Centering Reykjavik, Imperializing Morris: The Viability of Travel Narratives in Architectural and Urban History

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Introduction

Iceland has consistently been portrayed as a place which occupies the periphery. This positioning can be seen in how it has been spatially, geographically, and temporally represented by various entities. To foreigners, it has constituted a gateway to the Arctic, the last vestige of human interaction before the blank and ahistorical space of the North. This marginal position, however, also means that it has been greatly overlooked in the history of European relations. Travelers to Iceland desire to experience the extreme topographical features of the countryside which simultaneously communicate various cycles of history, from deep geologic time, to the sagas, which are only a few thousand years old. Thus, the capital city operates as an access point to both the country's interior and to the Arctic region, both of which can be framed as conceptual and imaginary spaces, constructed by the agendas of foreign travelers.

Representations of Reykjavik, then, are the evidence of Iceland's liminality. The city operates within travel narratives, as well as other textual and visual descriptions, as a transition point between the maritime journey from England and the country's interior. It is a place to buy ponies, sort out guides and make general preparations, but never an actual destination worthy of more than a few pages of commentary. Therefore, in comparison to the descriptions of the Icelandic environment or history, the textual and visual representations of the city are always

shallow and insubstantial, a collaging of character descriptions and footnotes regarding inventories of personal libraries. They take up a small fraction of the remarkably dense accounts.

This thesis aims to recenter Reykjavik, both spatially and temporally, by arguing that through a mapping of the occupation of interiors spaces in the city, by objects, interactions, and people, Iceland can be framed as more connected to transnational and global networks than has been previously thought. This works to foreground the urban center, as well as to highlight Icelandic society at this time, something in which both the travelers and contemporary historians have had fleeting interest. The concept of occupation, then, allows us to broaden the analytic frameworks of architectural and urban history. This thesis also demonstrates the viability of travel narratives to the architectural, material and urban historical record. Not only do the accounts provide commentary about architectural subject matter, such as rough sketches of city layouts and house plans, but they also contain descriptions of interiors and objects which are not represented in the limited number of photographs we have from this time period. Broadly, I would like to make the case that travel narratives are a tool through which to construct part of the material record of a specific place in time. This is especially useful when there is a dearth of scholarship pertaining to this area, as well as when the scholarship is predominantly written in another language. I aim to demonstrate that the descriptions within travel narratives can provide more than just atmospheric details, and that they are an underutilized resource for expanding

upon a largely impermanent material environment which lacks both photographic and other visual documentation.

In order to position travel narratives as analytic tools, I spend the first chapter situating them within both the larger context of travel writing and an established discourse about Iceland, especially in relation to British conceptions of the 'North' and the Arctic. By foregrounding the narratives of Sabine Baring-Gould, William Morris, and Richard Burton, I argue that they each take part in an imperialist discourse, thanks to the representational methods they employ and the author's position. The choice to document and communicate their experiences of Iceland through both sentimental and empirical observation includes them within this production. The first chapter, then, reframes Morris within this perspective, in opposition to earlier accounts of his Icelandic sojourn. It is through the similarities of his narrative with other British travel writers, in terms of rhetoric employed and agendas enacted, which implicates him in a British imperialist discourse. The absence of any discussion of Reykjavik that suggests his complicity with an imperial perspective. Thus, this chapter positions the Icelandic accounts as products of the author's self fashioning, which operates at both individual and national levels. This analysis unpacks their observational positions, which then allows us to place these biases aside in the second chapter, so as to employ their descriptions in service to the construction of a deeper understanding of Reykjavik and its transnational traces.

The only two scholarly works that I have found which visually and textually document the nineteenth-century built environment of Reykjavik, as well as rural Iceland, are Frank Ponzi's *Ísland Fyrir Aldamót* or *Iceland-The Dire Years*, published in 1995, and *Ísland Howells* or *Howell's Island*, published in 2004.[1] The books are dedicated to a collection of published photographs from British travelers to Iceland in the latter half of the nineteenth-century. In both studies, Ponzi's underlying argument is that the "traveler's personal mementos would in time become invaluable historical documentations."[2] Thus, he uses the images to unpack the social, political and material history of Iceland and the analogous advances in photography and printing technologies which enabled the recording of the images and the publishing of these books. In framing this inquiry he states that "the views" produced in both books, "have also become uniquely topographical records of town and country sites that have long since disappeared."[3] This statement provides the foundation for my engagement with other contemporary travel literature in service to the same goal.

The Dire Years is structured around the photographic records and journals left by Maitland James Burnett and Walter H. Trevelyan, two British travelers who journeyed to Iceland numerous times in the 1880's in order to pursue leisure activities, such as trout fishing. The two

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[1] Frank Ponzi, *Ísland fyrir aldamót: harðindaárin, 1882-1888.* (Mosfellsbær:: Brennholt. 1995). Frank Ponzi, *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004).
[2] Ponzi, *Ísland fyrir aldamót*, 19

[3] Ponzi, *Ísland fyrir aldamót*, 19.

intertwined themes of Ponzi's book, which contextualizes the photographs from their trips, are the professional development of Icelandic photographers, with discussions about how and when daguerreotypes and others photographic techniques were introduced on the island, and the simultaneous production of photography by travelers. The book's title comes from what Ponzi calls the 'Dire Years' in Icelandic history, the period between 1882 and 1887, which saw the ramifications of a series of difficult winters, the continuous depletion of fishing stocks, both of which contributed to a measles epidemic. As Ponzi states, this caused a migration of Icelanders to America and Canada in 1883. Throughout the rest of the book, he moves through the photographs, in what I assume is the order they are presented in the original publication, discussing the inhabitants of the structures which are represented, such as the Hotel Reykjavik and the Sölvhóll farmstead. Given the images included, Ponzi spends most of the commentary engaging with homesteads and churches that are located in the interior of the island. Unlike his other book, which does not explain the source of the contextual information he provides, in this book Ponzi clearly outlines his usage of the traveler's diaries to explain the context of the photographs.

Ponzi's second book, *Howell's Island*, is based on a trip that Frederick William Warbreck Howell undertook in 1890 to the island, and Ponzi uses these photographs to weave a social and material history of Iceland at this time, positioning the images as access points through which to

discuss notable political events, as well as career summaries of builders, merchants, and occupants. The merit of this work is twofold. It provides the only substantial scholarly analysis of saga-travel to Iceland, even though this inquiry is in the service of introducing Howell's work. It also begins to document a material environment which largely has ceased to exist. As he states in the introduction, "...contemporary knowledge of this period of Iceland's history is in no small measure derived from these earlier first-hand...accounts."[4] Therefore, he is setting up the argument I will elaborate in this thesis, that the travel narratives offer a distinct and substantive perspective to architectural, urban and social history. Ponzi is commenting on photographic accounts, however, I wish to expand this frame to also include textual sources.

In the preface describing the trip made by Howell, Ponzi sets up the particular phenomena of travel to Iceland in the later nineteenth-century by visitors and scholars who were "immersed in the heroic deeds and intrigues of nordic-medieval clans."[5] This particular brand of excursion, as opposed to the scientific expeditions which had begun exploring the island about a century earlier, can be seen as opening up a type of tourist industry which focused largely on facilitating the movement of visitors interested in various leisure aspects of the island, from visiting the domestic spaces of the saga-steads to salmon fishing. As Ponzi states, "drawn by a desire for a more tangible rapport with the narratives many knew by heart, well-versed saga

[4] Ponzi, *Ísland Howells*, 11.
[5] Ponzi, *Ísland Howells,* 9.

readers embarked annually from an industrially advancing, cosmopolitan Britain to the ancient rural locations."[6] This statement frames the central and lasting binary which is continuously asserted between these two entities, that of the modern British traveller and his desire to experience archaic landscape of Iceland. Ponzi does not further discuss the saga-travellers, largely because Howell was not interested in such pursuits. Instead he uses the travelers accounts to situate Howell within the popular phenomena of British travel to Iceland.

He describes the typical trip, stating that they would usually occur in the summer months, that the visitors would take either a Danish or a Scottish mail or cargo ship out of Leith or Granton, and that they would usually stop in Thórshavn before continuing on to Reykjavik. It was in the capital where they would make their preparations for travel to the interior. Here they would find guides and ponies, as well as engage with Icelandic society through social engagements and dinners. He goes on to provide a list of the places commonly explored during such journeys, namely, the Hekla volcano, the Geysir, the Gullfoss waterfall, Bergþórshvoll (an important site in the Njal saga), Hilðarendi, Gunnarshólmur, Reykholt, Borg and Mosfell. He cites the more well known British travellers, such as William Morris (1871, 1873), Anthony Trollope (1878), Sabine Baring-Gould (1863) and W.G. Collingwood (1863), before launching into a more focused commentary on accounts written by women, specifically Ida Pfeiffer (1846),

[6] Ponzi, *Ísland Howells,* 9.

Elizabeth Jane Oswald (1882), and Mrs. Disney Leith (1894). He does not continue this analysis of the saga-travellers, but transitions into a deeper discussion of Howell's work and the historical record which his photographs evidence.

Ponzi's work predominantly focuses on the architecture and infrastructure of Reykjavik in the latter part of the century. Perhaps the most successful overarching theme is his discussion of the lifespan of these spaces and buildings, particularly in the wake of Iceland's foray into industrialization in the twentieth-century. Thus, he positions the photos and the broader phenomenon of travel during this time, as an initial stage in this burgeoning development.[7] His argument is that with the importation of new building materials, such as timber and corrugated metal, as well as an increase in new technology and industry, the architectural and decorative styles which had existed up until this point were either romanticized, ignored, or destroyed.

He continues with a discussion of the unrealistic ways which structures from this period, namely the 'farmstead' and turf houses, have been preserved and replicated over time. "Realistically, the traditional farm houses are seen as sensible structures adapted to a harsh environment. Romantically, they are viewed as blending unobstrusely (sic) and aesthetically in to their bucolic settings." He continues, arguing that "[t]his version of former reality, however, much like the 'imagined actualities' of Victorian saga seekers, often lends itself to deceptive

[7] Ponzi, *Ísland Howells*, 13-14.

illusion," and thus "relatively little visual history remains."[8] He insists that Iceland has always been framed, both by outsiders and Icelanders, in terms of its fictionalized and romanticized past, one that is wrapped up in the myths of ancient heroes and the rural farms with which they were associated. To counter this, he aspires to narrate the "matter-of-fact photographs, social and topographical documents, that explicitly depict the centuries-old Icelandic farmer-fisherman's daily existence...a glimpse into a cultural past now extinct" which have been left behind by the Victorian travelers.[9] His aim, then, is to provide a more realistic and thus grittier image of life in Iceland at the turn of the century.

Ponzi's focus lies predominantly on the rural interior of the country, even though he spends a sizeable portion of the book discussing photographs of Reykjavik. My thesis aims to take this inquiry further, and demonstrate, through references to similar primary materials, the cosmopolitan nature of the capital city during this period. Ponzi is fair in his assessment of the need to document the impoverished daily existence of Icelanders, something which has recently started to emerge in other scholarship as well. However, other aspects of Icelandic life have been repeatedly overlooked, especially connections the Icelanders had to a global network, formed through trade, travel and international education. These substantial connections can be evidenced

[8] Ponzi, *Ísland Howells*, 8.
[9] Ponzi, *Ísland Howells*, 13

through the presence of luxury goods, building materials, and personal interactions which British travel literature documents.

While Ponzi is generally successful at presenting an interwoven architectural and social history, his work has a few glaring omissions. The first is that he does not include interior shots of the structures, which is due, in large part, to the nature of the photographs in Howell's collection. From the images, he documents an understanding of the lives of the inhabitants and the various economic, cultural and political forces which were at play during this period, but these observations can be aided by an understanding of the ways in which the interior spaces of the houses and buildings were occupied. The second absence within his work is a lack of textual description or thorough citations. While he mentions some of key British travelers in his introductory discussion of foreign engagement with the island, he does not buttress Howell's experience of the city or the land with descriptions by other travelers. Thus, the tome is more of a testament to one man's journey, and a demonstration of how it could provide the foundation for documenting a social history of place.

There is also a dearth of contemporary material which discusses the architectural and decorative material of Iceland in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. The most comprehensive engagements I have found are *A Guide to Icelandic Architecture*, published by the Association of Icelandic Architects in 2000, and *Iceland and Architecture?* edited by Peter

Cachola Schmal and published in 2011.[10] Acting as both cursory commentaries on the buildings and the general history of Reykjavik, they include short essays on the development of architectural practice within the country and provide a guidebook for what they consider to be important buildings in the country, with cursory factual descriptions. In similar fashion to the photographs in the Ponzi books, the images only show the exterior of each building, failing to document both the inside and how the structures were occupied. This desultory approach to the architecture of the island is indicative of a prominent impulse in architectural history, that simply knowing the most evocative images and facts about important buildings is enough to capture a sense of place and culture. Thus, by focusing this inquiry on the descriptions and uses of interior spaces in Reykjavik, I aim to make the case that it is necessary to conflate historical research on architectural and urban conditions with an understanding of how those spaces were used. This argument also foregrounds the tensions and advantages of employing text and image in conjunction with each other, both of which augment historical inquiry

This thesis began as an investigation into the connection between Morris and Iceland, with the hope of demonstrating how his experiences on the island influenced his later production of visual materials. In the first stage of this research, I wanted to see what kind of physical and visual objects Morris was experiencing throughout his travels, with the aim of possibly

[10] Dennis Jóhannesson, et al. *A Guide to Icelandic Architecture* (Reykjavik: Association of Icelandic Architects, 2000). Peter Cachola Schmal, *Iceland and Architecture? Island und Architektur?* (Frankfurt am Main: Deutsches Architekturmuseum; Berlin: Jovis, 2011).

connecting these stimuli, such as a piece of embroidery or rough hewn spoon, to his artistic works. I realized, through this initial research, that scholarship on the material culture of Iceland is significantly lacking. To make up for this absence in secondary analysis and documentation, I turned to other contemporary travel narratives written about Iceland to see if I could triangulate descriptions of certain places he had visited with others accounts, with the hope of fleshing out a more precise visual environment. In this process, I found myself struggling to categorize and characterize the narratives themselves. Despite the identity of the writer, each one unwittingly employs similar rhetorical and literary mechanisms as travel accounts to colonial hubs, such as Calcutta or Hong Kong. This began my questioning of Iceland as a colonial entity and the complex ways it operated within the British imaginary. Therefore, this thesis has transitioned from an attempt to understand the maturation of one man's artistic output through his experience with place, not dissimilar to Ponzi's contextualization of Howell, to an attempt at constructing the specificities of one particular place, Reykjavik, through the impressions of various men.

Travel Narratives as Construction of Self and Nation

This chapter analyzes narratives of travel to Iceland in the latter part of the nineteenth-century, unpacking the ways they operate both as a unified group and as discrete entities. They are neither wholly personal narrations nor ethnographic studies, neither detail-oriented mineralogical records nor political histories. It is their collage-like quality which is perhaps most striking, and thus they can be viewed as mosaics of data, mixing charts with personal observations, floorplans with daily frustrations. This analysis is meant to gesture towards the larger corpus of travel narratives to Iceland during the nineteenth-century, however, I have chosen three especially exemplary accounts. These accounts are Sabine Baring-Gould's *Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas* (1863) who visited the island in 1863; William Morris's *Icelandic Travel Journals* (1910), which detailed his trips in 1871 and 1873; and Sir Richard Burton's *Ultima Thule: or a Summer in Iceland* (1875), from his trip in 1872. This choice is predicated on the connection of these three accounts to one another, and more generally, to contemporaneous travel narratives about Iceland. Despite being referenced by each other, these writers employ a variety of documentation methods in their communication of their Icelandic experiences.

While each of these accounts uses information differently and in various configurations, the fact that they all employ a multifaceted and multi-genre approach renders them dynamic objects of analysis. How can we categorize them? What can they tell us about the construction and performance of British identity abroad? I aim to demonstrate that each of these writers is operating within an imperialist discourse, despite the fact that they may hold fervent anti-colonialist positions and that Iceland was a Danish, not British, colony. This positionality within an imperial production of knowledge is evidenced through various rhetorical mechanisms

employed in their accounts, namely, the employment of romantic or picturesque imagery congruent with empirical observation and documentation, especially when engaging with architectural subject matter. Perhaps, the most indicative element of their imperial agenda is the glaring absence of a detailed description of Reykjavik, especially by contrast to how much time they spend recounting their perceptions and experiences of the Icelandic countryside. In situating these accounts, I employ the theoretical framework as advanced by Mary Louise Pratt, in her seminal work, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992), focusing specifically on how European travel writing works to produce a construction of the author's self, as well as a production of knowledge about the world. Through this understanding, I unpack how these accounts functioned as expressions of the author's subjectivity, and helped to shape a distinctly British, masculine, and imperialist identity. Thus, these accounts provide indices of 'self' fashioning. They were the products of choices that functioned with the larger imperial discourse of the second half of the nineteenth-century.

While this specific positioning is not new for a figure like Burton, it is the anti-imperialist and staunch socialist William Morris who has yet to be framed within this specific production of knowledge. Morris has been the focus of extensive scholarship in a wide swath of fields, from ecological socialism to visual studies, however, he had not been adequately positioned within the the production of imperial discourse. This is understandable, due to his political and aesthetic leanings, however, by positioning him within such a production, it allows for new understandings of his life and work. By implicating him within the constellation of actors who also went to Iceland at this time, and who have distinctly imperial agendas, Morris becomes imbricated within this production. The similarities in the constructions of identity

within their works indicates a level of complicity that has been previously unacknowledged. By fleshing out an understanding of this constellation of actors, in terms of the similarities of their agendas for the trips and how they represent their experiences, Morris can be seen to fit comfortably within this group. It is also important to situate these writers within the discourse surrounding the conceptual 'North' in the British imagination. This allows us to account for the romanticized and distorted representations of their experiences, especially in their construction of Reykjavik, as opposed to the settlements in the countryside, as a liminal space, a place where one prepares for their journey into the highly detailed interior.

