is said to have already reached the country[254]. Details throughout the saga remind constantly of the Christian context. In chapter 38, a bishop is mentioned, and in chapter 35, Þórhallr thanks God for freeing him of revenants, while in chapter 64 a woman makes the sign of the holy cross. Norway is also depicted as under the banner of Christianity ("land of Christians"). In the king's church, Grettir is unable to perform an ordeal, which echoes

252 *Gísla saga*, ch.10, p. 36; Other examples: "**Það var þá mælt at sá væri skyldr** at hefna er vopni kippti ór sári; en **það voru kǫlluð** launvíg en eigi morð ef menn létu vopn eftir í beninni standa." *Gísla saga,* ch.13, p. 44."En þá er þeir veitt Vésteini umbúnað **sem siður var** til gekk Þorgrímr at Gísla ok mælti: **"Það er tízka,**" segir hann, "að binda mǫnnum helskó þá er þeir skulu ganga á til Valhallar ok mun ek þat gera við Véstein." *Gísla saga,* ch. 14, p. 45. "Vésteins eftir þeirri **siðvenju** er þá var **í þann tíma**"*Gísla saga,* ch. 13, p. 44.

253 *Grettis saga*, ch.32, p.111.

254 "Þeir boðuðu kristni fyrst fyrir norðan land;". *Grettis saga,* ch. 13, p.35.

his stop at the border of the sacred space of the church in chapter 65, and also the impossibility for Glámr's body and the priest to meet. Finally, the anti-Christian speech uttered by Glámr in chapter 32 seals the antagonism between supernatural spaces and creatures and Christian society[255].

Régis Boyer draws attention to the fact that the existence of the church mentioned in chapter 32 of *Grettis saga* is very unlikely[256], as it is mentioned only in this text. We can then deduce the high level of fictionality of this episode[257]. It is far more probable that, in those years of transition, the society was still less Christianized and that here the extreme opposition between pagan and Christian is a literary tool serving the characterization of the outlaws and the contrastive narrative process.

This fictionally created environment allows the preoccupations of the outlaws to be revealed and emphasized in opposition. That is made clear in chapter 51: "Er þat þó ólíkt, því at Þormóðr er maðr guðhræddr ok trúmaðr mikill, en Grettir er svá myrkfælinn, at hann gerði eptir skapi sínu"[258]. The syntax reveals the gap between Grettir and the others: the society is already Christian, but Grettir is stuck in a liminal world of darkness, strongly connected with the supernatural. Many examples all along *Grettla* show that Grettir's main concerns are to (first) prove his strength through deeds and (second) accumulate treasures. There are numerous examples: to carry a bull alone (chapter 50), to carry a big stone *Grettistak* (chapter 16), to take back valuables and money from a grave-mound, to show his strength in a game under disguise (Gestr) while he is an outlaw (chapter 73).

He is very arrogant, thinks that nothing is impossible for him, and is disappointed if he has nowhere to put his strength to use[259]. Grettir is always curious about strange events and willing to "hætta á þat"[260]. He even displays Promethean features, like his exploits in swimming in order to bring back fire to his fellows (chapter 38)[261]. It seems that Grettir is characterized as belonging to the so-called "Matter of the

255 "Marga hindrvitni hafi þér, þá er ek sé til einskis koma; veit ek eigi, at mǫnnum fari nú betr at heldr en þá, er menn fóru ekki með slíkt; þótti mér þá betri siðr, er menn váru heiðnir kallaðir, ok vil ek hafa mat minn, en engar refjur.". *Grettis saga*, ch. 32, p.111.

256 "L'existence de cette église, mentionnée par ce seul texte, paraît tout à fait improbable. ". Régis Boyer, *Les sagas islandaises*, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Paris, Gallimard, 1987, note 1 p.1769.

257 See Orri Vésteinson, *The Christianization of Iceland: Priests, Power, and Social Change,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001.

258 *Grettis saga*, ch. 51, p. 163.

259 "Þá þótti Gretti mikit mein, er hann mátti hvergi reyna afl sitt, ok fréttisk fyrir, er nǫkkut væri þat, er hann mætti við fásk.". *Grettis saga*, ch. 31, p.107.

260 *Grettis saga*, ch. 18, p. 57; "Grettir kvað sér hug á at koma á Þórhallsstaði ok sjá, hversu þar væri um geng.". *Grettis saga*, ch. 34, p. 117; "Grettir hafði spurn af þessu, ok með því at honum var mjǫk lagit at koma af reimleikum eða aptrgǫngum, þá gerði hann ferð sína.". *Grettis saga*, ch.64, p. 210.

261 Many studies underline the fact that Grettir has at the same time superhuman features and subhuman

North"[262], being more of a legendary pagan hero, than part of the society he was born in. But it would be too reductionist to think that the preoccupations of a legendary hero were only about physical strength. Grettir shows his knowledge of proverbs repeatedly in the saga. He also displays his talent as a *skáld*, both abilities that are connected with knowledge of the past. Moreover, Grettir reveals his opinion on non-heroic behaviour: "Grettir sá nú, at hann var eigi slíkr fullhugi, sem hann lézk, því at hann stóð jafnan á baki mǫnnum sínum"[263]. It makes sense with the character he surrenders to in a fight, Loptr/Hallmundr, the one who surpassed his physical strength[264]. This will lead to a friendship between the two men.

From his attitudes towards conciliation and work Gísli's preoccupations seem to be connected with peace (even "spiritual peace") and with the afterlife. The moment he admits Þorgrímr's murder by uttering a *vísa* "er æva skyldi"[265], Gísli grants himself the position of criminal but at the same time frees himself from the inner-burden of a secret crime which was disturbing his inner-peace. When Þorgrímr tacitly admits Vésteinn's murder in front of his grave, he does it out of hatred (chapter 15). Gísli admits his crime in front of his victim's grave as well, but the scene is not exactly the same. He is not motivated by hatred but because he sees his sister Þórdis siting on the mound (chapter 18). In committing a crime, Gísli breaks what he tried to build as well as any of his crafty productions, i.e. his peaceful–relationships with his siblings. Therefore, this born-builder can be connected to the noble heathen figure coined by Lars Lönroth, for he is the "ideal counterbalance"[266] to other pagan characters (like Þorgrímr).