While there is no contemporary scholarship that includes an updated and comprehensive commentary on all the travel publications to Iceland in the nineteenth-century, the various narratives are discussed in conjunction with each other by various sources, ranging from the internal commentaries which each account provides, to scholarship on the Victorian obsession with the Arctic. Each of the writers I have engaged with discusses the other travel accounts in varying depth, with Burton dedicating an entire chapter of his tome to what is, essentially, an annotated bibliography of these accounts, to Baring-Gould offhandedly citing his predecessors when describing how he prepared for his trip. Morris does mention Baring-Gould in a perfunctory manner, but his narrative is relatively free of citations to previous trips. These references to other travelers provides a starting point for fleshing out the constellation of actors who are traveling in Iceland at this point in time. Conceptions of exploration in the Arctic were not new, however, and by this point in the nineteenth-century, the travelers were operating within a specific construction of imperialist discourse surrounding the area.

In her book, *White Horizon: The Arctic in the Nineteenth Century British Imagination* (2008), Jen Hill situates Arctic landscapes as an integral part of the European imperial project. She pulls from a wide selection of primary source material in a variety of mediums, constructing complex understandings of how the Northern region operated as a masculine formation within the British collective imagination. She argues that "the Arctic was a test limit for the ideas the Romantics and Victorians had about themselves, a place in which they experimented with and made legible forms of identity and their attendant anxieties."[11] She positions the Arctic as "space in a complex cultural imaginary that critics such as Said and Spivak have encouraged us to read for its unexamined articulations and justifications of imperial practices."[12] Hill frames her investigation around the disappearance of Sir John Franklin's Arctic expedition in the late 1840's and the ensuing cultural chaos regarding the various rescue missions. She demonstrates, through invocations of Arctic symbolism in Jane Eyre and the adventure fiction of R.M. Ballantyne, the importance that this seemingly blank and wild space, both real and imaginary, had on various aspects of British culture. This ranges from the conception of the geographic and ideological separation of genders, to an ossification of binary constructions which helped to "define Britain's relationship with colonial spaces."[13]

She outlines the important aspects of Arctic space for the British construction of identity. First, it seemingly stood outside of economic relations, and this apparent unpeopled emptiness absolved the British from many of the debates that were raging around this time which dealt with the ethics of colonial occupation. She argues that "the Arctic relation between the white man and

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[11] Jen Hill, *White Horizons: The Arctic Imagination in the Nineteenth Century British Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008): 3.
[12] Hill, *White Horizon*, 4.
[13] Hill, *White Horizon*, 8.

the white landscape...provided refuge...in a legible plot of national behaviour and geographical triumph, one that could resolve or at least ameliorate uncomfortable questions about nation and character raised by imperial excesses and foreign policy debates abroad, as well as national unrest, poverty, and speculation at home."[14] The Arctic, then, worked as both popular spectacle, as well as an apolitical and imaginary location which the British could explore and conquer with seemingly moral impunity. In summary, she makes the case that this area of study is in great need of scholarly attention, and that it would greatly benefit from a cross-disciplinary approach.

Iceland occupied a middle ground between the blank space of the Arctic and industrial Britain. It represents both spheres, that of a historied people and a land of topographic extremities. Iceland itself is bifurcated into two opposing spaces; the interior, which is the desired destination of the travelers, and Reykjavik, which they characterize as the mediocre town through which they must to pass in order to access the wilderness. The city operates as a liminal space for this transmission of activity, and thus its role and representations are both complicated and perfunctory. By positioning the island as a physical and conceptual gateway, we are able to situate the travel and subsequent narrations of Iceland as part of the imperial discourse which characterizes the British conceptions of the Arctic. To complicate things further, is the status of Iceland as a Danish colony, while simultaneously functioning in some Victorian circles as an almost mythic foundation of both Western democracy and the romantic medieval values of fortitude and chivalry. Thus, it expands the conception of imperial methods of recording to geographic locations outside the realm of the political British empire. I aim to open up Hill's frameworks of the discourse surrounding the Arctic in order to include the construction of

[14] Hill, *White Horizon*, 13.

Iceland that is mapped by the travel writers. The argument, then, is that these narratives communicate more regarding the construction of the writer's self and national identity, than the actual state of Iceland at this time. It is not only the presence of certain mechanisms of representation, such as comparison and filtration of experience, which implicate them in this discourse. It is also the absence of any sort of detailed descriptions of Reykjavik and contemporary Icelandic people which works to construct an image of Iceland that is rooted in the past and stationed in the countryside.

In his book, *The Vikings and the Victorians*, literary scholar Andrew Wawn argues that through the engagement and translation of Icelandic literature, as well as the production of travel narratives and scholarship about this region, the Victorians constructed our contemporary understanding of the Vikings. Wawn's inquiry broadly investigates at the "reception of northern antiquity in nineteenth-century Britain."[15] He states that by the end of the eighteenth-century, "a raft of old northern literary and philosophical issues had emerged, which...would form an important part of the Victorian old northern agenda," and argues that these issues coincided with a broader reframing of British "questions about regional and national identity."[16] He compares the era-specific attitudes of Regency and Victorian England towards the exploration of Iceland, focusing specifically on the translation and popularization of four Icelandic texts; *Heimskringla, Frithiof, Burnt Njall,* and the *Eddas.* In order to compile a more comprehensive picture of the operations of Icelandic, and by extension Victorian, culture during this period, he focuses not simply on the careers and agendas of the translators of these works, but also on the history of their reception. Wawn foregrounds part of his third section, entitled "Philology and Mercury," on

[15] Andrew Wawn, *The Vikings and the Victorians* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000): ix.
[16] Wawn, *The Vikings*, 30.

two poems which Morris produced on his return to England, arguing that it was his multidisciplinary engagement with Iceland, from learning the language and translating the sagas, to traveling around the country and writing an account, that has made him the most successful and popular Victorian documenter of the region.[17] This thesis builds upon Wawn's argument, as well as focusing on the visual rather than textual production of these narratives. It was through the Victorian's engagement with the idea of the "old north," and how this affected their efforts to explore and record the homeland of the Vikings and the Sagas, that they, in effect, also facilitated a collective conception of Iceland. This version of the island is predicated on a hybridity of sentiment and empirical observation, and it focuses on the interior of the country and its mythic past, thus relegating the urban environment of Reykjavik to the margins.

In 1871 and 1873, writer and designer William Morris traveled to Iceland. By this time in his career, Morris had completed a degree in Classics at Oxford University, where he had developed a strong affinity for medievalism. After graduating, he trained for a year as an architect under the direction of G.E. Street, as well as established and maintained friendships with key members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, notably Edward Burne-Jones and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In 1861, the decorative art firm of Morris, Marshall, Faulkner & Co., was founded, and Morris went on to produce tapestries, fabrics, furniture, stained glass and wallpapers under its guise. After he returned from the Iceland trips in 1875, he received full control of the company, which was subsequently renamed, Morris & Co. He wrote four main works; *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-1870), *A Dream of John Ball* (1888), the utopian novel *News from Nowhere* (1890) and *The Well at the World's End* (1896). In 1877 he founded the Society

[17] Wawn, *The Vikings*, 249.

for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, also known as 'Anti-Scrape,' which advocated against what they saw as the destructive 'restoration' of ancient buildings in Britain. He argued that the buildings should instead be 'repaired.' In his later life he became involved in socialist politics, a period which saw his brief association with the Social Democratic Federation and later his founding of the Socialist League in 1884. In 1891, he started Kelmscott Press which designed and printed illuminated manuscript-style books. He is lauded for his adeptness at direct observation, which can be seen in his works on a micro scale, in terms of his strident attention to detail, and at the macro scale, in his predilection to place whatever he engages with within a larger context.

For Morris, the trips were both an apex of his interest in the sagas of the North, as well as a way to prove his own fortitude in the wake of personal problems; such as the extramarital relationship of his wife with Rossetti, and financial issues with his firm. In mid-June of 1871, Morris signed a lease with Rossetti for Kelmscott Manor in Oxfordshire, with Jane, his children and Rossetti moving into the house in early July. Morris remained permanently in London. While much has been written about this extra-marital relationship, Jack Lindsay contends that by his first trip, "he must have finally realized he had lost Janey. His thoughts had turned more to Iceland, the Norse world of fortitude, where 'failure never reckoned a disgrace,' if bravely borne."[18] Building off of this situation, Fiona MacCarthy suggests that his "new passions for the sagas was itself in effect a discarding of Rossetti and Pre-Raphaelite influence: he regarded the bluntness of the Old Norse literature as a good corrective to the maundering side of medievalism."[19] She posits that because Charles Faulkner, one of his business partners who

[18] Jack Lindsay, *William Morris: His Life and Work* (London: Constable, 1975), 167.
[19] Fiona MacCarthy, *William Morris: A Life for Our Time* (New York, Knopf, 1995), 215.

accompanied him on both trips, had little connection with Rossetti, it worked to distance Morris even further from the romantic style of his youth. Similarly, with the men traveling together across the rough terrain, it conjured up feelings of male comradeship, reminiscent, she argues, of his times at Oxford and his tour of northern France.[20] It is this personal and emotional context in which Morris travels to Iceland and recounts his experience, and in many ways it provides a background to the construction of self which is evident within his travel account.

Morris had been exposed to Benjamin Thorpe's *Northern Mythology* (1851) in 1853 while at Oxford,[21] although, it was not until 1868, when he was introduced by Warington Taylor, his Firm's business manager, to Eirikr Magnusson (1833-1913) that he became involved specifically with the Icelandic language and culture.[22] Magnusson was an energetic Icelandic theologian and linguist, who had first arrived in London in 1862 to oversee the printing of the Icelandic New Testament for the British and Foreign Bible Society.[23] As various sources report, the two men liked each other immediately, and Morris proposed taking Icelandic language lessons from Magnusson three times a week. The lessons with Magnusson were unconventional. Instead of starting with grammar and vocabulary exercises, they immediately began translating Icelandic stories, with Magnusson writing out a transliteration and Morris adapting his own interpretations. Even though he was learning the language rapidly, he was clearly altering the original tales to fit his own narrative agenda. The most egregious difference between Morris's creations and the originals was in his choice of language, because even though he chose to employ Norse idioms, he sacrificed the clarity of their message in order for them to read in a

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[20] MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 279.
[21] Emily Louise Meredith, "Iceland as a Metaphor for Integration in the Works of William Morris" (PhD diss., University of Rhode Island, 1980), 29.
[22] E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), 177.
[23] MacCarthy, *William Morris,* 279.

more romantic and flowery way.[24] This process of adaptation had ideological purposes for him. He was crusading for a purer Germanic form of English, one that would let him revolt against what he called the "English of our drawing rooms and leading articles."[25] By refashioning these stories, he was attempting to hark back to their original spirit (or what his interpretation of this was), that of the unadulterated Germanic roots of Anglo-Saxon culture. This conscious curation of existing material in service to a compelling and romantic image will be theme throughout Morris's work, both in terms of his Icelandic journals, but also his larger collective artistic enterprise.

His purpose for working on the translations, as well as basing his creative work off of these sagas, was to impart their ethos onto his audience. In these stories, he found resonating themes, such as resilience to accept life's hazards, defiance in the face of personal suffering, and the strength of community which he wanted English culture to regain.[26] His first attempt at this was in *The Lovers of Gudrun*, a poetic revamp of the *Laxdaela Saga*, which was published as part of his work, *The Earthly Paradise,* an epic poem based on retellings of Greek, Scandinavian and medieval tales. While he published other variations of the sagas during this period, it was his 1876 epic reconfiguration of the Nibelung story, *Sigurd the Volsung*, which he considered to be his major Norse inspired work. After his trips, he continued to translate the Icelandic sagas, although this petered off when his attentions turned to socialism.

His translations of Old Norse literature, their creative reinterpretations, and his trip journals were tools through which he could communicate his ideas about society and the

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[24] Magnusson discusses this at length, giving the example: Eirikr's translated sentence, "They put a canopy over a splendid carriage," turns into "then they tilted over a wain in most seemingly wise," by Morris. Magnus Magnusson, foreword., *Icelandic Journals* (London: Mare's Nest, 1996), xx.
[25] Magnusson, *Icelandic Journals*, xx.
[26] Magnusson, *Icelandic Journals*, xx.

importance of personal strength. As he wrote in the Introduction to the Saga Library, "...that the Icelandic historians and tale-tellers were cut off from the influence of older literature, was..a piece of good luck to the reader, rather than a misfortune."[27] To him, this signalled a freedom from Christian and European control. He elaborates on this point in a letter to Andreas Scheu on September 5, 1883, claiming that "the delightful freshness and independence of thought of [the Icelandic writings], the air of freedom which breathes through them, their worship of courage, their utter unconventionality took my heart by storm."[28] These sentiments foreground an understanding of Iceland as a place which is uncontaminated from modern European society and pressures. This conceptualization of Iceland as a sort of time capsule pervades not just Morris's work, but that of all the travellers to Iceland and has a direct impact on the ways in which they represent their experiences.

In Iceland, Morris was looking for a societal metaphor which represented the principles of unity, continuity, and a harmonious society which integrated art and personal integrity.[29] He was disappointed with what he perceived to be the fragmentation and distancing of British society within the Victorian era, that competitive capitalism, commercialism, and the growing bureaucracy were actively working to splinter society. Most of all, self interest, spurred on from these traits, as Emily Louise Meredith foregrounds in her dissertation, "distorted all sense of [historic] continuity." He advanced the notion that Iceland was perhaps the freest society in the world and he conceived of it, both in ancient and contemporary times, as allowing its citizens the

[27] Charles Harvey and Jon Press, *William Morris: Design and Enterprise in Victorian Britain* (Manchester & New York: Manchester University Press, 1991), 72.
[28]Harvey, *William Morris*, 72.
[29] Meredith, "Iceland as Metaphor," 57.

maximum amount of individuality within the confines of a communal structure, and thus, it provided the perfect societal model.[30]

He does comment on the state of the Icelandic people, stating later in a letter dated to 1883, "that the most grinding poverty is a trifling evil compared with the inequality of classes."[31] MacCarthy argues that this quote demonstrates how his experiences in Iceland changed him, that "seeing life lived at the barest limits of survival" is what set the foundation for his later socialism.[32] He would go on to later express his admiration for the primitive democracy of Iceland in his lectures on socialism. A point he frequently returned to was that crime meant nothing in the ancient society, that its morality was purely enforced by public opinion. MacCarthy makes the convincing claim that his utopian novel, *News from Nowhere*, is infused with the societal ideals he found in Iceland, especially his thoughts on criminality and violence.[33]

On a personal level, he found, in the concept of Iceland, ideals which he could relate to; those of courage and endurance. It can be speculated that he wished to find equivalents of these ideals during his trips, and that by travelling to the region, the land which produced such dramatic stories of fortitude, he could develop these traits as well, so as better to cope with his world. Thompson asserts that it was in Iceland where "he found manliness and independence among the crofts and fisherman lacking in capitalist Britain."[34] Iceland gave him the opportunity to entertain a new part of his personality, and in his quest to find the heroic within this particular landscape, he was, in effect, casting himself in one of the sagas. Thus, his journals can be read as a very specific construction of self, one predicated on a climactic demonstration of personal

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[30] Meredith, "Iceland as Metaphor," 57.
[31] Thompson, *Romantic to Revolutionary*, 31.
[32] MacCarthy, *William Morris,* 278.
[33] MacCarthy, *William, Morris*, 307-308.
[34] Thompson, *Romantic to Revolutionary*, 184.

endurance in the face of an ancient and atmospheric environment. The Icelandic environment, in order to fill this role, needed to be filtered in a specific way, privileging the extremes of topography and history, while erasing the more modern additions, such as machinery and clothing, to the country.

After planning his trip for several months,Morris and the three other travelers in his party left for Iceland on July 6, 1871.[35] They first headed to Edinburgh, from which they boarded the *Diana* on July 8, which took them to the Faroe Islands and then onto Reykjavik. In his poem, "Iceland First Seen," he writes:

> Ah! What came we forth for to see
> that our hearts so hot with desire?
> Is it enough for our rest,
> the sight of this desolate stand
> And the mountain-waste as voiceless as death.[36]

Invoking a timeless and ruined character of the landscape, one that is 'wasted,' devoid of human presence, this phrasing sets the tone for his ruminations on the trip. Aside from the personal reasons, Morris also wanted to make a literary pilgrimage to the landscapes and locations where the Sagas had supposedly occurred. In a letter describing his motivations, he states "yet I have felt for long that I must go there and see the background of the stories for wh [sic]: I have so much sympathy."[37] The sagas and their backdrops are deeply entwined, which adds to their immediacy and emotional potency. The group crossed terrains of barren lava and black black grained sand. They visited the house of Njal, a character in the *Njal Saga*, as well as

[35]During this time he wrote enthusiastic notes to Faulkner about the importance of riding exercises. William Morris, *The Collected Works of William Morris*. Foreword by May Morris (London: Longmans, greens & Co., 1910), xvj.
[36] William Morris, 'Iceland First Seen,' in *Poems by the Way* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1891).
[37] Thompson, *Romantic to Revolutionary*, 179.