We can say that what is taken away from them is what they cared the most about. Grettir cared about glorious deeds and strength, but Glámr's curse prevents him from achieving his full strength and leaves Grettir stuck in a childlike position. Gísli cared the most about conciliation and fraternity which gave him spiritual peace, but ends up killing one of his kinsmen by alliance. Outlawry did not change their preoccupations, but instead made the outlaws more concerned about them. Those

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features, which draws him as a mythological figure. See Kristen Hastrup, *op.cit.* p. 291, Russell Poole, "Old Norse/Icelandic Myth in Relation to Grettis saga", G. Barnes and M.Clunies Ross (eds.) *Proceedings of the 11th International Saga Conference, 2-7 July 2000, University of Sydney,* Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Sydney, 2000.

262 Torfi H. Tulinius, "*La Matière du Nord". Sagas légendaires et fiction dans la littérature islandaise en prose du XIIIe siècle*, Paris, Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1995.

263 "Grettir now saw that he was not such a hero as he made out, for he always kept behind his men ". *Grettis saga,* ch. 59, p. 192.

264 "Sér Grettir þá, at hann hefir ekki afl við þessum manni;". *Grettis saga*, ch. 54, p. 177.

265 *Gísla saga*, ch.18, p. 58.

266 Lars Lönnroth, *op. cit.*, p.28.

preoccupations were already in conflict with their own society *before* the condemnation, which excluded them from their own kind, taking the shape of an inner exile. The constant non-fitting attitude between their preoccupations and their society might even be the cause of their outlawry: Gísli started his troubles by asking for a blood-brotherhood, and Grettir was warned not to engage with Glámr (chapter 34), but he could not repress his need to prove once more his strength. As a consequence, the dialectic of inner exile is retro-active: the inner exile triggers the geographical exile (outlawry), which in return deepens the inner exile already present (see annex 1.b).

5.-The scapegoating process

The analysis of the contrastive narrative and its conclusion on the inner exile as a cause of the outlawries of Grettir and Gísli supports the idea of a strong process of individualization. It does so precisely through the recurrent "one versus many" motif, which is the first clue to identify a possible scapegoating process in the two sagas. The theory of the scapegoat developed by René Girard will help to understand the ambiguity held towards outlaws: hunted down and feared, they are nevertheless admired by and useful to society.

5.1 René Girard and the scapegoat theory

The word "scapegoat" originates in an early Greek mistranslation of the Hebrew Bible (The *Septuagint*). There, the uncertain word "Azazel","for absolute removal", was understood as "ez ozel", the "goat sent out". This misunderstanding is then carried out in the Latin *Vulgate* as *caper emissarius*, the "emissary goat", which led in the 16th century translation of the Bible to (e)scapegoat in english. "Azazel" was originally a ritual of the *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement) on which occasion a goat was cast out in the desert to perish. Its sacrifice was performed in order to clean the sins of the community (*Leviticus 16*) on that sacred day.

From this Hebrew origin, the word was then commonly applied to any person blamed by a community for an evil. James Frazer is the first to mention it in his large comparative anthropological study of myths and rituals[267]. As a process, the "scapegoat mechanism" was then coined by the American literary theorist and philosopher Kenneth Burke in his *Permanence and Change* (1935). More recently, René Girard expanded the concept in his ambitious "philosophical anthropology" or "mimetic anthropology". According to him, violence in society is caused by human actions led by what he described as "mimetic desire", the desire for what is possessed by someone else. If repeated on a large scale, this mimetic desire creates a vicious circle of private revenges that can threaten the stability of the society and generate tensions inducing chaos. As a result, society discharges that violence on a single person or a community, a scapegoat, which will help to bring back a temporary peace[268]. The violence of *everyone against*

267Frazer, James, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion,* Cosimo, 2009*,* p 354.

268 "C'est la communauté entière que le sacrifice protège de sa propre violence, c'est la communauté entière qu'il détourne vers des victimes qui lui sont extérieures. Le sacrifice polarise sur la victime des

everyone is therefore turned into the violence of *everyone against one*.

In *Le Bouc-émissaire*, René Girard establishes the stereotypes of persecution in order to identify if a scapegoating process happens or not[269]. The first stereotype is a stereotype of crisis. It refers to the context in which the text is produced or said to happen. It is a time of "indifferentiation", for the crisis needs to be of such proportions that it reaches any social group inside the society, a "crisis for all". The causes can be external, like plagues or natural disasters, or internal like political troubles or religious conflicts. To support his argument, René Girard gives the example of a text from the 14th century blaming the Jewish community for a terrible plague devastating France[270].

The second category is the stereotype of accusations. Like the crisis, the crimes or practices the victim is accused of must be "indifferential". By this it means that they are not just crimes (for example a murder) but are *more than a crime*, involving bestiality, infanticide, incest, profanation, etc. To sum it up, the crime challenges the values of the society by transgressing taboos (for example witches were often accused of sacrifiying children, having incestuous relationship or turning into beasts)[271]. Therefore it is depicted as an atrocity.

The third stereotype is "differential". It concerns the victim of the accusations, who must have victimal traits[272] which makes them good candidates for blame. Those criteria might be religious and cultural (like for minorities) or purely physical. The single fact of being abnormal in some way (disease, madness, deformities, mutilations) is a trait that can be interpreted as simultaneously sacred and cursed. Physical traits can be used in return to build a stereotype of a cultural group. To reduce this to the absurd: it would mean to consider the fact that children have an abnormal size compared to adults, and for that reason all children are somehow connected with the evil. The victimal traits can expand to social abnormality and the two extremities of the economic structure, the poorest as well as the richest. Then the persecutors suggest the victims as having an "affinité coupable avec la crise"[273], making a link between the abnormality of a person/group and the abnormality of an event. The final result of this scapegoating

germes de dissension partout répandus et il les dissipe en leur proposant un assouvissement partiel".Girard, René, *La Violence et le sacré* in *De la violence à la divinité*, Grasset, Paris, 2007, p. 305

269René Girard, *Le Bouc-émissaire*, chapter II, p.21-37.

270René Girard, *Le Bouc-émissaire*, Guillaume de Machaut, *Jugement du Roy de Navarre,* p 5-19.

271René Girard, *Le Bouc-émissaire*, p. 28.

272 "...les auteurs désignés de ces crimes possèdent des signes de sélection victimaire,...", René Girard, *Le Bouc-émissaire,* p.37.

273 René Girard, *Le Bouc-émissaire*, p.37; "Their guilty affiliation to the crisis".

process is to transfer on the victims the responsibility for the crisis, with the belief that if the victim is sacrificed or at least expelled, the crisis will be solved.

5.2 Persecution in the outlaw sagas

In the outlaw sagas, the scapegoat process is not obvious at first sight, because the violence against the scapegoat (the outlaw) is made legal. It is close to what Girard calls "persécutions à résonances collectives"[274], which are "crowd-movements" supported by the law, and in that sense different from social unrest aimed against a person or a group of person. A clear example of the "legal" scapegoating process is the Greek ritual of exile or "pharmakos". The city of Athens used to choose a human scapegoat (a cripple, a beggar or a criminal) who was held responsible for a disaster, and expelled him in order to purify the society. Later on, the word *pharmakon* kept the ambivalence of the sacrificial ritual by meaning at the same time "poison" and "medication"[275].

As already stated, the Icelandic full outlawry condemnation is also ambivalent. Outlaws are expelled but not allowed to leave the island. As a consequence it triggers a hunt, from which we can identity motifs of persecution. The time of crisis is double concerning the sagas. First, the *sogüold* is a time of religious transitions and tensions. *Gísla saga* takes place just before the official conversion (964 to 977 BC), *Grettis saga*'s main plot unravels just after (996 BC to 1031 AD). To follow the description proposed by Torfi H. Tulinius of the *Islendingasögur* genre[276] as well as the present analysis of the contrastive narrative, we can assume that the outlaw sagas, *Grettis saga* and *Gísla saga,* belong to a literature of crisis. Moreover, the time of writing is as well a time of crisis, of social and political struggle[277]. This double-crisis gives a suitable context to the

274 René Girard*, Le Bouc-émissaire,* p,21; "Persecutions with collective resonance".

275 "En cas de besoin, c'est-à-dire quand une calamité s'abattait ou menaçait de s'abattre sur la ville, épidémie, famine, invasion étrangère, dissensions intérieures, il y avait toujours un pharmakos à la disposition de la collectivité. […] Il ne faut pas non plus s'étonner si le mot *pharmakon*, en grec classique, signifie à la fois le poison et son antidote, le mal et le remède...". René Girard, *La Violence et le Sacré*, p.410-411.

276 "This will reveal what I believe to be a specific trait of these sagas distinguishing them from the others: their predilection for what I have called ontological uncertainty, i.e the uncertain religious, supernatural and social status of their protagonists." Torfi H. Tulinius, *Saga as a myth: the family sagas and social reality in 13th-century Iceland*, University of Reykjavík, 1999, p. 527.

277 "This is a period when the dominant group in society seems to be recomposing itself. On the one hand, a hitherto more or less homogeneous chieftain class is dividing itself into a class of overlords dominating the others: on the other hand, church officials, until then a part of this homogeneous dominant class, define themselves increasingly as a separate group with its own identity, inducing the remaining chieftain class to define itself as laymen" Torfi H. Tulinius, *Saga as a myth: the family*

development of the scapegoating process.

The second stereotype of persecution is revealed by the "more than a crime" committed by both outlaws. Gísli commits what is labeled "secret murder" (*launvíg*). The difference is made explicit in the language: committing a secret murder was not considered as an acceptable way to kill. A *víg* was a murder which was publicly proclaimed by the responsible in the nearest inhabited location to the crime-scene[278]. A *morð* or *morð-víg* was a non-proclaimed crime, for which compensations were often not enough[279]. But the use of the secrecy at night seems to be highly shameful. It is by this interdiction to kill at night that Egill's life is saved: "Eigi mun konungr láta at eggjask um ǫll níðingsverk þín; eigi mun hann láta Egil drepa í nótt, því at náttvíg eru morðvíg."[280] Therefore, Gísli commits a shameful crime, breaking both legal and social rules. Added to that fact, he commits the crime in the intimacy of his sister's marital bed and is said to accidentally touch his breast[281]. The expression "Hon hugði, at hann legði hǫndina yfir hana." might even be highly suggestive, for in Eddaic mythological poems, it was a euphemism for sexual intercourse[282]. With that gesture, Gísli reaches the incestuous theme which is, according to Girard, one of the aspects associated with the stereotype of accusations.

The first crime of Grettir is also a *morð*, for he does not proclaim the deed[283]. Afterwards, the crime which grants him the full outlawry is *more than a crime* as well, for he kills two brothers, Þorgeir and Skeggi, sons of Þórðr. The loss of two sons was an important matter, for inheritance reasons as much as emotional ones. The enraged father Þórðr is logically said to dedicate himself to condemn Grettir[284], calling the crime "slík óverkun"[285]. In the same tone, the crime is qualified as "þessu óhappi" and Grettir's "mesta illvirki"[286] by the merchants to whom Grettir brought back the fire. The advice gave to another outlaw Gunnar by the wise Njáll appears as a distant warning to Grettir:

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sagas and social reality in 13th-century Iceland, p.527.