Gunnar's abode at Lithend. Moving on to the Geysir, it was not until August 5 that they started their climb for the setting of the *Grettir Saga*. They witnessed the cave at Surtshellir, where the eponymous hero killed Thorir Redbeard. However, it was their trip to Thingvellir, a rift valley in south-west Iceland, which is perhaps the most important stop along the tour. Since the inception of its use in 930 A.D., this natural formation served as the seat of Icelandic Parliament. 'The black and the white line are the Great Rift (Almanna-Gja) and Axewater (Öxará) tumbling over it. Once again that thin thread of insight and imagination...did not fail me at this first sight of the greatest marvel and most storied place of Iceland."[38] Morris speaks about this site with much delight, since he not only found the landscape arresting, but he also greatly admired what he saw as the "primitive" democracy of the country.[39] The party stayed on the island for six weeks, with Morris returning to England on the seventh of September.

It was not until the eve of his second trip to Iceland, June 20, 1873, that he gave an edited version of the notes from his first excursion to his friend Georgiana Burne-Jones. He had written the notes from the first trip intended for her readership, and MacCarthy surmises that the specificity of tone he employs, one in which he is full of self deprecation and humility, is meant for "a sympathetic female readership," since it was only meant to be read by Burne-Jones.[40] His daughter May transcribed the records with her "usual practice of interfering as little as possible," [41] as she was preparing the publication of his larger *Collected Works*. Both journals are the products of a diary which he kept throughout his travels, and thus can be seen as indicative of his employment of direct observation, musings which he then put through a process of curation and

[38] Morris, *Icelandic Journals*, 168.
[39] Magnusson, *Icelandic Journals*, xxiii.
[40] MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 281.
[41] Morris, "Foreword," xxxiv.

narration. As May Morris writes in the introduction, when her father was typing up his first journal he was "very full of his 'painted books,' and in the middle of the manuscript his ordinary firm, clear copying-hand blossoms out into a beautiful and careful script."[42] Not only a testament to his unending artistic sensibility, this comment also speaks to the presence of his hand, his mind, and his creative impulse within the production of these journals. Thus, the descriptions are also wrought with his personal palette of romance and drama, a construction of self, as much as an observation of the land.

The journals are also full of both triviality and personal discovery. He discusses the long stretches on ponies, the surprising comfort he found in sleeping in a tent and the pride he took in his cooking, stating to the ambiguous reader, "You've no idea...how well I can fry bacon under difficulties."[43] He discusses evenings in which he conversed with the locals about the sagas, which had been orally preserved between the generations.[44] There is a string of discussion about how he frequently loses his belongings, with MacCarthy noting that "in Iceland he casts himself in his old role of the incompetent."[45] The tone he employs is strikingly full of self deprecation, evident of how he describes himself as a novice traveller, who, as Pamela Bracken Wiens states, is "blustering his way through a land in which he is continually thunderstruck."[46] These explications of himself work to position him as a central figure within his observations of the land and the history which he saw as written upon the topography. It also adds a certain narrative

[42] Morris, "Foreword," xxxiv.
[43] Morris, *Collected Letters,* 44.
[44] Thompson, *Romantic to Revolutionary,* 179-180.
[45] MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 293.
[46] Pamela Bracken Wiens, "Fire and Ice; Clashing Visions in the Travel Narratives of Morris and Burton," *Journal of William Morris Society* Xi.4 (Spring 1996): 13.

function to his characterizations of place, and attests to the readability of his account. The choice to depict himself in such a comedic and humanizing role is a conscious one.

In July of 1873, Morris and Faulkner set out on their second journey, a trip which would last a little more than two months. Writing in his journal that he "felt quite at home," Morris's account of this trip shifts its focus to the people and farms he encounters, rather than the awe-inspiring landscape to which he had grown somewhat accustomed to.[47] In her introduction to the second journal, May Morris explains that the journey was "harder and more adventurous" than the first.[48] The pair spent ten days traversing the south-west part of the country where they had already been, revisiting Lithend and Gunnar's Hall. They revisited Njal's country which then set them on the north-east course across the central desert, and reaching Dettifoss on Jokulsá, a river that runs across the country. They also made it to Akureyri, a northern port town, before turning back to the south and returning to Reykjavik in September. In a letter written on September 28, Morris states that "[t]he glorious simplicity of the terrible and tragic, but beautiful land with its well remembered stories of brave men, killed all querulous feeling in me, and have made all the dear faces of my wife and children...dearer than ever to me."[49] The journal from this trip is published in an unfinished state. As May analyzes, this "direct daily record of impressions seems to bring us very near the traveller and his emotions; he saw things keenly and with broad vision."[50] It is suggested both by Morris and through the interpretation of these journals that he did not feel the need to return to Iceland after this trip. A sort of symbolic circuit had been completed and the space of Iceland had served its purpose.

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[47] Lindsay, *William Morris*, 170.
[48] Morris, "Foreword," xxxj.
[49] Lindsay, *William Morris,* 198.
[50] Morris, "Foreword," xxxij.

Of all the travel narratives to Iceland in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, Morris has, by far, the most secondary scholarship written about his work. This is due to his importance as a figure in numerous fields, ranging from art history and political science to utopian and ecological studies. Monographs on him include anywhere between a footnote to a chapter on his Icelandic jaunts. These sources all tend to characterize his trips in a similar way, as a formative moment in his discovery of a mature self. MacCarthy, in her book on Morris's life states that these journals are important because they are the only record we have of his day to day existence.[51] These scholars discuss his emotional interactions with the landscape, and highlight moments where he makes emotional breakthroughs. Frederick Kirchhoff, in his psychoanalytic analysis of Morris entitled, *William Morris: The Construction of the Male Self, 1856-1872*, builds off this theme of focusing on the dramatic moment. Citing the care with which Morris keeps the journal, Kirchhoff suggests that the act of writing down his emotional responses to the landscape, as well as documenting the more mundane aspects of traveling, were part of his process of transformation and self actualization. He further states that Morris presents himself almost like a novelist would present a character or a persona.[52] This brief historiography of his trips is meant to demonstrate how both he has been characterized and how he has, in turn, characterized and constructed and understand of Iceland that is shared by other travel writers. It is a space of personal transformation and has been written about by scholars as a series of dramatic moments. I aim to employ a more sustained commentary to his accounts, drawing on patterns, such as comparison, filtration and absence, which he uses to depict and erase the landscape. The usage of these mechanisms, in order to construct himself and the environment, implicates him within a

[51] MacCarthy, *William Morris*, 281.
[52] Kirchhoff, Frederick. *William Morris: The Construction of a Male Self, 1856-1872* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1990), 219.

larger imperial discourse since they are similar to those employed by Baring-Gould, Burton and other imperialist writers.

The articles which engage with Morris's trips as a central focus of their analysis, can be used to establish an analytical matrix through which to frame the less engaged accounts, such as Baring-Gould and Burton. In her article, "Travels Abroad in Iceland and Paris: Morris's Utopian Mapping," scholar Karen Herbert argues that Morris filters his conception of the landscape through his past experiences.[53] She frames his compiling of the notes on his journey as important process through which he engaged with these environments. In his recounting of the "geological and topographical 'map' of Iceland" he tends to find patterns of juxtaposition, between "garden" or "humanized nature" and "wasteland" and "picturesque and sublime."[54] She develops this idea of dialectic patterns in his work, and argues that it is through setting up contrasts with his previous experiences that he communicates information regarding Iceland. As she states, "...his topographical quest is for the material origins of the saga teller's imagination, his narrative quest is for the dialectical progressions toward his identity as skald," which "allows his understanding of Iceland to interact productively with his contemporary situation."[55] Kirchhoff's article, "Travel as Autobiography: William Morris's *Icelandic Journals*," corresponds with this perspective that the Journals act as an extension of Morris's construction of identity.[56] He argues that to Morris, "Iceland represents an earlier stage in European civilization…" and "...also a return to his own past." Thus, the Journals record a type of self-confrontation, which Kirchhoff

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[53] Karen Herbert, "Travels Abroad in Iceland and Paris: Morris's Utopian Mapping," *Journal of William Morris Studies* New Series I.2 (Fall 1992): 24-29.
[54] Herbert, "Travels Abroad," 25.
[55] Herbert, "Travels Abroad," 27.
[56] Frederick Kirchhoff, "Travel as Autobiography: William Morris's *Icelandic Journals*," in *Approaches to Victorian Autobiography*, ed. George P. Landow (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1979), 294.

argues is an important stage in his "development as a poet." He also sees the Journals as the artistic product of this quest of finding a more mature version of himself. This can be traced through Morris's concern for the poetic and imaginative aspects of the land, as figured in his highly descriptive prose. Ultimately, these publications demonstrate "Morris's search for a world in which timeless nature is infused with a timeless imagination" and this mindset is what structures the way he confronts and represents the landscape.[57] This analysis, then, explains why Morris would fail to comment on the present Icelandic society which he was also experiencing, since it did not fit into his choreographed understanding of his quest.

Through a comparison between the Icelandic travel publications of Anthony Trollope and Morris, Peter Preston argues that it is the latter's experience in Iceland which solidified his later socialist leanings.[58] He frames Morris's journals along similar lines as the other scholars, implicating Trollope's written productions as evidence of his self construction. Wendy Parkins takes Morris's trips and traces their influence to his later home life. In "'Almost as good as Iceland on a small scale': William Morris's 'Icelandic Imaginary' at Home," she outlines this concept of the 'Icelandic Imaginary,' stating that for Morris "Icelandic literature and culture provided one such network of themes, images, stories, objects, even feelings or states of mind…" and she uses the objects he brought back from the island, such as embroidered vests and a live pony, to demonstrate how this imaginary construction was imparted onto his family.[59] She continues, untangling the global and local perspectives in his writing, ultimately asserting that his "'focus on archaic local customs, dress and language' represents the local transcending the

[57] Kirchhoff, "Travel as Autobiography," 294.
[58] Peter Preston, "'The North Begins Inside': Morris and Trollope in Iceland," *Journal of William Morris Studies* 14.2 (Spring, 2001): 8-28.
[59] Wendy Parkins, "'Almost as good as Iceland on a small scale:' William Morris's 'Icelandic Imaginary' at Home." *Journal of WIlliam Morris Studies* XXI. I (Winter 2014): 10.

global," effectively "fixing place and race in a form of essentialism" within his work.[60] This article not only continues the scholarly thread of Morris's journals as a narration and production of his sense of self, but it also outlines the concept of the 'Icelandic Imaginary' which corresponds to the conception of Arctic discourse as discussed by Hill. All of these articles use the Icelandic experience to elucidate a deeper understanding of Morris as a political figure and an artistic creator. Iceland is a means through which he constructs himself, both physically and textually. I aim to inverse this lens, arguing that through Morris, and the other travel narratives, we can also gain a deeper understanding of the Icelandic built environment. In effect, we are de-centralizing Morris and using both his descriptions and impulse to characterize Iceland in a particular way to not only flesh out how Iceland was occupied, but also how it fell into the imperialist production of knowledge by the British.

In her article, "Fire and Ice: Clashing Visions of Iceland in the Travel Narratives of Morris and Burton," Wiens frames the two writers and their Iceland accounts as offering "contrasting aspects of Victorian subjectivity."[61] Burton employs a style that is "encyclopedic, cataloguing, and critical" in order to convey information about his experiences in the country, whereas Morris's account is "modest, contemplative, and commendatory."[62] She frames Burton as a "representative of his nation, the Englishman subordinating all that he surveys to the power of his life-long habit of observation…" which is in contrast to Morris who depicts himself in these journals as "a novice traveler, blunder, bellowing, and blustering his way through a land in which he is continually thunderstruck."[63] To Burton, Iceland was a small moment in his global

[60] Parkins, "Almost as good," 11.
[61] Wiens, "Fire and Ice," 13.
[62] Wiens, "Fire and Ice," 13.
[63] Wiens, "Fire and Ice," 13.

adventures, whereas Wiens argues that for Morris, it was a transformative experience that changed his political views and aesthetic sentiments. The dichotomy that her argument establishes between these two accounts will be questioned later in this chapter, especially in regards to Morris's participation in an imperialist discourse regarding Iceland.

After being unable to find work in a consular position, Burton accompanied a sulfur mining expedition to Iceland, arriving in Reykjavik on June 8, 1872. Once he returned from his trip, he produced multiple newspaper articles and an almost 800 page account of his experiences, entitled, *Ultima Thule; or, A Summer in Iceland*, published in 1875, and complete with charts, tables, illustrations, maps, as well as nine sections on the historical, political, geographical, zoological and other aspects of Iceland's culture.[64] Wawn sets Burton's account up as the ornery and intentional antithesis to the other travel narratives being produced at this time. As he states "[Burton] was interested in facts, and scorned those who headed north in search of giddy sensations rather than sober thoughts."[65] The long flowery passages regarding the sublimity of the natural topography are replaced with data, from timetables regarding volcanic eruptions to profits from the fish exportation to France. As Wawn states, he even waited three years to release the Icelandic account, rather than the customary few months. Burton "feels under no obligation to advertise his knowledge of, or enthusiasm for, Icelandic sagas; they are mentioned periodically with elaborate unconcern...There are no concessions here to sentiment, lyricism, or innocent enthusiasm for saga texts."[66] He is still engaging with a construction of the 'old north,' and thus, the Arctic discourse as set out by Hill, as can be seen in his choice to depict frustration

[64] Sir Richard Francis Burton, *Ultima Thule; or, A Summer in Iceland* (London; W.P. Nimmo, 1875).
[65] Wawn, *The Vikings*, 302.
[66] Wawn, *The Vikings*, 303.

at the seeming lack of civilization in Reykjavik, but, as Wawn argues, this conception operates "strictly on Burton's pragmatic terms."[67]

Burton is the most self-reflexive of the writers that produced accounts from Iceland. He provides the most extensive commentary regarding the history of writing about travel to Iceland, which takes up an entire section of his book, as well as engaging in discussions at various points in his narrative about the act of travel writing in general. He states in his Preface, "[t]hose who have seen much of the world make themselves unintelligible and unpleasant (myself, alas!) by drawing parallels between scenes unknown or unfamiliar with their Public, who resents the implied slight accordingly."[68] In practice, he would counter this advice, filtering much of Iceland through a comparison with other places. Some demonstrative phrases include; asserting that a building mound was like "a nest of African termites."Particularly scathing is his categorization of the volcano Hekla, which was "only a commonplace heap...a mere pygmy compared with the Andine peaks."[69] Not only do these comments work to disparage the Icelandic landscape and people, but this engagement can be chalked up to the nature of his account, in that he purposefully wrote it to be read by a wide audience and that he had produced substantial travel narratives before this journey. However, adding the addition of a self aware viewpoint complicates the other narratives which are written in generally the same manner and employing similar experiences.

Burton is generally framed as the quintessential imperialist. Dane Kennedy argues in his book, *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World*, that although "biographies have tended to portray him in Nietzschean terms as a heroic, independent spirit

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[67] Wawn, *The Vikings,* 303.
[68] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, 327.
[69] Burton, *Ultima Thule,* 525, 680, 653.

operating outside the bounds of social conventions" he was also "a product of nineteenth-century Britain and its imperial encounter with the world."[70] He takes umbrage with the biographies for their emphasis on Burton's exceptionalism, and Kennedy works to contextualize Burton's work as a way to complicate him as a multifaceted figure. On a smaller scale, this thesis aims to similarly complicate how Morris has been framed within scholarship. Burton was an accomplished linguist, as well as writing over 20 travel books which, as Kennedy states, demonstrated his skill as an ethnographer and "advanced the cause of anthropology as a modern academic discipline."[71] In the 1840's, Burton was an officer in the British East India Company's army in Sindh, which, trained him in the Orientalist tradition of acknowledging 'difference,' and "stressing language acquisition as the key to ethnographic knowledge."[72] One of the incidents he is most famous for is his 1853 trip to Mecca in the guise of a Sufi of Pathan origin, and it is from these experiences which he developed a lifelong affinity with the Islamic religion and Muslim culture. Kennedy states that this frame of reference through which he began to question the role of Christianity in Britain. His transition into the 'explorer as detached scientific observer' stage in his life, happened when he was unable to operate in disguise during his journey into Somalia in 1855.

Kennedy states that by the mid-1860s' he had become one of the leading proponents for the polygenist thesis, which argued that Africans constituted a distinct and inferior species.[73] He espoused this viewpoint in various travel books set in West Africa and Brazil, as well as during his tenure as one of the founding members of the Anthropological Society of London. He saw

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[70] Dane Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World* (Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 2005), 2.
[71] Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man*, 2
[72] Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man,* 3.
[73] Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man*, 4.

racial difference as "innate and immutable" and used it to challenge the "universalist European claims that its own civilization was unsurpassed and supplied a model for others to emulate." In order to demonstrate this point, and as a way to counter the dominance of Christianity, he used other belief systems to "demonstrate that each was embedded with its own particular historical and cultural context."[74] He works through these ideas in his satirical book, *Stone Talk* (1865), which takes a subversive look at British society. He would write *Ultima Thule* about a decade later. These intellectual underpinnings set the stage for his many contemptuous comments, both directed towards the other British travelers to Iceland, especially in regards to the saga pilgrimages, and Icelandic society itself. Morris, Baring-Gould and the other travel writers generally regarded ancient Iceland as the bastion of European Christianity and democracy, an unadulterated space and people who evidenced a kind "purity" to the roots of Western society. He discusses the belief systems of old Scandinavia in relation to systems of African Fetishism, comparing a form of Norse baptism with an analogue practice in modern Gaboon.[75] He is, in effect, using the collective conception of old Norse Christianity as a way to demonstrate his point regarding the presence of universal belief systems, thus countering European essentialism. Surprisingly, the Icelandic accounts of Burton have been ignored by scholars, despite the fact that they so clearly demonstrate his intellectual thought process during this formative period in his life. Within my project, Burton acts as an example of the quintessential imperialist, a figure whose agenda and methods can be compared with Morris and the other writers, in an effort to show their engagement with an imperialist production of knowledge.

[74] Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man*, 4.
[75] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, 94.