278 See Cleasby's dictionary; In *Grettis saga* chap. 45 p. 146, Þorbjǫrn declares Atli's murder in the proper way: "Þá var Þorbjǫrn á bak kominn ok lýsti víginu á hendr sér ok reið heim eptir þat".

279 See in *Grettis saga*, ch. 16, Grettir does not proclaim Skeggi's murder and had to leave Iceland for three winters.

280 *Egils saga,* ch. 60.

281 *Gísla saga*, ch.16 p.53 "Gengr hann þangat ok þreifask fyrir ok tekr á brjósti henni. Ok hvíldi hon nær stokki."

282 *Gísla saga,* ch. 16, p.53; See Preben Meulengracht Sorensen, "Murder in marital bed : a crucial scene in Gísla saga", p. 250.

283 *Grettis saga,* ch. 16, p. 46-47.

284 "*var honum síðan þyngstr allra sinna mótstǫðumanna, sem opt bar raun á.". Grettis saga,* ch. 46, p. 146.

285 *Grettis saga,* ch. 46, p. 146.

286 *Grettis saga,* ch. 38, p. 131.

never kill twice in the same family[287]. Grettir, as Gísli, approaches areas of taboo. Moreover the two sons are Icelanders. We can suppose that a kind of solidarity was expected between people from Iceland (often travelling together). Þorfinnr the Norwegian grants them the status of a group when he claims that he does not trust an Icelander (chapter 20)[288]. As a consequence, both Gísli's and Grettir's crimes are *more than a crime* for they challenge social codes and taboos.

The third stereotype of persecution, the victimal traits, was revealed through the contrastive narrative process and the inner exile present before the time of outlawry (See chapter 4). On physical matters it corresponds to Grettir's abnormal strength: his force is occulted for he does not participate in games with others[289] and he is easily mistaken for a troll. His physical appearance is a matter of wonder and catches the attention[290]. We might add that his nickname, a differential trait, is Grettir "sterki". On social matters, it corresponds to his extreme asociability and his connections with supernatural creatures and with the margins. Gísli's victimal traits are revealed as well through the contrastive narrative, mainly on social matters (conciliation, work and sacrifices) and on his exclusive ability to dream, which puts him apart from the rest of the society. Their inner exile already present before the outlawry makes them "sacrifiable".

Finally, some more signs of persecution can be noticed. "The Icelandic sagaman built up his story around a conflict of characters, whereas adventures and outward circumstances were of secondary importance to him and were only used to stress the conflict."[291]. Indeed, as it was shown with the contrastive narrative process, the repetitive adventures of Grettir and Gísli stress major conflict. But more than a conflict between characters, it appears to be a conflict of *one* character against a *group*. In both sagas, the enemies of the outlaw are depicted as numerous. In *Grettis saga*, they are presented as a "pack", and this creates a narrative pattern of "one-versus-many". An example is the scene of Grettir's transportation (*Grettisfœrsla*), when he is attacked by 30 men together (chapter 52) and about to be hanged. In chapter 70, the island of

287 "Ver þú nú var um þig. Nú hefir þú vegit tvisvar í hinn sama knérunn."*Njáls saga*, ch.73, p. 177.

288 "...en ek treysti eigi vel Íslendingi". *Grettis saga*, ch. 20, p.71; It echoes to the violent reaction towards the Icelander Eyjólfr in ch. 3 of *Víga-Glúms saga*: "En hvort er," kvað hann, "þar hjá þér maður eða kvikindi? Það er hrúga eigi lítil. [...]"að eigi sé óhapplaust hér á bæ ef íslenskur maður skal hér vera."

289 "...eigi vissu menn gǫrla afl hans, því at hann var óglíminn.". *Grettis saga*, ch.14, p. 42.

290 "Ok er hann kom til kirkju, litu þeir margir til hans, er fyrir váru, ok tǫluðu þeir, at hann væri ólikr flestum mOnnum sakar afls ok vaxtar.". *Grettis saga*, ch.39, p. 133.

291 De Lange, *op.cit.*, p. 106.

Drangey is said to be owned by 20 bœndr (chapter 71), all enumerated, who tried without success to persuade Grettir to leave[292].

Moreover, men are repeatedly sent to look for the outlaws. In *Gísla saga* chapter 22, Borkr pays Eyjólfr who asks Helgi to hunt Gísli (chapter 22), and Helgi is sent a second time to look for Gísli (chapter 23) and a third on Ingaldr's island (chapter 31). Ransom is put on their head, and Grettir experiences even twice the betrayal of men in the same situation of outlawry[293] . The outlaws do not have a *single* opponent, but *many* members of the society get involved in their hunt. The hunt triggered by the outlawry focused the attention of the society on one exceptional figure, and as a result, we can conclude a certain *mouvement de foule* (crowd-mouvement) against them. The violence depicted in the saga is, after their outlawry, redirected towards them.

The scapegoating process can be of course understood in a strictly ethnographic way, and can be studied in the material reality in both "primitive" and "modern" societies. But it can be used as well in order to identify texts of persecutions, as René Girard argues for. Both outlaw sagas have the aspects of the persecution defined by René Girard, but they are works of fiction, *söguligr*. Therefore they are not exactly texts of persecution but tales of persecution. This transposition of the anthropological concepts to a text is extremely useful to study social patterns from remote times, as for medieval Iceland. However, this transposition does not work without risks: we need to have constantly in mind the fact that what we are reading is not strictly accurate historical facts, but a perception of history (the construction of an ideology or the subjective perception of an author). As a result, the scapegoating process can be studied as a process that happened in the past, or can be the result of a literary construction in order to throw light on a particular character (as is argued in the present thesis). Thanks to the flexibility literature offers, the scapegoating process can be a literary tool used to make a main character appear as a victim in order to make him more likeable for the audience.

292 "Nú þǫgnuðu bœndr, ok þótti mikill vágestr kominn í Drangey. Buðu þeir honum nú marga kosti, bæði með fégjǫfum ok fǫgrum heitum, en Grettir neitti ǫllu, ok fóru bœndr á brott við svá búit ok unðu illa við sinn hlut."*Grettis saga*, ch.70, p.228.

293 As mentioned earlier in chapter 2.Exile and outlawry, the situation of the outlaw is worsen by the fact that solidarity between the outlaws is not possible. See *Grettis saga*, ch. 55 and 56.

5.3 Fairness and unfairness

It is by depicting a balance between fairness and unfairness that both outlaws are made "likeable" as characters of fiction. Gísli's situation is clear and the balance tips the scale towards unfairness all along *Gísla saga*. Right from the beginning, Gísli is presented as the non-responsible cause of the tragic chain of events, which is making him a tragic character, or as Peter Foote stated, a "typical hero"[294]. He is the one to decide to strengthen the links of his kinsmen by *fóstbræðralag* in order to avoid the prediction made by Gestr the Wise[295]. However, the oath fails and starts the conflicts, between the kinsmen. Another moment of tragic unfairness is for example the blow Auðr gives to Gísli's opponent in his last fight. The blow does not kill him, and this will lead to Gísli's death[296]. The unfairness is mainly a tool of fate in *Gísla saga*, and Gísli expresses a singular passivity towards it[297].

In *Grettis saga* the situation is more balanced, for Grettir is far more ambiguous in matters of fairness. Fate is not external like in *Gísla saga* but appears embodied in one character: Glámr. The traumatic meeting with the *draugr* is the turning point of the saga with regard to fairness and unfairness because it brings him bad luck for the rest of his life (chapter 35). Before this meeting, Grettir is not a likeable character, but almost scary. He is bad-tempered, bloodily cruel towards animals as a child (chapter 14) and unfair in conciliations (see 4.1-Relationship to conflicts). His responsibility cannot be denied in Skeggi's murder as he does not proclaim the murder as he should have (chapter 16). This results in a fair procedure. Grettir is present at the assembly, compensations are paid, and the condemnation to lesser outlawry decided without struggle[298]. This contrasts with the agitation surrounding his second condemnation. Grettir is not present to defend himself and Skapi lǫgsǫgumaðr points out this irregularity. But the fierceness and importance of his opponent force his

294 Peter Foote, "An essay on the saga of Gísli and its Icelandic background", in *Kreddur*, 2004, Reykjavik, p. 16.

295 "Gestr svarar : "Eigi munu þeir allir samþykkir it þriðja sumar, er þar eru nú í þeim flokki."...Gísli svarar : "Hér mun hann mælt mál talat hafa. En vǫrumsl vér, at eigi verði hann sannspár;enda sé ek gott ráð til þessa, at vér bindim várt vinfengi með meirum fastmælumen áðr, ok sverjumsk í fóstbræðralag fjórir." *Gísla saga,* ch.6, p. 21-22.

296 "Þat vissa ek fyrir lǫngu, at ek var vel kvæntr, en þó vissa ek eigi, at ek væra svá vel kvæntr sem ek em. En minna lið veittir þú mér nú en þú mundir vilja eða þú ætlaðir. Þó at telræðit væri gott, því at eina leið mundu þeir nú hafa farit báðir.". *Gísla saga,* ch. 34, p.112.

297For example : "Svá verðr nú at vera" *Gísla saga,* ch.12, p. 40; "Nú fór sem mik grunaði, ok mun þetta fyrir ekki koma, sem nú er at gǫrt; get ek ok, at auðna ráði nú um þetta." *Gísla saga,* ch.6, p. 24.

298 "...gekk Þorkell til handsala ok helt upp fébótum, en Grettir skyldi vera sekr ok vera útan þrjár vetr ". *Grettis saga,* ch. 16, p. 48.

condemnation[299] and no one is there to take his defense, as his father died and his brother Atli got killed. Moreover, Grettir is, as Gísli, the non-responsible cause of the tragic events, for he creates panic while entering the camp because of his abnormal aspect (chapter 38). We can say then that one of his victimal aspects (troll-like) and his bad luck (from Glámr) are the effective causes of the accident, for Grettir did not do it "munu vígligri þykkja en ek"[300]. This discharges him from responsibility in the eyes of the audience of the saga, for its members are the only one to really know what happened. Finally, the possibility to prove his innocence is denied to him, for he cannot perform the ordeal because of a "svipligr" boy who plays on his bad-temper[301]. Looking at the full saga, it seems that Grettir's responsibility moves from fairness (the first chapters until Glámr's meeting) to unfairness (until his death), which underlines a process of progressive victimization. From that perspective, *Grettis saga* starts an exploration of "ill fate"[302].

Gísli is as well absent from the assembly while his condemnation is decided, and his defenders are described as non-efficient and ridiculous in dealing with his case: "...ok koma engu áleiðis um sættina, ok kalla menn, at þeir hafi illa borit sik, svá at þeim hafi næsta í allt skap komit, áðr en létti"[303]. Both outlaws could have been present to the assemblies[304]. Therefore, their absence and the two badly led procedures reinforce their images as victim. A repeated feeling of unfairness is transmitted to the audience, making both outlaws figures of empathy.

299 "Þórir var maðr héraðsríkr ok hǫfðingi mikill, en vinsæll af mǫrgu stórmenni; gekk hann at svá fast, at engu kom við um sykn Grettis." *Grettis saga*, ch.46, p.146.

300 *Grettis saga,* ch. 39, p.134.

301 *Grettis saga*, ch. 39, p.133.

302 As pointed out by Andersson : "Grettis saga is not a study of fate but of ill fate " Theodore M. Andersson, *The Icelandic Family Saga: An Analytical Reading.* (Harvard Studies in. Comparative Literature, 28.) Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard, p. 208.

303 *Gísla saga*, ch. 21, p.67.