Baring-Gould traveled to Iceland in 1862 and subsequently published his account, *Iceland; Its Scenes and Sagas*, the following year. He was a contemporary of Morris and they both have surprisingly similar personal circumstances and sets of interests. Both come from relatively privileged personal and educational backgrounds, and spent much of their lives entertaining antiquarian interests. Baring-Gould, like Morris, attempted to to teach himself Icelandic before his trip, relying on a Danish grammar book on Icelandic language and an Icelandic-Danish dictionary.[76] As with Morris, Baring-Gould travelled to Iceland in conjunction with his interest in the Sagas. His objective in visiting the island "was twofold. I purposed examining scenes famous in Saga, and filling a portfolio with water-colour sketches." He continues, invoking a proposed audience and what he expects them to take away from his efforts. The reader "may be disappointed at finding in these pages little new matter of scientific interest" but "the landscape painter will thank me for having opened to him a new field for his pencil; and the antiquarian will be glad to obtain an insight into the habits and customs of the Icelanders in the tenth and eleventh centuries."[77] Baring-Gould states outright that the sagas "from which I draw my extracts are not mere popular tales; they are downright history….handed down from father to son as truthfully and faithfully as could ever be the case with any public or notorious matter in local history."[78]

He continues to assert the legitimacy of their historical record, stating that "much passes for history in other lands on far slighter grounds, and many a story in Thucydides or Tacitus....is believed on evidence not one-tenth part so trustworthy as that which supports the narratives of these Icelandic story-tellers of the eleventh century." He then ruminates on the integration of

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[76] Wawn, *The Vikings*, 298.
[77] Sabine Baring-Gould, *Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas*. (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1863), xiii.
[78] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, xiv.

superstition in popular belief throughout the ages, and how the presence of ghosts and phantoms should not preclude the modern reader from finding what he deems as historical truths of varying degrees within such accounts, that "there is no difficulty whatever in distinguishing fact from fiction in these works of a bygone age."[79] This focus on a mythic history as seemingly an objective account of the island obscures and redirects the focus on the narrative to stories, rather than the conditions of the Icelandic people at this time.

The authors engage with each other's work in varying degrees, since it is common for them to draw attention to previous works of Icelandic travel and building upon them. This includes asides such as Burton's footnote, "Mr. S. Baring-Gould gives a catalogue of fifteen books and manuscripts usually found amongst the priests and farmers; and in Appendix D. a list of Icelandic published sagas (thirty-five), local histories (sixty-six), annals of bishops (twelve), annals of Norway, etc. (sixty-nine)...."[80] In another section he characterizes Baring-Gould's work as a "handsome volume" which "is written with an object, to illustrate the Sagas and to represent their *Mise en Scéne.* The author sees the Icelander as he is; the topography is that of a geographical traveller; and the books contains an immense amount of useful information." Burton lauds Baring-Gould for "taking the realistic view" which has rendered this work "not a favorite in Iceland." His one criticism is that it "lacks an index."[81] He comments on other accounts which will be utilized in the next chapter, touting A.J. Symington's work (1862) as "unpretending," Lord Dufferin's *Letters from High Altitudes* (1858) as "written in the best of humors and in the most genial style," albeit displeasing to the Icelanders, and W.C. Paijkull's work (1867) as having "a decent map," but its "merits are much debated, and as a rule, its tone is

[79] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, xvi.
[80] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, xxxiv.
[81] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, 248-249.

greatly disliked by the islanders."[82] He does not comment on Morris's journals, which were published in 1911, nor is there evidence that he was aware of Morris's trips to the island, which is surprising, since they travelled to the island less than a year apart and must have visited the same steads and houses. He does, however, mention that a "Danish gunboat, 'Fylla,' the waiting maid of Frygga" is "...the sister ship of the *Diana*, which also flies a pennant…"[83] The *Diana* was the boat that Morris took to get to Iceland for both of his journeys.

Morris was aware of Burton's work, writing to Magnusson that he was "curious to see what the humbug Burton has to say about Iceland."[84] He also mentions Baring-Gould in his discussion of the tun of Kalmanstunga. "... though this was the first bonder's house we have slept in, and I have yet to shake off my dread of-, inspired principally by Baring-Gould's piece of book-making about Iceland…" (81). Baring-Gould was the earliest account and thus, does not make mention of the the other two. These connections, both personal commentaries and the subsuming of previous research, work to frame an intersubjective production of knowledge, or discourse, about Iceland. The narratives and their interconnections act as nodes of information which in turn ossify a larger understanding about the culture and reality of the island, both to a British audience and an Icelandic one. Thus, it is important to frame the mechanisms through which the culture is being represented within these travel narratives, and situate it within a larger imperial production of knowledge, despite the fact that Iceland was not Britain's colony.

The goal of this section is to establish a theoretical matrix through which to analyze the travel narratives as productions and reflections of both self identity and national identity with varying shades of imperialism. In her dissertation on the subject of British travel narratives to

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[82] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, 249.
[83] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, 324.
[84] Wiens ?

Iceland, Erla María Marteinsdóttir employs Pratt's construction of an imperial discourse through travel narratives in order to engage critically with British travel writing in relation to Iceland.[85] In her discussion of Lord Dufferin's *Letters from High Latitudes*, which will be incorporated into this thesis in the next chapter, she sets up the dual yet competing framework of how these writers, consciously and unconsciously, positioning themselves, as both an "autobiographical narrating subject" and an "imperial traveler." This paradigm is what I will be utilizing to link the accounts of Burton, Baring-Gould and Morris together.

In her seminal work, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, argues for a refined conceptualization of imperialism, which, as Sara Mills explains in her critique of the book, as a "nexus of relations," rather than the more traditional view of a political empire.[86] She uses this understanding to demonstrate how the productions of empire, in various material forms, shaped the European metropole, claiming that despite the presence of borders, "Europe was constructed from the outside in as much as the inside out."[87] Pratt's point of departure in this work are travel narratives which are produced during the mid-eighteenth century, which is marked, she argues, by "two intersecting processes" in Europe; "the emergency of natural history as a structure of knowledge, and momentum towards interior, as opposed to maritime, exploration." She terms this shift as the development of "planetary consciousness" which she explain as "a shift that coincides with many others including the consolidation of bourgeois forms of subjectivity and power, the inauguration of a new territorial phase of capitalism propelled by searches for raw materials, the attempt to extend coastal trade inland, and national

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[85] Erla Maria Marteinsdóttir, "On Top of the World: Colonialism and the Conquest of the Past in British Travel Narratives of Iceland" (PhD diss., University of California, Riverside, 2001), 67-68.
[86] Sara Mills, "Knowledge, Gender, and Empire," in *Writing Women and Space: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies*. Eds. Alison Blunt and Gillian Rose (The Guilford Press, 1994), 34.
[87] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 6.

imperatives to seize overseas territory in order to prevent its being seized by rival European powers."[88] This opening up of European consciousness to the scale of the global expands into the next century, fueling much of the British impulses for travel.

My projects takes up near the end of her time frame, after these shifts had been established for almost a century, and deals with an inversion of her geographical lens. This "planetary consciousness" coincides with the production of a discourse about the Arctic, constructing this space as desirable for exploration and exploitation, both of which can be seen in the works of Burton, Baring-Gould and Morris. In bounding her study, she argues that it is through an understanding of recurrent tropes or conventions of representation that are employed within a set of travel narratives which allows us to unify them into a corpus. Her stated aim is to outline a "rhetoric of travel writing," using this framing concept as a way to suggest the heterogeneity of travel accounts and allude to their interactions with other kinds of expression. Thus, this positioning opens up the analytic lens so that we can trace these impulses within their variegated accounts.

In service to this agenda, she provides a theoretical toolkit. She employs the term 'contact zone' as a way of conceptually spatializing Iceland and the multivalent interactions which this space offers. The contact zones are "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination…" This type of production allows for an understanding of how "subjects are constituted in and by their relations to each other," by focusing on their "copresence, interaction, interlocking understandings and practices, often with radically asymmetrical relations of power."

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[88] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 9.

[89] The question of this thesis, then, asks how fair it is to characterize Iceland as such a contact zone for the British. For the purposes of this argument, I frame the island as such a space, since, as has been demonstrated especially in relation to Morris, the experiences within the country and in conjunction with a relation to even the idea of the site, produces a certain sense of self. She also argues that "in travel literature...science and sentiment code the imperial frontier in the two eternally clashing and complementary languages of bourgeois subjectivity."[90] These two competing and complementary impulses will inform how Iceland is represented, both textually and visually.

There are areas for expansion within Pratt's framework. Does it change when applied to relationships which are not colonial, per say, but exhibit similar impulses for exploitation and construction of the imaginary. Another element, which is what implicates Morris in this discourse, is the function of absence. The imperialist impulse is as present in copious descriptions of peoples and places, as it is in the silence of an area overlooked. It is in this negative space, in that the photographic record is clearly evidencing Icelandic architectural and material space which is similar to other locations in Europe, especially ones that Morris would be familiar with, and yet he is not commenting on it, which indicates a level of operation within an imperial production of knowledge.

As has been demonstrated by this chapter, current scholarship frames the importance of these travel narratives as what they can tell us about the author's personal or ideological biases and transformations. The majority of scholarship on Iceland in the Victorian period is focused on the phenomena of foreign travel and how these experiences work to construct the author's sense

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[89] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 4.
[90] Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 38.

of self and a larger British identity. This emphasis serves to further marginalize Iceland, both in terms of continuously foregrounding its past, since that is what the travelers are most interested in documenting, as well as continuously centralizing the undeveloped interior of the country, rather than the capital, Reykjavik. Thus, in the next chapter, I propose to reverse this lens, and see what the texts can tell us about the urban center, rather than the person who is producing them. While travel writing has been used by art and architectural historians in their inquiries on the built environment, it is usually employed for the purposes of buttressing more substantive evidence, such as floor plans, observations from field work or photographic images. This privileging of the visual over text is understandable, however it causes a tension when one is attempting to engage with a built and material environment that has not been preserved and was very infrequently documented. Thus, travel narratives allow us to map the occupation of these spaces.

Occupy Reykjavik

Interior photographs of the structures in Reykjavik are very rare. This is due to technological limitations of the photographic process, as well as the attentions of the photographers being directed elsewhere. In the book, *Ljósmyndarar Á Íslandi: Photographers of Iceland, 1845-1945,* which is written entirely in Icelandic, the editor, Inga Lára Baldvinsdóttir, includes three photographs of interior spaces in Reykjavik.[91] An interior photograph by Pétur Brynjólfsson, depicts three women standing in a furnished room, complete with decorated wallpaper, framed pictures, carpet, and intricately carved wood furniture (Fig. 1). A roughly translated caption from the original Icelandic, reads

> ...wall hangings for windows in the ceilings and the wall, which were able to control the light. A selection of photographs from the room, among other things is the famous picture of Stefanía Guđmundsdottir..[92]

Another photograph by Magnús Gíslason depicts a similarly furnished interior, but in a different location (Fig. 2). He foregrounds an intricately wrought lighting fixture and the sumptuous fabrics which adorn the windows and the table. A third photograph, whose creator is unattributed, depicts yet another richly decorated space (Fig. 3). These photographs incited my interest in the occupied spaces of Reykjavik because I was unable to find any explanation for them. They suggested that the space of Iceland was much more complicated and diverse than the images of turf houses which have been promulgated by historians and travelers for the last two

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[91] Inga Lára Baldvinsdótti, *Ljósmyndarar Á Íslandi: Photographers of Iceland, 1845-1945.* (Reykjavik: JPV Útgáfa og Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, 2001).
[92] Baldvinsdótti, *Ljósmyndarar Á Íslandi*, 44.

hundred years. Without being able to read Icelandic, I turned to the texts of British travelers to this region in an effort to contextualize these interiors. While these specific spaces are not engaged with by the accounts, I aim to set up a method of inquiry that would allow me to expand this project so as to parse these images.

This section aims is to demonstrate the merits of the travel narratives as analytic tools for the discussion of built and material environments which have failed to be adequately documented. By looking at the general conversation regarding architecture and urbanism within the accounts, we can begin to understand how these travellers commented on and categorized the environments which they encountered, as well as the ways in which they criticise each other's architectural engagements. Iceland is generally framed as occupying the periphery, and it is the combination of scientific and aesthetic inquiry which drew the travelers to the island. This hybridity of empirical observation and picturesque scenery is evidenced in the belaboured ways the travelers document the Icelandic farmhouse as compared to the desultory and offhand manner in which they recount the structures in Reykjavik. The farmhouse, or saga-stead is framed as the traditional and quintessentially Icelandic architectural structure, one that is intimately tied up with the sagas and the island's mythic history. Thus, the writers' employment of its imagery works to further their understanding of the colony through its mythic stories. By comparing photographic images of various structures in Reykjavik with textual descriptions from the travel narratives, I aim to map the occupation of these spaces with objects, people, and

interactions, which not only work to recenter Reykjavik as an important part of Icelandic society in the Victorian period, but also demonstrate, through the origins and nature of these occupations, that the island was connected to transnational networks, thus recentering it globally.

I also aim to situate descriptions from various accounts with specific locations, namely the Governor's House and the Cathedral. To do this, I have tracked the locations which the travellers visited, and compared their experiences. The text is then corroborated, when possible, with photographs of either the structures themselves, or similar images of buildings. These accounts provide a micro-history for the locations, and the overlaps and disparities between the descriptions allow us to chart how the structures were used and how they changed over time. Broadly, I wish to investigate the intersections and potentials between textual and visual descriptions as a means of analyzing the built and material environment.

Since architectural details are not a main focal point of the narratives of Baring-Gould, Morris, and Burton, I have opened up the bounds of this study to include other travel narratives from the later nineteenth-century. These are employed in order to construct a richer image of the interiors of the buildings and material culture which they contain. Due to the nature of his account as more self reflective and wilderness centered, Morris plays a smaller role in the analysis of Reykjavik, compared to the other writers. This absence of description, particularly for someone who demonstrates a voracious curiosity elsewhere in his life and writings, confirms the

findings from the last chapter, that Morris came to Iceland with a specific understanding of the island and his position within the landscape. This static view of the past and the process of exploiting it for his personal gain, in terms of his leisure and saga interest, implicates him within an imperial discourse. Prior to the exercise of linking the descriptions in the travel accounts to photographs of Reykjavik, are short biographies of the writers of these accounts. The purpose for such a detailed understanding of these various figures is that it is through a mapping of their individual interests and backgrounds, which are predominantly imperialist in some way or another, that the travels to Iceland can be framed as imperial in nature. Thus, by placing Morris within this constellation of actors who all, in varying degrees, are operating within an imperialist discourse, it implicates him within this discourse as well, a critical position which has not previously garnered scholarly attention.

Frederick Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, the 1st Marquess of Dufferin and Ava (1826-1902), was a British public servant. Educated at Christ Church, Oxford, he was sent to Syria in 1860 as a British representative to handle the fallout from a massacre of Christians in Damascus. After this holding, he became the Under Secretary at the War Office and the India Office. He was later appointed the Governor-General of Canada in 1872 and held this position for seven years. A.T.Q. Stewart, in his book, *The Pagoda War: Lord Dufferin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Ava, 1885-1886*, states that Dufferin was "unrivalled in the act of conciliation, and

he could often by his candour and humor lead contesting parties to appreciate the difficulty and delicacy of his own position as the representative of the Imperial government…"[93] When he returned from Canada in 1878, Benjamin Disraeli offered him the position of ambassador to Russia with a station in St. Petersburg, a post he was not particularly happy about. In 1880, he was transferred to Constantinople where he was met with some highly complex diplomatic issues, particularly in regards to Arabi Pasha's rising in Egypt. This unrest was later shut down by Sir Garnet Wolseley.[94] This episode in his life is considered to have made his reputation as a formidable diplomat. He was appointed to the post of Viceroy of India in 1884, a particularly tumultuous period due to the rising political unrest within the Anglo-Indian community. During his tenure he worked to alleviate tensions between Afghanistan and Russia in the wake of the Panjdeh Incident, as well as overseeing the Pagoda War (1885-1886) and the annexation of Upper Burma in 1886.[95] He went on to serve as the ambassador to Italy between 1881 and 1891 and France between 1891 and 1896, where he became the President of the Royal Geographical Society and Rector of the University of Edinburgh and University of St. Andrews.

His 1856 trip through Iceland is relatively early in his career. Two years prior, he had traveled to the Baltic sea in order to watch naval engagements between Allied and Russian fleets

[93] A.T.Q. Stewart, *The Pagoda War: Lord Dufferin and the Fall of the Kingdom of Ava, 1885-1886* (London: Faber & Faber, 1972), 26.
[94] Stewart, *The Pagoda War*, 27.
[95] Stewart, *The Pagoda War*, 30-31.

as the guest of Admiral Napier.[96] He then sailed the 80-ton yacht, *Foam,* on a 6,000 mile journey through the Arctic sea, stopping in Iceland, Jan Mayen island and Spitzenberg. Stewart states that it is this journey in which he becomes associated with "the select circle of Arctic explorers and made him a literary reputation."[97] From this trip he produced the widely popular text, *Letters from High Latitudes*, which was published in 1856 and included in the Oxford *World's Classics* series in 1910. The narrative is written in a series of letters to his mother and this definitive audience evidences a certain intimacy with which Dufferin recounts his experiences. Marteinsdóttir, in her dissertation chapter on Dufferin, claims this to be the most "popular travel narrative of the nineteenth century."[98] In her unpacking of the tensions between the "autobiographical narrating subject" and "imperial traveler" within Dufferin's work, she states that first and foremost, Dufferin was a servant of the British empire. However, his Scottish lineage and lifelong sympathies to the Irish cause complicated this national affinity and agenda.[99] She states that his mission in Iceland was twofold; he wants to "find the idyllic, pure, clear simplicity that he craves...along with a local culture, collective past and history," and at the same time, "fulfill his obligation as an imperial traveler in an exotic place...and broadcast knowledge,

[96] Stewart, *The Pagoda War*, 23.
[97] Stewart, *The Pagoda War,* 24.
[98] Marteinsdóttir, "On Top of the World,' 67.
[99] Marteinsdóttir, "On Top of the World,' 70.

truths, and meanings about Iceland to his countrymen and readers."[100] These impulses are very similar to those shared by the other travelers to Iceland around this time, notably Morris.

Like Burton, Dufferin engages with the concept of 'Thule,' but very briefly in a footnote to his section on the history of settlement and colonization of Iceland. He recounts the myth from the time of Alexander the Great, that there is a legend of Pythias the traveller, but he discredits it, surmising that he probably only got as far as Shetland.[101] He also has a clear saga-driven agenda, as seen in the majority of these letters, where he spends his time recounting a particular part of his journey. Once he finds a particularly historic or scenic location, he then proceeds to recount, in great detail, a story from one of the stories from the sagas. This act of recounting the sagas upon and within the land is one that Baring-Gould and Morris also employ, a way of proving the legitimacy of their pilgrimage, but also a way to link history, topography and personal experience.

In June of 1878, the novelist Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) traveled to Iceland for a two-and-a-half-week expedition, only four days of which were spent in Iceland. Organized by his friend, John Burns, who was chairman of the Cunard Steamship Co., the traveling group, which included sixteen Brits, only traveled to the Geysir, just outside of Reykjavik.[102] Trollope's book is significantly different from the others, both in size and style. It is much shorter, and reads

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[100] Marteinsdóttir, "On Top of the World,' 71.
[101] Lord Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes; Being an Account of a Voyage to Iceland, Jan Mayen, and Spitzenberg, in 1856* (London: J. Murray, 1857), 17.
[102] Victoria Glendinning, *Trollope* (London: Hutchinson, 1992), 459.

like a portrait of Icelandic society, focusing on the gossip and people, rather than the sagas or natural environment. As Coral Lansbury speculates in the introduction, he wrote this book around late June or early July in 1878, at the request of John Burns. The book was privately printed, probably in October of 1878 by Virtue & Co.[103] The attendant illustrations, mostly watercolors and pen sketches, were largely the work of Mrs. Hugh Blackburn. The scenery and adventurous moments which so captured other travelers frustrated Trollope. As Lansbury states, "...it was in Iceland when Trollope camped by the boiling pools of volcanic lava and contemplated a waste of steam and cinders, wondering why anyone should choose to explore such desolation."[104] Thus, this record functions less as a record of the trip or of the country, and more as a "commemoration of the friendship and good company that flourished in the cramped conditions and in a barren landscape."[105] Thus, his account works to populate the Icelandic landscape, both with his own companions and vignettes of the Icelanders.

Trollope's peripatetic life provided him with the imaginative flexibility and insatiable curiosity which set the stage for his literary career. Starting out as a clerk at the General Post Office in Belgium, where his family had moved to escape debtors, he continued this position when he moved back to England 1834. He moved to Ireland in 1841 continuing the same line of work, and started writing his first novels in 1844. His work during this period would use Ireland

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[103] Anthony Trollope, *How the Mastiffs Went to Iceland*. Intro. By Coral Lansbury (New York: Arno Press, 1981), i.
[104] Trollope, *How the Mastiffs,* ii.
[105] Trollope, *How the Mastiffs*, ii.

as an environmental setting, two employing the Great Famine as a theme. He moved back to England in 1859, retaining his position as a Post Office Surveyor. In his later years, he would focus his efforts on writing, making several trips to Australia. He is known for his works; *The Warden* (1855), his series, termed the Pallister novels, his satire, *The Way We Live Now* (1875), as well as his many short stories.

It has been virtually impossible to find information on Andrew James Symington outside of Burton's description of his work in his travel writing inventory. Wawn describes him as an "Iceland traveler and poet," before briefly discussing his engagement with Bishop Esaias Tegnér's 1825 Swedish translation of an Icelandic saga.[106] His work, *Pen and Pencil Sketches of the Faroe and Iceland* (1862), which documents his trip in 1859, reads like the other books in this corpus. He demonstrates an interest in both the sagas and the natural environment. As he states in the Preface, his aim is "to present pictures and condense information on matters relating to Faroë and Iceland." Like the others, he legitimizes his authority in recounting such information through demonstrating his social connections, "...I have had the advantages of frequent intercourse with Icelanders, both personal and by letter, since my visit to the North in the summer of 1859…"[107] He names common figures that the other travelers also interacted with, such as Rev. Olaf Pálsson, the Dean of Reykjavik Cathedral and Mr. Jón Arnason. After his personal recountings of the trip, he attaches appendices which detail poems and sagas translated by Pálsson, as well as 'information for intending tourists,' and a glossary. In concluding, he hopes that "these pages induce photographers and other artists to visit this strange trahytic island

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[106] Wawn, *The Vikings,* 122.
[107] Andrew James Symington, *Pen and Pencil Sketches of the Faroë and Iceland* (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1862), v.

resting on an ocean of fire in the lone North Sea…to become familiar with its stirring history and grand old literature…"[108] His account reads similarly to the others in terms of tone, sites visited and construction of self in relation to the environment.

Thus, this chapter uses these accounts as a way to not only shed light on both the urban layout and the the interior spaces in Reykjavik, but also to develop an understanding how these spaces were occupied. Occupation, by people, interactions, and objects is used as a metric for demonstrating transnational connections. The presence of books written in Hebrew, conversations conducted in German and walls adorned with French prints hints that the society of Reykjavik was connected to transnational networks of education, printing and artistic enterprise, thus overturning the narrative of Iceland as an isolated society in a wild northern clime. This works to foreground Reykjavik within the travel narratives, as well as center Iceland within global networks of exchange.

A main focus in the Reykjavik sections of the accounts are the social visits and parties which the travelers attend. It is in the descriptions of these events where the architecture and occupation of interior space is communicated, usually these descriptions function as a way to set the scene for these interactions.The social circles in Reykjavik were very small and concentrated, with the same ten or so figures making appearances in the accounts. This means that not only were the writers engaging with the same characters, but, by extension, they were also getting access to the same spaces. By triangulating these interactions and communications, we can begin to construct a textured image of the society of Reykjavik at this time.

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[108] Symington, *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, vi.

Perhaps the most notorious character of Reykjavik society which pervades the travel narratives is the island's physician Dr. Jón A. Hjaltalin,[109] who interacted with the all travelers at varying events in their accounts. Morris had dinner with him near the end of his trip, but mentions it in an offhand comment at the end of one of his journal entries.[110] In contrast, references to Hjaltelin are surprisingly pervasive throughout Burton's account, and he deflects judgements and information to the doctor quite frequently. For example, a typical comment reads. "Mr. Jón A. Hjaltalín...whose name is sufficient recommendation."[111] Symington, when recounting the layout of the city, points out the "residence of Dr. Hjaltelin, a distinguished antiquarian and the chief physician of the island,"[112] and Dufferin characterizes him as "the most jovial of doctors…."[113] The frequency with which Hjaltelin is referenced suggests that he was an important figure to interact with when traveling to the island. The laudatory way he is described, especially by Burton, indicates that his friendship was a way of one communicating a certain legitimacy of their narrative. Other notables include the guide Zoega,[114] and his extended family who are actually highlighted in the *Dire Years* journals and photographs. Governor von Trampe is another common character, and it is his Governor's House which will be discussed later in this chapter. These overlaps in social connections work to link our writers together in a shared

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[109] The spelling of his name changes based on various accounts. For example, Symington refers to him as Dr. Hjaltelin.
[110] Morris, *Icelandic Journals*, 179.
[111] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, xiv.
[112] Symington, *Pen and Pencil Sketches*, 49.
[113] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes*, 46.
[114] Zoëga, according to Morris, or Zöga, according to Symington.

experience of Reykjavik, through what can be surmised as similar topics of conversation and access to the same interiors, thus, demonstrating a collective understanding of the city.

A main theme in how the Icelanders are characterized is commentary by the writers on the native's unfailing hospitality, both within Reykjavik and at the various homesteads around the countryside. Despite the number of travelers going to Iceland during this time, there seems to only be one recorded hotel, Hotel Reykjavik, in the country. Thus, to support this proto-tourism industry, the Icelanders welcomed travellers into their homes, providing them access to their interiors and allowing for the close observation of their spaces and families. May Morris, in her introduction to Morris's journals also attempts to provide an explanation for the hospitality of the Icelandic people, stating that "[i]t has sometimes struck me that there are certain similarities between travel in the deserts of the East (in Arabia, for instance) and that in Iceland: there are the same conditions that make a rigorous hospitality necessary."[115] This culture of hospitality allowed for the travellers to gain access to these homesteads, which they would then use to furnish the descriptions of their experiences.

Throughout the corpus of travel narratives to Iceland, it is the farmhouse and attendant "tún" which has garnered the most interest by the travel writers. Thus, it has become a recurrent trope within their works and every writer commenting on it in varying degrees. It is this consistency which enables a positioning of the farmhouse as a substantial case study in service

[115] Morris, "Foreword," xxij.

unpacking how architectural discourse is employed within the accounts. It is also a way to frame the interactions between the text and visual materials within these accounts. The writing on the farmhouse demonstrates an intertwining of sentiment and narrative with a kind of scientific inquiry that rests upon categorizing, charting and documenting. This mentality characterizes these accounts, rendering them difficult to categorize, yet easy to bound together.

To demonstrate the persistence of this particular engagement with the farmhouse, it is necessary to include the visual and textual productions of the expeditions of Sir Joseph Banks, who traveled to Iceland in 1772. This expedition is written about in Ponzi's third book on the artistic outputs of eighteenth-century Iceland by Banks and another explorer named John Thomas Stanley, who travelled to Iceland in 1789. The image of the farmhouse figures prominently in the publications from the expedition. Banks is notable for his role as a naturalist on Captain James Cook's expedition to the south Pacific Ocean on the *HMS Endeavour* between 1768 and 1771, where he documented and collected the flora and fauna of the region. Disagreements regarding scientific accomodation excluded him from joining Cook's second expedition, and he used the already amassed crew and equipment to go to Iceland.[116] In typical fashion for this period which paired topographical landscape painting with scientific inquiry, among those on board the *Sir Lawrence* were three artists who all specialized in watercolor; James Miller, his brother John

[116] Frank Ponzi,. *Ísland á átjándu öld: myndir úr leiðöngrum Banks og Stanleys (Eighteenth-century Iceland: A Pictorial Record from the Banks and Stanley Expeditions)* (Reykjavik: Almenna Bókafélagið, 1980), 27.

Frederick Miller, and John Cleveley, Jr.. Uno von Troil, a Swedish scholar was also a member of this party, and it is his work *Letters on Iceland*, published in 1777 that many of the nineteenth-century travelers, including Sabine Baring-Gould and Richard Burton, cite regularly. The expedition was scientific in nature, with the agenda of collecting and documenting topographic forms and natural specimens. As Ponzi explains, at this time the majority of Icelanders were in a state of extreme poverty, the product of a series of harsh winters, volcanic eruptions and a smallpox epidemic. Despite this, the images which are produced from this trip focus on the pastoral and picturesque qualities of the Icelandic culture in settings of extreme topographical formations. This notable absence of commentary on the current poverty of the Icelandic people in the wake of a romantic and scientific view will become a trope within travel narratives to Iceland. Alongside the watercolors, there are also published textual accounts of the trip.

The visual materials produced from the Banks expedition are predominantly pastoral landscape paintings which include figures and buildings. It is unclear if the artists created the watercolors on site, or if they sketched during their trip and then completed the finished product whilst back in England. In the watercolor, *View of Danish Storehouses where we lived at Hafnarfiord*, (Fig. 4) Cleveley has depicted three wooden storehouses in the background which are framed by jagged hills, and interspersed with figures both on horseback and engaged in labor.

In the foreground are fishermen's boats and more figures, whose clothing is carefully rendered. The scene is placid and quotidian, a means through which to convey information about the structures, labor and costumes of the Icelandic people. Ponzi pairs the image with a quotation from Banks's journal from an entry dated August 31, 1772, "'4 room in three houses in which some of us slept a drawing room proper in which the draughtsmen draw & slept a kitchen & and a loft where the servants lived.'"[117] It is unlikely that this caption was intended to be connected with the watercolor, but the texts' ability to elucidate both the spatial interior of the structures and their usage, allows us to see the importance of pairing the textual accounts with the visuals. A discussion of these early accounts of the farmhouse demonstrates the long established tradition of foreign characterization of the island, showing that the impulse to mix sentiment with scientific documentation, as evidenced by the nineteenth-century travelers, is not new.

Another watercolor produced by Cleveley, *View of Arnes (?) house near the edge of Gardahraun* (Fig. 5) depicts a similar scene, although with a focus on domestic structures. Ponzi surmises that this house, which is situated in the middle of a lava field, as determined by the background, belonged to a local fisherman near the harbour.[118] Drawing from details employed throughout the accounts, Ponzi states that salt barrels present in the image indicate that fish was a main staple of the homestead and that they could also have been used for storing water. Cleveley

[117] Ponzi, *Ísland á átjándu öld*, 24.
[118] Ponzi, *Ísland á átjándu öld*, 36.

emphasizes the picturesque nature of the turf roofed houses with small groupings of people who are also dressed in traditional, and well kept, Icelandic garb, as indicated by the conical hat on one of the women. The turf house is featured prominently within the rest of the watercolors of this set, and will be a main focus of the later travellers, since it comes to be framed as a quintessential and unique Icelandic structure.

Along with these vistas, there is also a floor plan and elevation of the 'traditional' turf house within the collection. Ponzi presumes, through comparisons with other works, that John Frederick Miller painted the image entitled, *View of the inside of an Icelandic House* and the separate *Plan of an Icelandic House* (Fig. 6). He does not, however, relate these images to any text within the Banks' account. The impulse to diagram, what is framed as an ambiguous Icelandic structure, mirrors the empirical bent of the trip. Its decontextualized presentation is reminiscent of the systematized flora and fauna charts which are characteristic to Banks's Linnean approach to organizing nature. The decontextualization of this plan conveys the idea that it encapsulates Icelandic architectural culture. Judging by the plethora of rooms and the quality of the construction materials, it can be gleaned that this is a high end domestic structure, and not indicative of the general housing in Iceland at this time. Thus, this contributes to the highly stylized and picturesque construction of Icelandic material culture that is being touted through these images. The presentation is also similar to another image in the group, in which

James Miller daws a layout of ornaments from women's costumes (Fig. 7). Both images demonstrate the employment of the methods of representation of scientific inquiry as a way to categorize and communicate information about the products of culture and people. The Banks expedition did not travel to Reykjavik, which was still a small sized township in the 1770's. However, the subject matter and methods of representation of the Icelandic built environment, the almost codified way of showing traditionally clad people dutifully performing daily tasks in the wake of these turf houses alongside generalized layouts of the structures, is how the country would continue to be represented by foreigners.

The nineteenth-century writers descriptions of 'tún' and the Icelandic farmstead are a continuation of this neatly bounded approach to producing the 'traditional' architecture and space of the country. As seen with the Banks examples, it is an impetus of the travelers to combine sentimental images of the farmhouse, usually in terms of clothing or activity, with more empirically based representations, such as a floor plan or processional descriptions of rooms. Some writers, such as Morris describe actual locations, whereas others, like Burton, talk in general terms. However, they all seem to be describing, at various points in their accounts, the Icelandic turf house, heralding it as the typology best suited and representative of Iceland. These turf houses are represented visually throughout the travel accounts, such as the *Bjarg* engraving from Baring-Gould's account (Fig. 10), the 'Reykjavik Cottage' engraving in Burton's account

(Fig. 11), and in Howell's photographs (Fig. 8, Fig. 9). These two images are indicative of the larger representation of turf houses in accounts produced by foreigners. Broadly, the combination of sentiment and empiricism in their visual representations mirrors similar impulses in their textual depictions of similar subject matter, thus highlighting the overlap between the visual and the textual. These treatments are also important in comparison to the writer's treatment of structures and architecture in Reykjavik, which is predominantly described either through offhand comments or disparaging observations.

One of the methods of recording the history of the farmstead is by recounting the linguistic lineage of its name. Dufferin, in his description of the first farmstead he encounters, describes a visitor's approach to it. "At a distance, the farm-steading looking like a little oasis of green...not unlike the vestiges of a Celtic earthwork, with the tumulus of a hero or two in the centre; but the mounds turn out to be nothing more than grass roofs of the houses...and the banks and dykes but circumvallations round the plot of most carefully cleaned meadow…." This meadow, he states, is a "tún," and he then proceeds to comment on the evolution of this name. which, as he says "always surrounds every Icelandic farm:"

> This word "tún" is evidently identical with our own Irish "*townland,*" and the Cornish *"town*" and the Scotch *"toon"*- terms which, in their local signification, do not mean a congregation of the streets and buildings, but the yard, and spaces of grass immediately adjoining a single house; just as in German we have *"tzaun,"* and in Dutch "*tuyn*," a garden.[119]

[119] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes,* 27.

This national connection of the language of space which he frames, works to connect the "tún" to a larger European civilization. Also, this works to categorize the experience within a larger production of etymological knowledge, as well as infuse it with a broader historical lineage.

Another way of describing the farmhouse is through a processional description of walking through the structure. Burton, in discussing what he terms as "the Iceland farm-house," combines this adherence to providing accurate names along with illustrating the layout of the structure.