304 "According to Grágás law, a man formally accused of having inflicted a serious injury or a death-wound is not allowed to appear at the thing. This rule does not apply in the saga age, so that it is for different reasons when the accused avoids the thing. " Annelise Duncan, *A study of ethics and concepts of justice in two sagas of Icelandic outlaws*, University Microfilms International, 1981, p.81.

5.4 Reintegration in death

"Þá bjuggusk bœndr at sœkja slátrfé sitt í eyna" [305]

The final stage of the scapegoating process is the moment of the sacrifice. Both outlaws stand in a symbolical and liminal space (Grettir on an island, Gísli on Einhamarr). The theme of "one-versus-many" reaches its climax. In a short amount of time, a great number of men are sent to fight the cornered outlaw. No less than twelve men are sent against Gísli (chapter 35) and eighteen against Grettir (chapter 81). Both outlaws are supported in their last fight by characters who are not real fighting men, Gísli by his wife and foster-daughter, Grettir by his fifteen-year old younger brother and the lame outlaw Glaumr.

The time of the sacrifice is a moment of change. The sacrifice of the outlaws solves the contrastive narrative because both change their pattern of behaviour and embrace social expectations. Neither Grettir nor Gísli die in the way they are supposed to, or at least the way the narrative has characterized them. As has been shown, Grettir is a legendary hero from the "Matter of the North" looking for glorious deeds and Gísli a Noble Heathen looking for external and inner peace. But surprisingly, Grettir does not die fighting sword in hand but "behind the curtains ". In chapter 82 Grettir, wounded on the leg by the witchcraft of an old woman, has to be somewhat passive during the fight, and finally dies without glory. His death is only reported *after* the end of his brother Illugi's fight: "Eptir þat gengu þeir at Gretti; var hann þá fallinn áfram. Varð þá engi vǫrn af honum, því at hann var áðr kominn at bana af fótarsárinu;"[306]. Grettir dies while others were still fighting his fight.

On the other hand, Gísli breaks his passive pattern of avoiding conflicts and fights gloriously his enemies. Overwhelmed and deadly wounded, he ties his tunic around his guts to prevent them from falling out so he can fight a little longer[307]. His exceptional defense is underlined and once dead, he is acclaimed by all as "inn mesti hreystimaðr verit"[308]. The contrastive narrative seems reversed here, for Gísli turns into

305 *Grettis saga,* ch. 71, p. 228
306 *Grettis saga,* ch. 82, p.261
307 "Leggja þeir þá til hans með spjótum, svá at út falla iðrin, en hann sveipar at sér iðrunum ok skyrtunni ok bindr at fyrir neðan með reipinu." *Gísla saga*, ch. 36, p.114.
308 "Gísli lét líf sitt með **svá mǫrgum ok stórum sárum**, at furða þótti í vera. Svá hafa þeir sagt, at hann hopaði aldri, ok eigi sá þeir, at hǫgg hans væri minna it síðasta en it fyrsta. Lýkr þar nú ævi Gísla, ok **er þat alsagt**, at hann hefir **inn mesti hreystimaðr verit**..."*Gísla saga,* ch. 36, p.115.

a glorious legendary hero, whereas Grettir leaves this position for a low-profile death.

Grettir's own words embody a reconciliation of some kind: "Berr er hverr á bakinu, nema sér bróður eigi."[309] Feeling that his wandering is coming to an end, Grettir announces through what can be considered as his epitaph, a conclusive thought about what was his life and what was wrong. His strongly individualistic attitude, which often helped him to withstand almost twenty years of outlawry, at the same time triggered his outlawry and made him lonely. He now understands the vulnerability of the isolated individual.

Grettir seems now to embrace aspects of his society that he denied before. Moreover, Grettir has a last dialog with his enemy before dying. Þorbjǫrn affirms that Christ sent him: "Kristr vísaði oss leið.". By assuming he and his men are led by Christ, he wants to legitimate his action and carve it in the righteousness of an already Christian society. The other goal of this auto-proclaimed affiliation is to make Grettir appear as the enemy of the Christ, a devilish creature[310]. Surprisingly, Grettir counter-argues and turns against Þorbjǫrn what he was accused of: "En ek get," sagði Grettir, "at in arma kerlingin, fóstra þín, hafi vísat þér, því at hennar ráðum muntu treyst hafa."[311]. We cannot say of course that it is a sign of conversion, but at least Grettir embraces the preoccupations of his society and makes a step to reintegration, as Gísli did.

Finally, once dead, both outlaws become the object of unanimous admiration whereas they were hunted down or feared all along the saga. Gísli's defense is celebrateded: "Ok er þat **alsagt**, at engi hafi hér frægri vǫrn veitt verit af einum manni, **svá at menn viti með sannendum**"[312]. Grettir is not only said to have been the greatest outlaw (as Sturla says in the final chapter 93[313]), he is said to have been the most valiant man in Iceland (according to AM 152 fol.[314]). Gísli is given the "silver medal" of outlawry, for he earns the greatest *status* among outlaws, second only to Grettir[315]. They reach such an exceptional *status* that their murderers, who should be logically praised

309 *Grettis saga,* ch. 82, p.260.

310 We should remind the reader that when Grettir, Glaumr and Illugi arrive on the island of Drangey, they are seen as very dangerous "Sǫgðu þeir heraðsmǫnnum, hverr vargr kominn var í eyna"*; Grettis saga,* ch.71, p228*;* The same occurs when Grettir is called a *"heljarmaðr"* ch.59, p. 192, which could mean "a man from hell" (so a demononic figure), or a man doomed to hell *(Cleasby and Zoëga dictionary do not agree on the meaning).*

311 *Grettis saga*, ch. 82, p. 260-261.

312 *Gísla saga*, ch. 36, p.27.

313 "Hefir Sturla lǫgmaðr svá sagt, at engi sekr maðr þykkir honum jafnmikill fyrir sér hafa verit sem Grettir inn sterki.". *Grettis saga*, ch. 92, p.289.