> The abode was entered by a passage (Bœhar-dyr), six feet wide, with a cross-rafted roof, and thus this "Skemma" was lighted by windowlets (Skjágluggi) of "Himna" (membrane), transparent parchment of cattle's bladder...or by Skræna, inner membranes of the stomach, a little more opaque...Fronting the common entrance was the Bađstofa (public room, literally meaning bathroom), measuring fourteen ells by eight, in which the household worked at dressing wool and weaving cloth...[120]

This type of description continues for two more pages, as Burton works his way through the rooms in the stead, recounting various information he found important, from the placement of cups and other possessions, to the directions of the entrances. Morris employs a similar method of representation, albeit less detailed.

> ...the house was turf of course, with wooden gables facing south, all doors very low, and the passages very dark: the parlour we went into was a little square room panelled with pine: there was a table in it, one chair, and several chests, more or less ornamented...from the open door we could see the ladder that led up to the common sleeping and living room called the bađ-stofa...[121]

[120] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, 146.
[121] Morris, *Icelandic Journals*, 43.

The processional description corresponds with the impulse for these writers to provide a floor plan of the 'traditional' Icelandic house in their accounts. This is notable since they use visual images sparingly, and these generally depict topographical and dramatic scenes.

In his comments on the 'Icelandic farm house,' Burton includes a footnote which lays bare the recurrence of the creation of floor plans. "As every traveller, from Uno Von Troil downwards, has given a plan and sketch of the Bær, the reader need not be troubled with them."[122] This comment speaks to collective impulse of the travelers to employ similar tools of representation in order to convey information about what they think is important to the reader. Baring-Gould, in similar fashion to his rough sketch of the urban pattern in Reykjavik, provides a plan and elevation for the stead at Mósfell (Fig. 12). He does not attribute its creation to either himself or anyone else in his party, and it is decontextualized, in that it does not represent a specific stead. In comparison to the plan and elevation from the Banks expedition, this rendering shows a similar treatment in the thickness of the turf walls, and delineation of different materials in the section. The layout also appears to be congruent, although the Baring-Gould image, which shows multiple unconnected rooms opening to the yard, as opposed to the singular connecting hallway of the Banks representation, suggests this is a multi-family structure. Baring-Gould, in an extra step towards clarity, labels each room with its attendant function. This impetus for categorization can be seen in other charts he scatters throughout his narrative, such as a page on the 'magical

[122] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, 145.

signs of Iceland (Fig. 13) which depicts the various runic symbols he encountered during his study of Icelandic literature, as well the pages and pages of geologic and topographic names and processes. This empirical documentation, though, is compared with the more aesthetic rendering of the section, evidenced by the smoke actively unfurling from the chimney and the careful presentation of turf and wood. Thus, this tension, between empiricism and aestheticism, as seen in this runic chart, is indicative of the larger construction of these accounts, seen in their mixing of detailed geologic records with personal ruminations of the happiness and picturesque quality of the people.The density of description and attention to detail which each of the writer's directs towards their recounting of the farmstead is contrasted with the absence of their commentary on the architecture of Reykjavik.

To employ the method of pairing text and the visual that this thesis propounds, I wish to highlight the example of the Bessestad or Bessastaðir homestead, which is located near Reykjavik. While it can be surmised that the other travelers also visited this stead because of its proximity to the capital, it is Dufferin who directly names it. This stead is also represented in the photographs from *Howell's Island*. This pairing demonstrates the way that the descriptions from these travel narratives can be employed to populate and occupy the visual representations of these places, offering a more dynamic image of the space. Dufferin describes his initial impression of the stead, "[i]n front rose a cluster of weather-beaten wooden buildings, and huts

like ice houses, surrounded by a scanty plot of grass, reclaimed from the craggy plain of broken lava that stretched...on either side of the horizon."[123] Unfortunately, the exterior photographs we have of the Bessestad stead focus on the church, rather than the attending house, which is what Dufferin spends his time describing. The photograph of the church in the foreground and the house in the background (Fig. 14) show the weather weary structure that Dufferin is referencing. Howell also provides a sketch of the stead from the sea, where one can view both the church and the home from another angle (Fig. 15).

Dufferin is excited about the access to this location because, as he states, "this was Bessesad, the ancient home of Snorro Sturleson!" In following the agenda of his trip and the set up of his account, Dufferin uses this location of the "forlorn barrack," and its "solitary inmates," as a segue into a recounting of this famous saga of Snorro, "whose memory so haunted me."[124] Ponzi also provides a history of this location, although he focuses on another famous occupant, the poet and statesman, Dr. Grímur Thomsen (1820-1896), who should have been the occupant of the house when Dufferin visited it.[125] Dufferin, however, only mentions the women occupants that he meets there, so perhaps it can be deduced that Thomsen was traveling. Ponzi mentions that Dufferin sent Thomsen a copy of his "Letters from High Altitudes."[126] Thomsen is notable for this proficiency in multiple European languages and statesmanship, both of which allowed

[123] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes*, 28.
[124] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes,* 30.
[125] Ponzi, *Howell's Island,* 46.
[126] Ponzi, *Howell's Island*, 47.

him to not only travel, but also be a figure which foreign travelers to Iceland would seek out. This location was the first site of the Latin School, which was moved to Reykjavik in 1846, and thus it transitioned into a home for farmers.

Dufferin grants the reader access to the interior, stating that "entering the house, things began to look more cheery."[127] He mentions that a "dear old lady" received them and brought them into her "best room" and they were waited upon by her niece, a "pale lily-like maiden, named after Jarl Hakon's Thora." They were pleasantly surprised that the young lady spoke some French. The woman's son, who could either be Thomsen or his progeny, was in Copenhagen "pursuing a career of honour and usefulness...and it seems quite enough for his mother to know that he is holding his head high among the princes of literature, and the statesmen of Europe…." He provides an inventory of the parlour, stating that he sat on a sofa, and that on display were "a few prints, a photograph, some book-shelves, one or two little pictures...a neat iron stove, and massive chests of drawers…."[128] This variegated overlapping of information is indicative of other scenes throughout his, and the other travelers, accounts.

Dufferin continues, providing a description of the interior of the house, stating upfront that it seemed to be "a good old-fashioned farmhouse, the walls wainscoted with deal, and the doors and staircase of the same material."[129] While Howell does not provide any photographs of

[127] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes*, 28.
[128] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes,* 29.
[129] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes,* 29.

the interior of the house, which probably has to do with the limitations in photographic technology at this time, he does provide a sketch of the entrance hall (Fig. 16). The wainscoting that Dufferin mentions is visible, as is the cohesiveness of the building materials, which are denoted by a specific stroke of ink. From this image, we can assume that the stead has at least two stories, as communicated by the staircase, which sets it apart from the typical one story stead that the others document. Dufferin acknowledges this, positing that "The greater proportion of inhabitants live much more rudely. The walls of only the more substantial farmsteads are wainscoted with deal, or even partially screened." He goes on, using Bessestad as a way of creating a describing what other, more typical, steads looked like:

> In most houses, the bare blocks of lava, pointed with moss, are left in all their natural ruggedness. Instead of wood, the rafters are made of the ribs of whales….The same room...often serves as the dining, sitting, and sleeping place for the whole family; a hole in the roof is the only chimney, and a horse's skull is the most luxurious *fauteuil* into which it is possible for them to induct a stranger. The *parquet* is that originally laid down by Nature, - the beds are mere boxes filled with feathers, or sea-weed - and by all accounts the nightly packing is pretty close and very indiscriminate."[130]

In this quote Dufferin documents not only the building materials of the 'typical' Icelandic farmstead, but also the ways in which it is occupied, both by objects, such as the *fauteuil* and by tightly packed people. This theme of comparison between the Bessestad stead and the 'typical' stead works as a method of communicating information that is pervasive in the travel accounts,

[130] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes,* 29.

and works to not only set up differences within the Icelandic built environment and society, but also between the experiences of the island and what the travelers and readers were familiar with back in their homelands. This example also works to demonstrate the discourse which surrounding the documentation of the farmstead which is set up by these travelers.

The connection of these descriptions and images works to occupy the house with people, interactions and things. The noting of language and travel experience of the Icelanders, allows us to connect a space with its inhabitants, demonstrating the international mobility of the Icelanders. This method allows for the connection between space and the activity of people, populating wooden rafters and porcelain teacups with the lives of its users. Descriptions of the farmhouse are the most prevalent engagements with built environment by the travel writers. In more contemporary materials on Iceland, it is also this entity which garners interest, demonstrating that the buildings which reside in the interior of the country are what have come to define it, both internally and globally. An understanding of how the farmhouse has been viewed and generalized is meant to contrast the more offhand and arbitrary descriptions of Reykjavik by the same writers.

The initial descriptions of Reykjavik are from the sea, where the travelers provide textured and dynamic descriptions of the coastline. Dufferin's exposition of the approach to the

island is indicative of how this part of the journey is generally approached, in that they focus on the extremity of the different parts of the natural environment:

> [a]s you approach the shore, you are very much reminded of the west coast of Scotland, except that everything is more *intense*-the atmosphere clearer, the light more vivid, the air more bracing, the hills steeper, loftier, more tormented, as the French say, and gaunt; while in between their base and the sea stretches a dirty greenish slope, patched with houses which themselves, both roof and walls, are of a mouldy green as if the long-since inhabited country had been fished up out of the bottom of the sea.[131]

This painting of the beauty and magnitude of the natural environment is then contrasted to the built environment of Reykjavik, which is often painted in a deprecative light. Burton confirms the theatricality of this approach, and in typical fashion of his communication of the landscape, compares it to a previous and global experience, while criticizing the previous travelers to the region, and thus implicating them and himself in this later constellation of travel to Iceland:

> The aspect of Reykjavik from the sea is more unlike its description by travellers than, perhaps, anything I have yet seen-even Humboldt's Tenerife. One expects...to see a "Giant City of Bashan" rising from the waves. Old sketches suggest the "negative features" of John Barrow, the miserable show of a few tarred pent-roofs topping the black shingle, but free trade has changed all that ...We see nothing but dingy-white, dull-gamboge, verging on rhubarb, slate-grey, and tar-black[132]

This descriptive juxtaposition between the majesty of the natural environment of Iceland and the mediocrity of the built environment, especially of Reykjavik, is a trope which continues throughout the travel accounts. Reykjavik operates as a difficult spot for the travelers to

[131] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes*, 19.
[132] Burton, *Ultima Thule,* 325.

understand. On the one hand, it is not the picturesque and historic farmstead, which they can both romanticize and diagram, due in part because Reykjavik is similar in some ways, as can be seen in their constant allusions to its similarity to a town in Scotland or England. This similarity is of no interest to them, since they are pursuing a completely foreign experience. Thus, they fail to describe it with the same sense of care and aestheticism with which they apply to the natural environment. The descriptions they do employ, are, if not outright disparaging, then they are lackluster. Reykjavik did not excite any of the travelers imaginations, due in part to somewhat of a familiarity of image and the overpowering intrigue of the island's interior.

The travelers initial impressions of Iceland are generally bleak. "The general aspect of Iceland is one of utter desolation," writes Baring-Gould. He continues, asserting that "Reykjavik is a jumble of wooden shanties, pitched on wherever the builder listed."[133] This characterization of the unplanned nature of the urban layout is one that is shared between the writers. He writes that the town is in the "shape of a rude parallelogram, facing the sea on one side, showing its back to the lake on the other; the other sides rise up with the slopes of hills from three to four hundred feet high, the one crowned by a windmill, the other by the Roman Catholic mission."[134] Two photographs in Howell's collection evoke the view of Reykjavik from the sea (Fig. 17, Fig.

[133] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, xxviii.
[134] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, 26.

18). In these images, the jagged rocks and tumultuous sea are foregrounded before the wooden buildings which meet the visitor.

The general layout of Reykjavik also elicits comments of consternation, with the focus of their criticism being directed towards the seemingly haphazard layout of the streets. Baring-Gould explains that "there are but two streets, and these are hardly worthy of the name. One leads from the jetty to the inn, and is called the Athalstræti, or High Street...the second starts from the street, and terminates at a bridge crossing a brook…"[135] Howell takes a photograph of a bridge which seems to be in a similar position as the one Baring-Gould is describing (Fig. 19). Captioned, 'Sverrir Runólfsson's stone bridge over Lækjargata," the pairing of this text and image work to map the urban landmarks of Reykjavik. Baring-Gould works populates his commentary with characters, "[n]ow let us push down the street, avoiding the drunken man who lies wallowing on the ground...we are in High Street."[136] He also provides a rough drawing of a plan of Reykjavik (Fig. 20). Buttressed on both sides by water, this simple plan lays out what Baring-Gould felt to be the most important buildings to map; the the Bishop's House, Cathedral, Catholic Mission, a windmill, among other buildings. Symington explains that the town "consists chiefly of two parallel streets, with small cross streets, and a small square in which there is a statue of Thorwaldsen," an area which can be seen in a photograph from Howell's compendium

[135] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, 27.
[136] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*. 31.

(Fig. 21). Despite foregrounding the Thorwaldsen statue, the photograph also includes the "Ísafold printing house and French buildings."[137] Morris characterizes Reykjavik as a "commonplace-looking town of wood principally...a little street of low wooden houses, pitched, and with white sash frames…"[138] Symington also documents the two main streets, one of which contains the Governor's house and "the other street on the right contains several shops, merchants dwelling houses, the residence of Jon Gudmundson, president of the Althing…"[139] These descriptions work to explain the directionality of the town, and the more specific positions of the street views shown in the Howell photographs and those from the *Dire Years* (Fig. 22, Fig. 23). The general overview of Reykjavik can be seen a photograph by Sigfús Eymundsson taken in 1867 (Fig. 24). A more detailed study of the urban condition of Reykjavik at this time could benefit from a more careful triangulation of the street descriptions in the accounts, especially in regards to their names and their residents, as overlapped with these images.

Most of the writers comment on the smell of Reykjavik. Baring-Gould explains that "the moment the main thoroughfares are quitted, the stench emitted from the smaller houses is insupportable. Decayed fish, offal, filth of every description, is tossed anywhere…"[140] Burton corroborates this assertion, "Throughout Reykjavik a smell of decayed fish prevails, making

[137] Ponzi, *Howell's Island*, 40.
[138] Morris, *Icelandic Journals*, 23.
[139] Symington, *Pen and Pencil*, 49.
[140] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, 27.

strangers wonder how it escapes pestilence and plague…"[141] Symington, despite declaring that "Reykjavik is a fishy town" where "at every little bit of vantage ground could be found vacant, there were fishes laid out to dry," finds it "at present clean and pleasing."[142] A major theme of the traveler's experiences in the city rest upon the cleanliness or dirtiness of their space. The houses are generally characterized as surprisingly clean, where as the streets are deemed dirty and smelly. These comments work in conjunction with observations as to the lack of infrastructure in the city. They also work to occupy the space of Reykjavik with olfactory sensations, and are important because they not only provide a more multidimensional understanding of the city than a photograph or paragraph could, but it also communicates information as to how the space was used and what industries it supported.

In these general overviews of the street scenes of Reykjavik, there are few inquiries which inquire past the initial exteriors of the houses, all the descriptions are based on surface the value of the structures. However, Dufferin, through a seemingly offhand comment, provides a glimpse past this exterior threshold.

> No tree or bush relieves the dreariness of the landscape, and the mountains are too distant to serve as a background to the buildings…and as you walk along the silent streets, whose dust no carriage-wheel has ever desecrated, the rows of flower pots that peep out of the windows, between curtains of white muslin, at once convince you that notwithstanding their unpretending appearance, within each dwelling reign the elegance and comfort of a woman-tended home.[143]

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[141] Burton, *Ultima Thule,* 332.
[142] Symington, *Pen and Pencil,* 23.
[143] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes,* 21.

In this quote, he is drawing attention to the barrier-ness of the exterior of these spaces, hinting at the supposed civility and warmth which occupies their depths. This quote works to suggest that it is the interior of the house, and, more importantly, its specific occupation, that allow us to see how Icelandic society operated.

A common descriptor of the houses in Reykjavik is that they are tenements or slums. Burton writes that "the tenements mostly face the beach; the roofs pitched steep against the snow, are slated or boarded; tiles are common, and turf is preserved only by the poorest." He continues, stating that the houses near the "Cathedral" (scare-quotes his own), "are built with the scant regularity of a Brazilian village; they face every direction towards the sea, or towards the rivulet-valley, and rarely southwards as they should do for the benefit of the sun."[144] Dufferin confers that the "town consists of a collection of wooden sheds, one story high-rising here and there into a gable end of greater pretensions…"[145] Baring-Gould explicitly states that he "is keenly alive to all the unpleasantness of the Reykjavikian slum…"[146] They do not mention any specific street names or residences, which would enable a potential connection to a photograph in the Howell collection.

[144] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, 333.
[145] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes*, 21.
[146] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*. 28.

They also foreground the building materials of these structures into their descriptions, which are tied up in conceptions of temporality, where wood connotes a sort of ephemerality and the rare stone communicates a permanence. This trope, of permanence versus ephemerality, is one that permeates the travel accounts and can be attributed to the larger conceptions regarding the intersections of history and their personal travel agendas that the writers carry. Burton is the most explicit in his description of the houses as "short-lived like the "skips," requiring frequent repairs, and rarely lasting beyond thirty or forty years," because, as he surmises "their endurance depends greatly upon the quality of the wood…"[147] The others make general references to the wood and lava brick being employed in the structures of the residences.

There travelers also tend to focus on gardens in their descriptions of the town, providing a commentary of what is being grown in them and their overall conditions. A continuous trope in these descriptions is the barrenness of the Icelandic soil and the inability for things to grow. This can be seen in Trollope's description of the state of the garden at the Governor's House during his visit:

> Some flowers and vegetables in the front of the house we did see, - and I observed a frame for protecting plants from frost; but it soon struck us that the absence of growth of pretty things was one of the chief drawbacks to the comfort of life in Iceland...There is not a tree in the island; - not a wild grown shrub. A small cabbage is a difficult achievement.[148]

[147] Burton, *Ultima Thule,* 333.
[148] Trollop, *How the Mastiffs*, 18.

This mirrors other sentiments by the travelers on the state of gardens and cultivated plants in Reykjavik. Morris states that interspersed in the "streets of black volcanic sand; little ragged gardens about some houses growing potatoes, cabbages and huge stems of angelica; not a very attractive place…"[149] Symington also comments, that "between these two streets, houses stand at irregular intervals, and nearly all have little garden plots attached to them."[150] This focus on the garden within the urban context provides an interesting tension between the wilderness that the travelers are seeking from Iceland and the somewhat absent human presence. The garden descriptions mediate this tension and also act as a barometer for the larger comments the travelers have on the progress of Icelandic society.

In an effort to demonstrate the viability of the travel narratives in providing textured descriptions of the occupation of the structures in Reykjavik, I have chosen two main structures which most of the travelers have visited and written some sort of description about. Both the Cathedral and the Governor's House are visited by the travelers. Thus, the descriptions of these buildings provide us with an understanding of how these spaces were occupied, with people, interactions and objects. The nature of this occupation and the qualities of these objects, can then be connected to larger transnational networks, through their trade, production, education and travels. This, then, allows us to position Iceland within a global network of relations.

The Cathedral (*Dómkirkjan*) is perhaps the most discussed building in the traveler's accounts. Symington positions the building as inhabiting the "back of the town, with an open

[149] Morris, *Iceland Journals*, 23.
[150] Symington, *Pen and Pencil*, 49.

square space in front of it, and a little fresh water lake - inland - to the left."[151] He calls it a "modern edifice,"[152] one that is constructed of brick and plaster. Dufferin also calls it "a moderate size" with the ability to hold "three or four hundred persons," as well as making sure to emphasize that it was "erected in very ancient times, but lately restored."[153] Baring-Gould does not mince words when he discusses the Cathedral. He describes it as "a large stuccoed edifice, consisting of nave, chancel, east sacristy and south tower….This tower is perhaps the most hideous erection which head of man could devise or hand execute."[154] He continues to describe the exterior, "[t]he sides curve inwards and are capped by a saddle-back roof, tarred and surmounted by a vane never at rest."[155] Trollope very briefly mentions the building, stating that it is "anything but beautiful, but is larger and commodious…."[156] There are two exterior photographs of the Cathedral in *The Dire Years*. One shows the Cathedral in relation to the post office (Fig. 25) and the other shows it in relation to the Parliament (Fig. 26). The former image also depicts a standing self-portrait statue by Icelandic-Danish sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1844). Surprisingly, Howell's compendium includes such a similar photograph of the Cathedral as those in the *Dire Years* that it does not warrant inclusion. These images leave much

[151] Symington, *Pen and Pencil*, 62.
[152] Symington, *Pen and Pencil*, 62.
[153] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes*, 23.
[154] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, 31.
[155] Baring-Gould, *Iceland,*31.
[156] Trollope, *How the Mastiffs*, 23.

to be desired, especially in regards to how the interior of the church was constructed and decorated, and how it was occupied by the Icelanders.

Baring-Gould does not change his opinion in regards to the interior, and, like Dufferin, he also alludes to the proportion of the structure's size in relation to the amount of occupants it can hold. "There are galleries for the sake of contributing to additional ugliness, I presume, as they can be no manner of use, as the whole population of Reykjavik could be accommodated on the floor. It would hold three to four hundred people easily…"[157] Dufferin also categorizes the congregation, stating that "as in every church...the majority of the majority of the congregation were women, some dressed in bonnets, the rest in the national black silk skull-cap, set jauntily to one side of the head, with a long black tassel hanging down to the shoulder…"[158] He then describes the preacher, "who descended from the pulpit, and putting on a splendid cope of crimson velvet (in which some bishop in ages past had been murdered)...chanted some Latin sentences in good round Roman style."[159] He uses the activities of the preacher, as well as the various objects, outfits and ceremonies to comment on both the religion and nature of the Icelanders. "Though still retaining in their ceremonies a few vestiges of the old religion, though altars, candles, pictures and crucifixes yet remain in many of their churches, the Icelanders are staunch Protestants, and, by all accounts, the most devout, innocent, pure-hearted people in the

[157] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, 31.
[158] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes*, 25.
[159] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes,* 25.

world."[160] The structure and its occupation, then are being used to convey a social history of the Icelandic society.

Of the accounts, it is Baring-Gould's that provides the most structural detail. He attests that the "chancel is raised three steps above the nave and is unfurnished with stalls, as the Icelandic established religion has but one service." He continues, stating that the "roof of the chancel is painted blue, with gold stars. There is no east window, and the place is occupied with by a baldacchino enclosing a painting of the Resurrection, feeble in design and bad in colour, belonging to the worst French sentimental school."[161] This resurrection painting, as Ponzi explains, was done by G. T. Wegener, and stands in front of Thorvaldsen's marble baptismal font (Fig. 27). Baring-Gould also comments on the font, stating that it "is beautiful in regards to sculptured detail, but bad in general design, the motif being a Pagan altar."[162] He continues, providing information regarding the font which the photograph lacks:

> It is a squat rectangular block of marble, with a wreath around the diminutive bowl. On the front is a representation of our Lord's Baptism; on the right, Christ blessing little children; on the left, the Virgin and Child; whilst the back is occupied by a festoon and a cluster of fat cherubs, supporting the legend: "Opus hoc Romæ fecit, et Islandiæ, terræ sibi gentiliacæ, pietatis causâ, donavit Albertus Thorvaldsen, anno M.DCCC.XXVII.[163]

[160] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes*, 25.
[161] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, 31.
[162] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, 31.
[163] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, 32.

He follows up this description by asking "when will the stupid affectation of putting Latin inscriptions in churches cease? The living vernacular is so infinitely superior to the stilted dead Latin." Symington also acknowledges the painting, however quickly states that "the only object of artistic interest is the white marble baptismal…."[164] He goes on to characterize it as "a low square obelisk. The basin on top is surrounded with a symbolic wreath of passion flowers and roses, delicately carved in high relief out of white marble….It is a chaste and beautiful work of art."[165] This multidimensional understanding of this space is only gathered through the conflation of various sources, thus, demonstrating the efficacy of combining textual and visual accounts.

Perhaps of most interest is what Symington describes as a library above the church. It is surprising that none of the other writers were either granted access to it, or felt obliged to document it, and thus, Symington is the only person to refer to it. Positioned as "immediately under the sloping roof" he goes on to describe an apartment which "runs along the whole lengths of the building." He determines that this is the "free public library of Reykjavik, which consists of more than six thousand volumes in Icelandic, Danish, Latin, French, English, German and various other languages….a copy of every book published in Copenhagen is sent here by the government…."[166] He returns to the library a few times throughout his stay, and finds it frustrating that "there were no manuscripts...older than the fifteenth-century, and these were

[164] Symington, *Pen and Pencil*, 63.
[165] Symington, *Pen and Pencil,* 63.
[166] Symington, *Pen and Pencil,* 64.

chiefly genealogies, or translations of medieval tales or romances…."[167] This frustration at the inconvenient modernity of the object can be found expressed in many of the travel narratives in various locations around Reykjavik. The occupation of space, by people and objects, is not able to be gleaned through visuals alone. The intersections of text and photography, then, can be employed to convey a more dynamic understanding of past spaces.

Burton sardonically describes the Government House as "a substantial barn" of "white-washed stone, fronted by a well drained slope, and a bit of meadowland, courteously called a garden; its dignity is denoted by a tall flagstaff." He continues, stating that it "was originally an almshouse, and a tugthús (jail): old travelers tell us...that the poor preferred its comforts to their own wretched homes, it was not easy to keep certain citizens out of it."[168] Baring-Gould makes similar claims, both about the exterior aesthetics, "the third stone edifice in Iceland…. whitewashed...having a turf patch before the door, and a little tree, twelve feet high, trained against the wall…" and its previous occupation, "[i]t was originally designed as a prison, but Icelanders are too lazy to become great criminals so...it was adapted to its present use."[169] He is not in favor of the structure, however, stating that "the 'Residence' boasts no architectural merit" that "it might do for a shed in the dockyard."[170] This exterior can be seen in Howell's photograph of the Government House, as seen from Austurstræti Street (Fig. 28). Dufferin

[167] Symington, *Pen and Pencil,* 64.
[168] Burton, *Ultima Thule*, 322.
[169] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, 30.
[170] Baring-Gould, *Iceland*, 39.

positions it as "on the top of a hillock; the only accession of dignity it can boast is being a little bit of a mangy kitchen-garden that hands down in front to the road, like a soiled apron."[171] Symington employs the trope of comparison in recounting the structure, stating that "the house itself resembles and at once suggests pictures we have seen of missionaries' houses in Madagascar."[172] It is through comparison that the writers convey information regarding this structure.

Dufferin and Symington both met with the Governor, Count von Trampe, a Dane, while they were there, whereas Trollope meets with his predecessor, Governor Finsen. Burton recounts von Trampe as a name "well remembered, especially by travellers." They all visit the house for social purposes, which are described in varying detail. It is Dufferin's dinner party attendance, which he describes as "a Babel of conversation...with speeches in French and Latin" and then leads to the foreigners singing Scottish folk tunes at midnight on the sunlit streets of Reykjavik that is perhaps the most descriptive. These parties seem to be thrown in the visiting foreigner's honor, and their recounting reads like an inventory of the important societal figures in the capital at this time. As Dufferin explains, the "company consisted of chief dignitaries of the island, including the Bishop, the Chief Justice, etc. etc. some of them in uniform, and all with holiday faces."[173] As seen vividly in Dufferin's party experience, but also in the other traveler's

[171] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes,* 35.
[172] Baring-Gould, *Iceland,* 58.
[173] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes,* 39.

experiences in the house, parties at the Governor's House served as a nexus of for the important figures in Icelandic society to engage with foreign travelers.

The interior of the House is not as defined as other structures we have seen. Trollope characterizes it as "a comfortable well-to-do house, with many rooms opening from one to another on the ground floor, with a large drawing room on what would have been the garden at the back of the house, but...gardens are not easily maintained."[174] Dufferin recounts that "the table was very prettily arranged with flowers, plate, and a forest of glasses."[175] It is Symington provides the most descriptive account of the interior, which he say is "tasteful and elegant"

> ...all the walls of his [the governor's] suite of apartments are covered with French portraits, paintings, engravings, and lithographs, nearly all presentations. In the public room, I only observed one that was not French, Judging from the walls, we might have been in the residence of the French Consul.[176]

He bizarrely uses this to segue into a discussion of how the French would benefit from colonizing the island, providing a detailed list of how the country could benefit from such a political move. More importantly, is the presence of such a preponderance of French memorabilia, which connects the Governor, and by extension Iceland, to the country and its artistic output. This, along with the frequent mentions by the travelers of various French frigates

[174] Trollope, *How the Mastiffs,* 18.
[175] Dufferin, *Letters from High Latitudes,* 39.
[176] Symington, *Pen and Pencil,* 58.

in the harbour, suggests a relationship between the two cultures that is based on more than simply trade.

The interior photographs mentioned at the start of this chapter are the closest visual depictions available to what the traveler's were experiencing at the Governor's House. They work to corroborate the textual descriptions of its interior, that what look like French prints actually did hang on the walls. More importantly, they expand this inquiry, since they demonstrate that it was not just the Governor who resided in spaces that were occupied with such a specific array and display of objects and furniture. Thus, this chapter is meant to suggest that this type of interior deserves more serious study, that the Icelandic built environment was not simply composed of turf houses and dirt floors. This argument also establishes the limitations of the choice to use travel narratives to occupy these interiors, since it has been demonstrated that these accounts were not focused on documenting and communicating this kind of space. However, outside of Icelandic language sources, there are not many sources which allow us to populate these rooms. Thus, this continued inquiry would benefit from business and import records which would document the importation and sale of these objects into the country. By tracing the objects within these rooms, it can be demonstrated that Iceland was connected to larger transnational networks.

Conclusion

Iceland has consistently been portrayed as a place which occupies the periphery. This positioning can be understood in how it has been spatially, geographically and temporally represented by various entities in the last two centuries, notably British travelers who later publish accounts of their trips. The island is characterized as existing primarily within its prized saga tradition and medieval history, both of which are associated with the island's rural landscape, and thus there is little documentation on the conditions of nineteenth-century Reykjavik. This thesis aims to re-center the capital city by compiling descriptions from British travelers to the island during this time, and using the commentaries to occupy the spaces with architectural elements, objects, interactions and people. This inventory includes; French prints hanging on the walls, German language books, cigars from Hamburg, errant Italian travelers, and conversations simultaneously conducted in four languages. These materials, objects and interactions work to demonstrate Reykjavik's connection to global networks of trade, education and ideas. In service to this occupation of urban space, I analyze and categorize the travel accounts, arguing that they are constructed within a British imperialist production of knowledge. This lens is particularly novel when applied to the writer, designer, and socialist William Morris, who has been framed as a staunch anti-imperialist. By associating his trips and the methods of representation he employs within the other accounts of this time, written by such figures as Sir Richard Francis Burton and Sabine Baring-Gould, Morris is implicated within this larger structure of exoticization and exploitation of the island.

This thesis is meant to be the beginning of a larger project, and thus aims to provide a foundation for a larger inquiry into the transnational networks between Iceland, Europe and

America, in the nineteenth and twentieth century as seen through objects and the built environment. It has outlined a method of engaging with travel narratives which has the potential to be viable and helpful for architectural, urban and social history. This project should be expanded to include the reception history of these accounts. Questions include how they were read and who they were read by would allow us to gauge the influence these narratives actually had in British and European society. This would also contribute to a tracing of the motifs established in these narratives regarding the filtration of Icelandic culture and environment, an inquiry which would provide a larger framework for how Iceland was viewed in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. The motifs which are established, those of an mysterious ancient past as written upon a dramatic topography, continue to proliferate in the advertisement of Icelandic tourism today. Iceland is being packaged in a similar way as how the accounts bound it, suggesting a similarity between the phenomenon of travel to Iceland in the later nineteenth-century and the adventure and ecotourism boom it is seeing currently.

Another unexplored network is that of the objects which are acquired during these trips and transported across Europe. The acquisition of objects, from embroidery to manuscripts are discussed as part o f these narratives, usually as a way to demonstrate the hospitality of the Icelanders. This corresponds to the human network of Icelanders who were operating within European capitals at this time. While small in number, these actors, as evidenced by Eirikr Magnussons's activities in London, were integrated in intellectual and political circles in a variety of metropoles. Investigation into these circles would not only complicate the conception of Iceland as a political entity, but also highlight an unexplored transnational connection of intellectual ideas. These figures generally settled back in Iceland after being abroad, and their

experiences abroad contributed to Icelandic political thought, relocating their global reach to the local. This can be seen in the employment of German marxist ideas in the creation of the Icelandic independence movement.

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Illustrations

Figure 1. Pétur Brynjólfsson. Innan úr ljósmyndastofu Pétur Brynjólfssonar é Hverfisgötu 18.

Baktjald á vegg og tjöld fyrir gluggum í lofti og á vegg en með þeim var hægt að stýra birtunni við myndatökur. Uppstillt úrval af ljósmyndum frá stofunni m.a. fræg mynd af Stefaníu Guðmundsdóttur leikkonu ofan við skatthol. A myndinni eru þrjár konur sem lærðu og störfuðu hjá Pétri, þær Jóhanna Pétursdóttir.

Source: Baldvinsdótti, Inga Lára. *Ljósmyndarar Á Íslandi: Photographers of Iceland, 1845-1945.* (Reykjavik: JPV Útgáfa og Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, 2001), 44.

Figure 2. Magnús Gíslason. Heimili Árna Thorsteinsonar, ljósmyndara í Reykjavik, um 1905. Þjóðminjasafn Íslands.

Source: Baldvinsdótti, Inga Lára. *Ljósmyndarar Á Íslandi: Photographers of Iceland, 1845-1945.* (Reykjavik: JPV Útgáfa og Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, 2001), 44.

Figure 3. Stofa í Lækjargötu 4 hja hjónunum Þorláki Johnson kaupmanni og Ingibjörgu Bjarnadóttur kaupkonu, Reykjavik. Þjóðminjasafn Íslands.

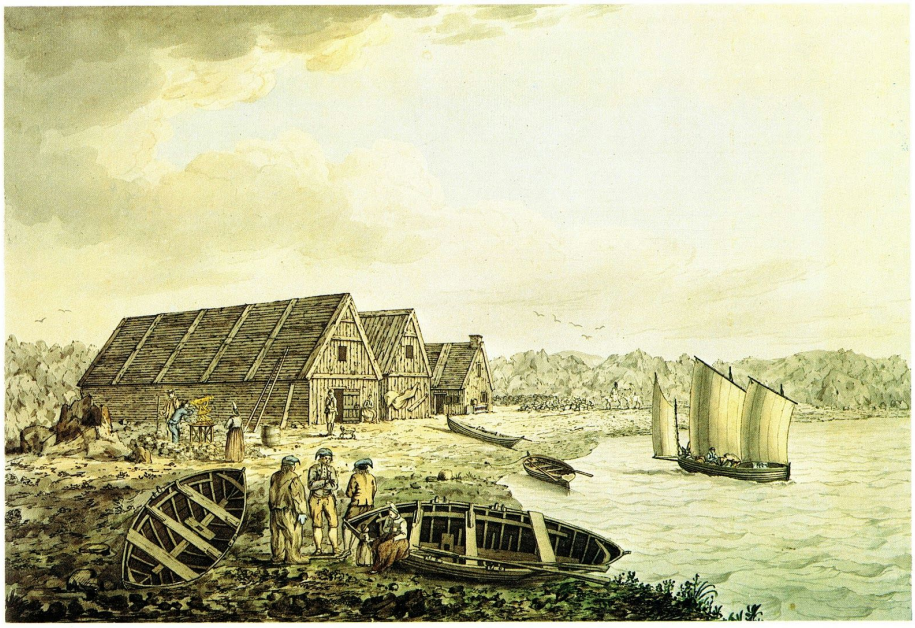


Figure 4. *View of Danish Storehouses*. John Cleveley, Jr.