314 "Lét Grettir þann veg líf sitt, inn vaskasti maðr, er verit hefir á Íslandi;". *Grettis saga,* ch.82, note 1, p262.

315 "Þat kemr saman með ǫllum vitrum mǫnnum, at Gísli hafi lengst allra manna í sekð gengit annarr en Grettir Ásmundarson". *Gísla saga*, ch.22, p.70.

for ridding society of an anomaly on its borders, are instead blamed for their action. This reversal of situation is particularly noticeable when Ásdís, Grettir's mother, leads the charges against Þorbjǫrn, it is said that everyone supported her, even those who were Grettir's enemies before[316]. Everyone is on his side now he is dead whereas in his previous trials, no one defended him. In chapter 84, Þorbjǫrn is the one to be outlawed for using witchcraft to achieve his goal. As previously stated, outlaws should not be avenged because the primary function of the full outlawry is to stop the circle of feud and private revenges. However we see a "revenge plot"[317] develops, as in other sagas. Grettir is avenged in *Miklagarðr* in the so-called epilog *Spesar Þáttr* (chapter 85 to 93)[318] and Eyjólfr is shamefully wounded by Gísli's sister Þordis (chapter 37). As a final mark of reintegration, both Grettir and Illugi's corpses are moved to the church, which should not have been done for outlaws do not deserve proper burial. It is a symbol of their reintegration into society *post-mortem*.[319]

Maurice Keen states about the medieval outlaws that "The only champions of justice are those who are, officially, criminals"[320]. We would rather say that the Icelandic outlaws are first "the champions of injustice" all their lives, but that this injustice is constructing them as heroes. Once dead in an explosion of injustice (overwhelmed by numbers, wounded, with no chance to escape their fate), society is giving them back justice in reintegrating them *post-mortem* (outlawing or shaming their murderer, giving them a place at church). As a result, the contrastive narrative meets its final goal, reconciliation in death (See annex 2), and finally drags them out of the liminality they have been stuck in.

To summarize, in time of crisis (here the time of transition from a pagan society to Christianity) society is gathering against an outcast character, an easy target, and sacrifices him. The victim must have committed a crime which is challenging the values

316 "Ásdís var svá vinsæl, at allir Miðfirðingar snerusk til liðs með henni, **ok jafnvel þeir, sem áðr váru óvinir Grettis**". *Grettis saga*, ch. 83, p. 265.

317 Clover, Carol, *The Medieval Saga,* Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1982, p. 44.

318 The last part of Grettis saga has been a matter of discussion and often considered as an interpolation. See De Lange, *op.cit.,* p.97-103, De Looze, *op.cit.* P92 93, Duncan, *op.cit.* p. 21, Clover, *op.cit*. p. 40, William P. Ker, *Epic and Romance : essays on medieval literature*, Macmillan, 1931, p.195, Stefan Einarsson, *History of Icelandic literature,* Umi Research Press, 1985, p. 22-27 and p. 145; Andrew Hamer, "Grettis saga and the iudicium dei." in *Northern voices* : *essays on Old Germanic and related topics*, p. 19-40. We think it has to be considered as a part of the tale, showing an example of successful exile in a Christian perspective.

319 "...ok fór til Drangeyjar at sœkja lík þeira brœðra, Grettis ok Illuga, ok fœrðu út til Reykja á Reykjastrǫnd ok grófu þar at kirkju". *Grettis saga*, ch. 84 p269. According to the Grágás Ia, 12 : "Skógarmanns lík, þess er óœll er ok óferjandi, þat skal ok eigi at kirkju grafa..." quoted by Guðni Jónsson, Grettis saga, note 4, p. 269.

320Keen, *op.cit.*, p. 92.

of the social group and have pre-victimal aspects. By choosing an individual to carry on his back the tensions generated, society is expelling temporarily violence out of its fences, but yet praising the condemned for its sacrifice. The reintegration after the liminal state of outlawry can only be carried out in death, a key-moment in both sagas. This *post-mortem* return is prepared in the narrative thanks to a slow progression from fairness to unfairness, transforming the outlaw in a victim but at the same time creating a figure of hero who lives on in the audience's mind.

6.-Conclusions

6.1. Anachronism and outlaw sagas

Despite their great differences in style, the two outlaw sagas seem to be connected by similar constructions serving the scapegoating process. Both Gísli and Grettir explore original narrative spaces, before and after their outlawry. Through a contrastive narrative construction, their preoccupations are revealed in opposition to the ones of their society. As Victor Turner pointed, "...the sagas were nothing but connected sequences of social dramas"[321] The outlaw sagas are not simply a story about the outlawry of a memorable character, historical or fictional, but give the opportunity to stress a time of crisis and build the stage of this "social drama", which was the transition to Christianity. Therefore, the inner exile can be said to be temporal: Grettir belongs in a legendary past and Gísli in an anticipation of Christianity. They are not simply strangers in their own society; they are strangers in their own time. They even seem to have switched their deaths, for what is expected from Grettir (heroism) is performed by Gísli and vice versa, what is expected from Gísli (passivity) happens to Grettir (See Annex 3). As a consequence, the common trait of the outlaw sagas is the anachronism of their main characters, Grettir being exiled from the past and Gísli from the future.

6.2 The sacrificial outlaws.

Why should he live long? The outlaw should live long enough to fulfill his sacrificial function. He is needed so the violence inherent in society can be focused on him in order to bring back peace, but also to restore a normal temporality. Thanks to Grettir's death, witchcraft is definitely banned from the island[322] and the past definitively buried with the outlaw. On the other hand, Gísli appears as a martyr and prefiguration of Christianity, being sacrificed with "sacrificial blood"[323] for representing the new faith too early. They are expelled and killed because of their temporal abnormality, but thanked and admired for their sacrifice.[324]. As a consequence, the "project" behind the

321Turner, Victor, "An Anthropological Approach to the Icelandic Saga", in *The Translation of Culture vol.2,* London, Taylor & Francis, 1971, p. 353.