Source: Frank Ponzi, *Ísland á átjándu öld: myndir úr leiðöngrum Banks og Stanleys (Eighteenth-century Iceland: A Pictorial Record from the Banks and Stanley Expeditions)*. (Reykjavik: Almenna Bókafélagið. 1980), 35.

Figure 5. *View of Arnes (?) house near the edge of Gardahraun*. John Cleveley, Jr.

Source: Frank Ponzi, *Ísland á átjándu öld: myndir úr leiðöngrum Banks og Stanleys (Eighteenth-century Iceland: A Pictorial Record from the Banks and Stanley Expeditions)*. (Reykjavik: Almenna Bókafélagið. 1980), 37.

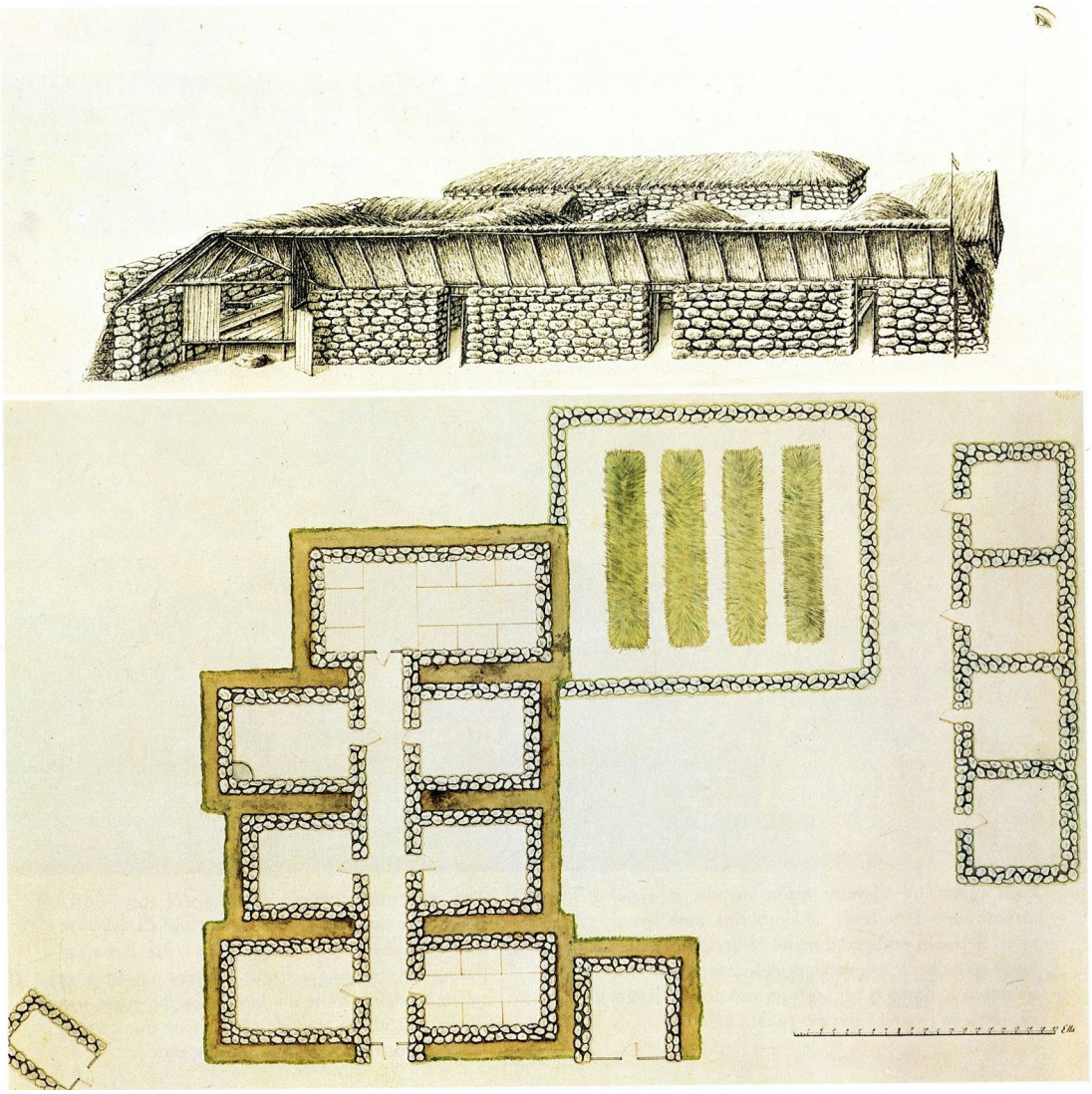


Figure 6. *View of the inside of an Icelandic House (&) Plan of an Icelandic house.*

Source: Frank Ponzi, *Ísland á átjándu öld: myndir úr leiðöngrum Banks og Stanleys (Eighteenth-century Iceland: A Pictorial Record from the Banks and Stanley Expeditions)*. (Reykjavik: Almenna Bókafélagið. 1980), 47.

Figure 7. *Ornaments of women's dress.* James Miller.

Source: Frank Ponzi, *Ísland á átjándu öld: myndir úr leiðöngrum Banks og Stanleys (Eighteenth-century Iceland: A Pictorial Record from the Banks and Stanley Expeditions)*. (Reykjavik: Almenna Bókafélagið. 1980), 83.

Figure 8. *Skáholt Farm.* William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 97.

Figure 9. *Hay drying behind Laugarvatn farm*. William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 98.

Figure 10. *CAPTION*

Source: Sabine Baring-Gould. *Iceland: It's Scenes and Sagas. (*London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1863), 297.

Figure 11. *Cottage in Reykjavik.* Sir Richard Burton.
Source: Sir Richard Francis Burton. *Ultima Thule; or, a Summer in Iceland*. 2 vols. (London: W.P. Nimmo, 1875), 631.

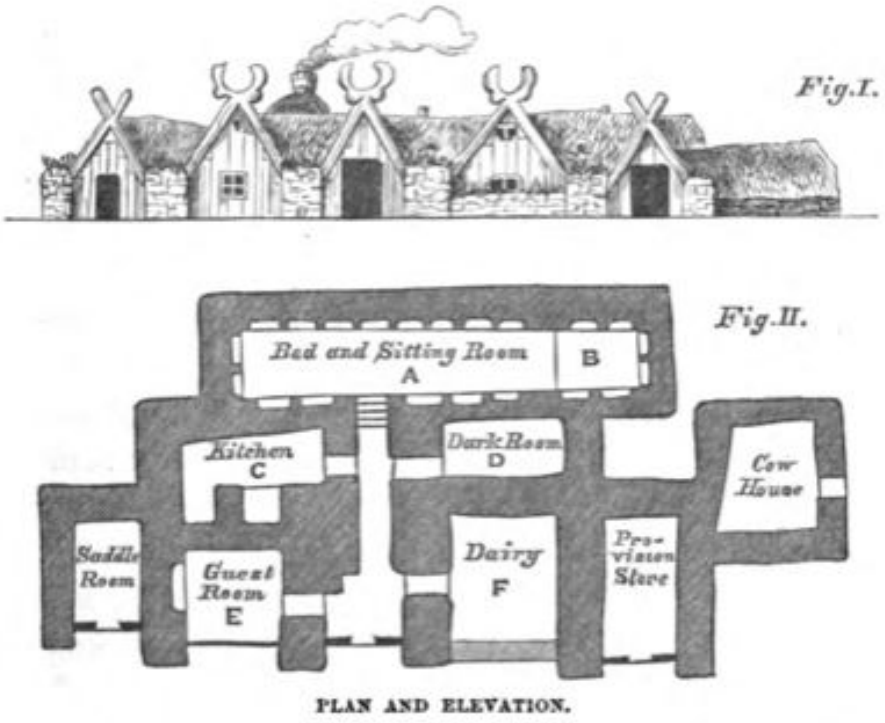
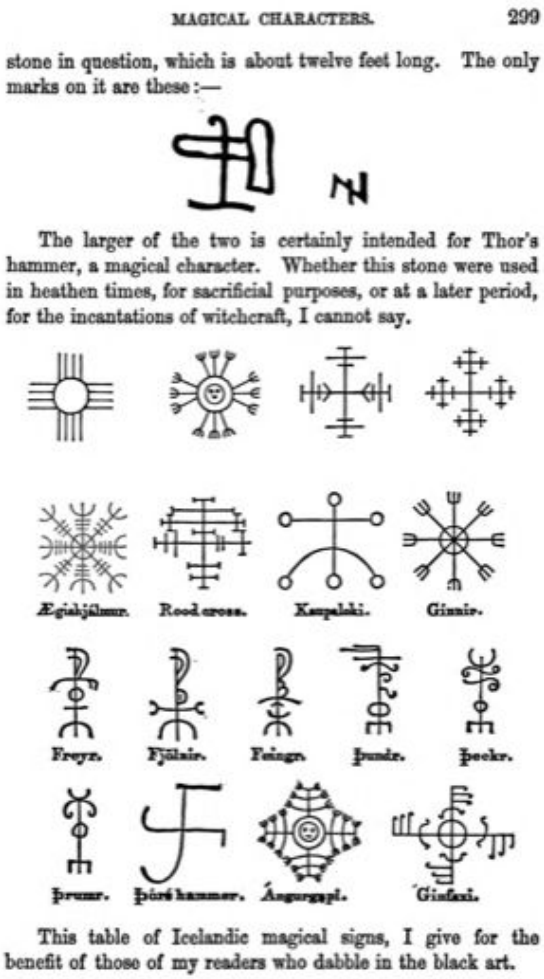


Figure 12. *Plan and Elevation.* Sabine Baring-Gould.

Source: Sabine Baring-Gould. *Iceland: It's Scenes and Sagas. (*London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1863), 59.



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stone in question, which is about twelve feet long. The only marks on it are these:—

The larger of the two is certainly intended for Thor's hammer, a magical character. Whether this stone were used in heathen times, for sacrificial purposes, or at a later period, for the incantations of witchcraft, I cannot say.

Ægishjálmur. Rood cross. Kompaloki. Ginnir.

Freyr. Fjölnir. Freingr. Þundr. Þeokr.

Þrumr. Þórs hammer. Ásgurgapi. Gimfaxi.

This table of Icelandic magical signs, I give for the benefit of those of my readers who dabble in the black art.

Figure 13. *Icelandic Magical Characters.* Sabine Baring-Gould.

Source: Sabine Baring-Gould. *Iceland: It's Scenes and Sagas. (*London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1863), 299.

Figure 14. *Bessastaðir church and Grímur Thomsen's house.* William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 49.

Figure 15. *Bessastaðir church and altarpiece.* William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 46.

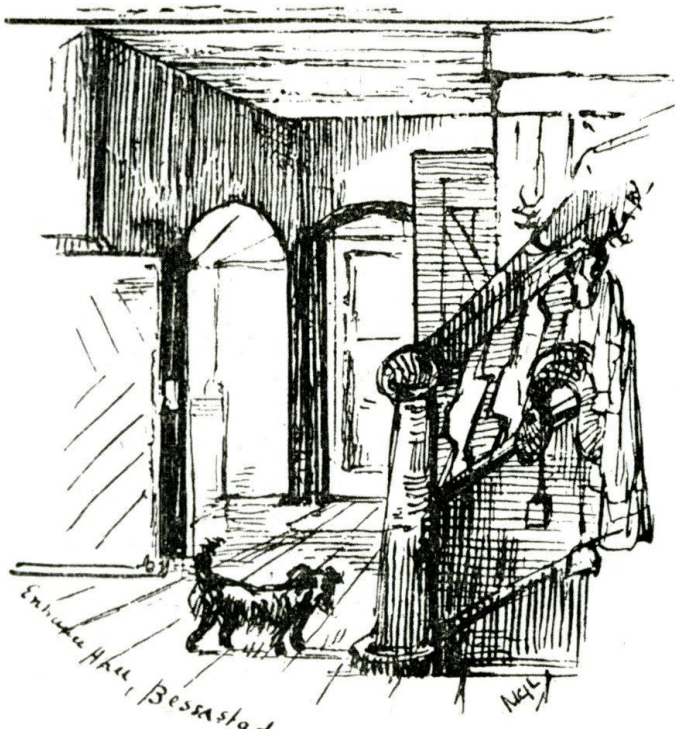

Figure 16. *Entrance Hall, Bessastaðir*. William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 46.

Figure 17. *View from the lake.* William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 33.

Figure 18. *Town's West Shore.* William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 33.

Figure 19. *Sverrir Runólfsson's stone bridge over Lækjargata*. William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 38.

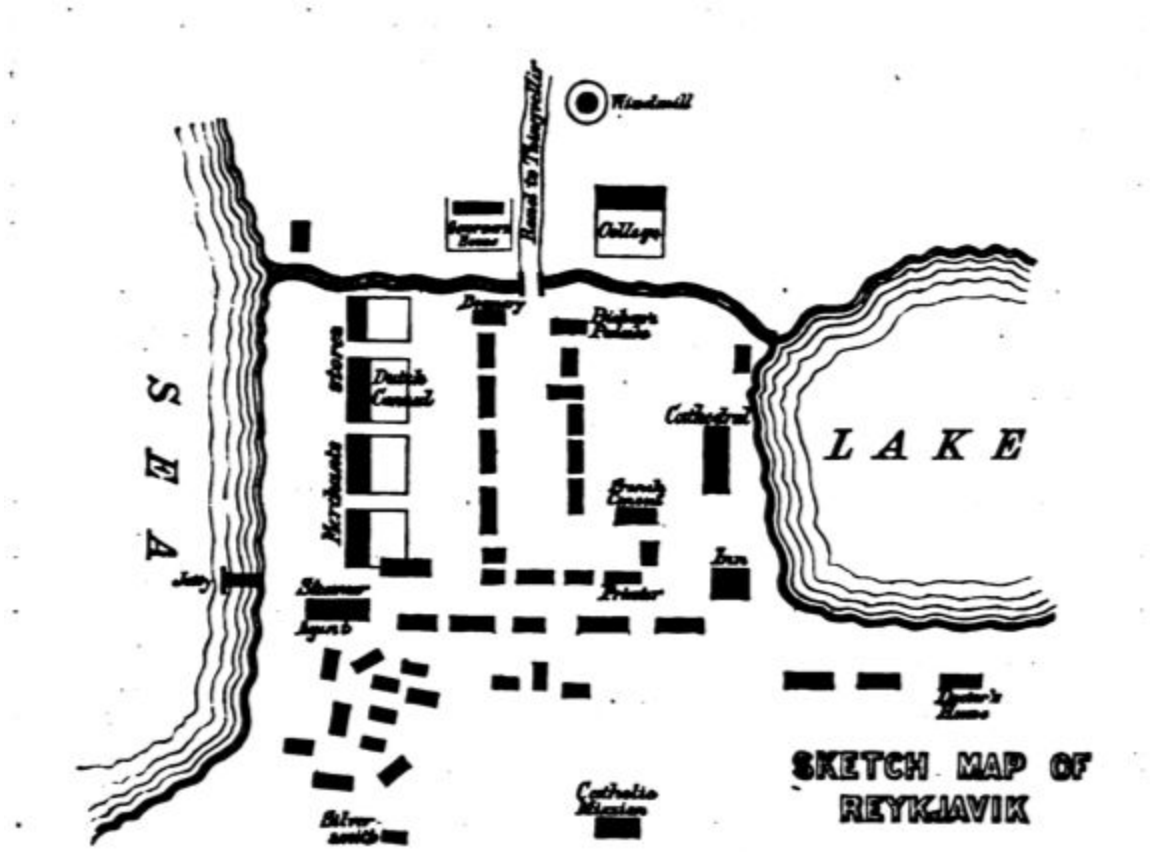

Figure 20. *Reykjavik Layout*. Sabine Baring-Gould.

Source: Sabine Baring-Gould. *Iceland: It's Scenes and Sagas.* (London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1863), 27.

Figure 21. *Thorvaldsen's statue between Ísafold printing house and French buildings.* William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 40.

Figure 22. *Dried fish being transported on Vesturgata.* William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 36.

Figure 23. *Looking down Bankstræti*. William Howell.

Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901*. (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 38.

Figure 24. *Eftirlíking af stereóskópmynd af miðbæ Reykjavíkur, 1867. Det kongelige Bibliotek í Kaupmannahöfn.* Sigfús Eymundsson.

Source: Inga Lára Baldvinsdótti . *Ljósmyndarar Á Íslandi: Photographers of Iceland, 1845-1945.* (Reykjavik: JPV Útgáfa og Þjóðminjasafn Íslands, 2001), 24.

Figure 25. *Post Office and Cathedral*.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland fyrir aldamót: harðindaárin, 1882-1888.* (Mosfellsbær:: Brennholt. 1995), 59.

Figure 26. *Parliament and Cathedral.*

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland fyrir aldamót: harðindaárin, 1882-1888.* (Mosfellsbær:: Brennholt. 1995), 59.

Figure 27. *Thorvaldsen's baptismal font and Wegener's altarpiece in the Cathedral.*

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 40.

Figure 28. *Governor's House seen from Austurstræti.* William Howell.

Source: Frank Ponzi. *Ísland Howells, 1890-1901.* (Mosfellsbær: Brennholt, 2004), 38.