322 "Var þá í lǫg tekit, at alla forneskjumenn gerðu þeir útlæga.". *Grettis saga*, ch. 84, p. 268-269.

323 "...at konan sú in verri kemr opt at honum ok vill jafnan ríða hann blóði ok roðru...", *Gísla saga,* ch. 24, p.76. See Cleasby "Roðra".

324 "Si la victime emporte la violence réciproque avec elle dans la mort, elle a joué le rôle qu'on attendait

specificity of the Icelandic full outlawry is explored and thanks to the temporal flexibility of a literary work, Grettir and Gísli appear as belonging to the same category of "sacrificial outlaws".

Joost De Lange concludes his comparative study on Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic outlaws saying that "In Iceland the main interest centered around the individual and his fate, and in England the outlaw represented to the people the champion of freedom or for their jealousy guarded liberties. In other words, he became a "social" type"[325]. Even if more centered on the individual, this work has hopefully succeeded in proving that the specificity of Icelandic outlawry hides a social function too, and that through the analysis of *Grettis saga* and *Gísla saga*, the "sacrificial" function of both outlaws has been unveiled.

6.3. Perspectives

As a matter of fact, Grettir and Gísli are not the only outlaws of the saga literary corpus, even if they are the most popular ones. Another great outlaw, Hǫrðr from *Harðar saga ok Hólmverja* might add a fair and alternative contribution to the research on Icelandic outlawry. His lesser popularity, patent in both manuscripts and scholarship, might be explained by the fact that he is not a lonely outlaw like his memorable counterparts. As the title of the saga suggests (*ok Hólmverja*"[326]), he enrolls with him in the margins of the law a band of men who seek refuge with him on an island. As a result, he is more of a "social" type of outlaw, and a deeper study of his story might unveil another way to react to outlawry in the sagas. Other types of outlaws might be typified, as Hrafnkell from *Hrafnkels Saga Freysgoða* who refuses the lower condition that has been imposed on him and works to recover his status in life, or as Gunnar from *Njáls saga* who has a shorter but esthetically meaningful outlawry, choosing death over marginality. Finally, non-heroic and anecdotal outlaws are spread in the sagas corpus, and their "toolish-foolish" function may confirm, by contrast, the concept of the sacrificial outlaw.

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d'elle; elle passe désormais pour incarner la Violence sous sa forme bienveillante aussi bien que malveillante, c'est-à-dire la Toute-Puissance qui domine les hommes de très haut; il est raisonnable, après l'avoir maltraitée, de lui rendre des honneurs extraordinaires. De même il est raisonnable de chasser œdipe quand il semble apporter la malédiction et l'honorer pour son départ." René Girard, *La Violence et le Sacré*, p.415.

325 DeLange. *Op.cit,* p. 127

326"And the Holm's dwellers". Grettir and Gísli are more individualized by owning alone the title of their saga.

The study of the specificity of Icelandic outlawry in the middle ages, and the similarity of basic structures found in literary works such as *Grettis saga* and *Gísla saga*, might reveal an unconscious social expression. Could it be that from the original exile from Norway and through the generations, Icelandic society was repeating in these mythical outlaw figures the condition of inner exile experienced by each Icelander? The anxieties about a peripheral location "in the middle of nowhere"[327], and the struggle to prosper -or at least survive- at the margins of the inhabited world, might underlie the literary construction of these ancestral Icelandic figures.

327The expression is from William Ian Miller, *op.cit.*

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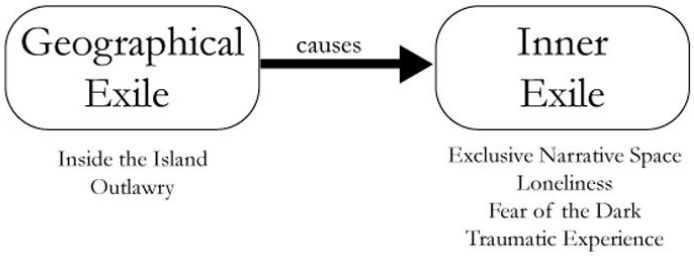
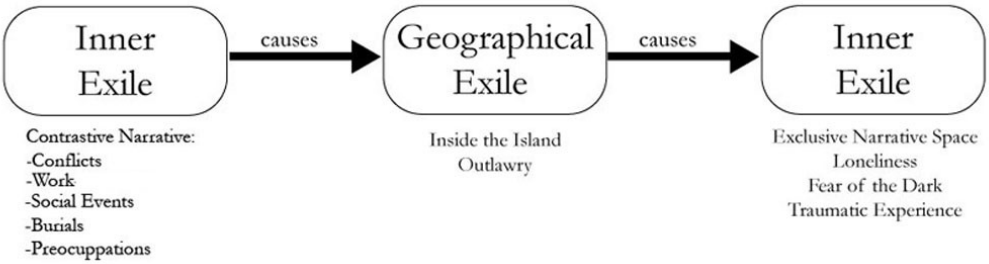
*Annex 1*a



*Annex 1*b



Annex 2 : The Contrastive Narrative.

	Grettis saga		Gísla saga	
	Context	Grettir	Context	Gísli
Conflicts	Conciliation	No Conciliation	No Conciliation	Conciliation
Work	Ask for Work	Unwilling to Work	Avoid Work	Hard-Working, Skillful
Social Events	Games and Jól	Unwillng to Participate	Feasts to Freyr, Blót	Feasts, but no Blót
Burials	Church	Does not go to Church	Grave-Mound (hel-shoes / boat)	Confession in front of the Grave-Mound
Preoccupations	Peace and Order	Deeds, Exploits, Treasure, Strength	Valuable Possessions = Envy	Peace and Afterlife
=	Christian	Legendary Hero	Pagan	Noble Heathen
	Reconciliation			
Death	Admired and Avenged ↔	Unglorious Death	Admired and Avenged ↔	Glorious Death

Annex 3 : Anachronism in the Outlaw Sagas