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ON THE COVER

PHOTO: ELIN THORDARSON

Icelandic Cemetery in Brown, Manitoba

Editorial

The Ring by Guttormur, Modernism and Formalist Aesthetics

by Elin Thordarson

I'll start by drawing a connection between modern philosophy and formalist aesthetics. Because that needs to be our jumping off point for looking into a play by Guttormur J. Guttormsson.

The First:

Modern Philosophy begins in disappointment. That is to say, that modern philosophy begins not, as ancient tradition does in an experience of wonder at the fact that things like nature, the world, the universe exist. But rather with an indeterminate but palpable sense that something has not been fulfilled, that a fantastic effort has failed. One feels that things are not the way we hoped or expected them to be.

The Second:

The ideology of modernism ushers in a completely new school of aesthetics known as formilism. Formalists delight in the complexity of both the reference and deconstruction of the self in linguistic experimentation and in texts that agonise over the limits of the inexpressible.

This is the zeitgeist under which Guttormur J. Guttormsson was writing. Because even though he is known as the Poet of New Iceland and the Bard of Riverton, and he is the only Canadian born poet to write solely in Icelandic, he is much more than a provincial level writer. Guttormur was engaged in a dialogue with the largest philosophical and aesthetic movements of his age.

Scholars agree that there is a mysterious profundity to a Guttormsson play, which for the most part are one act plays. And it is generally thought that these plays are virtually unstageable. It is the consensus that these should be considered parlour plays, where people gather and read them aloud, or perhaps they are meant to be read by one's self. Better than his poetry, of which he published seven volumes over the course of his lifetime, Guttormur's plays illustrate, truly, his tragic view of life.

Born in 1878 at Víðivellir on the Icelandic River, Guttormur is the son of Jón Guttormsson and Pálína Ketilsdóttir, both emigrants from the East Fjords of Iceland. Sadly, Guttormur would lose his mother when he was only seven, and his father by the time he was sixteen. The losses of these two, and when we think about they only lived 10 and 20 years, respectively, in the New World; the losses of these two are no doubt massively influential on his writing. Guttormur was someone who, as a playwright, was preoccupied with the mysteries of death and dying.

The play *The Ring* peers into the cloudy

dream of "what it is like to die." The father and his two boys have lost their way in an evergreen forest during a snowstorm. And as the chill of nightfall quickly descends upon them, their chances of survival are dwindling.

But let's also not forget that Guttormur is also an aesthetic formalist. By examining the inexpressible nature of death, he means to "disconceal" something that is no longer the tragedy of this family dying. Through some incredibly striking stage directions, something different is meant to speak to us.

In Professor Watson Kirkconnell's assessment of *The Ring,* he claims that when the family exits the stage after being reunited with The Mother character, that "an hour is supposed to elapse, and wolves cross the stage from right to left, following hungrily on the track of the wanderers. Still another hour elapses with no sound but the crackling of the frost and the sighing of the spruce branches."

On two occasions Guttormur leaves the scene completely empty. For an hour each time, according to Kirkconnell. What is happening is an experience of time's flow. Or as modern philosopher Henri Bergson calls it: "time's duration."

If we wish to grasp what duration entails, this is the key; the duration of time is enduring, indivisible, uninterrupted, inexpressible, and immeasurable. Time is succession without distinction, a continual making which excludes all ideas of a tidy juxtaposition of states, it is a flow not implying a thing that flows, a passing not presupposing states passed. Duration is not the replacing of one instance with another; duration, writes Bergson, "is a continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances."

Formalists like Guttormur are implicitly preoccupied with perception and misperception, and with the fundamental sense of the mind as unable to apprehend the world as it really is. But also resonant among formalists is the idea that the mind's capacity for imagination may strip away the film that obscures reality. That is, an experience of duration through art or literature functions to reveal a fundamental unity. This is precisely the effect of the experience of time in *The Ring*.

Let us consider this. Let us imagine trying to sustain in our minds, at least for one moment, an image of this forest clearing as night falls. Imagine the minute changes that are endured through the effects of the natural elements. Imagine the biography of this forest as we try to experience the effect of the duration of time on it. Undoubtedly our minds will be unable to maintain this task that Guttormur requires of us for very long, but what is intuitively sensed through this exercise of the imagination is both the existence of an infinite reality, and our finite participation within it. An inexplicable expression of our existence occurs.

Bergson writes "... the matter and life which fill the world are equally within us; the forces which work in all things we feel within ourselves; whatever may be the inner essence of what is and what is done, we are of that essence."

Guttormur gives us a glimpse of our own finite essence when he leaves our minds to consider the indivisible nature of the duration of time. So "let us then go down into our inner selves," Bergson writes, "the deeper the point we touch, the stronger will be the thrust which sends us back to the surface."

Finally, in philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty's reading of Bergson, he claims that imagining an experience of duration conjures up this personal revelation: "so time is myself, I am the duration I grasp, and time is duration grasped in me. And from now on we are at the absolute."

The Pioneer: Einar Jónsson's Monument to Jón Sigurðsson

by Andrew McGillivray, University of Winnipeg

June 17th, 2021, marked the one-hundred-years anniversary since the Jón Sigurðsson monument on the Manitoba Legislative Building Grounds was unveiled. The monument is remarkable for its meaning to the Icelandic community in Manitoba, for its artist, Einar Jónsson, as well as for its aesthetic elegance. In addition to addressing these important points, the present article also highlights the often-overlooked yet masterful bas-relief included in the monument, known in English as "The Pioneer."

PHOTOS: ELIN THORDARSON

The present moment is also one that calls for serious reflection by all Canadians on the ongoing legacy and trauma of settler-colonialism in Canada. This is especially vital in the wake of the recoveries in May and June 2021 of 215 unmarked graves at the Kamploops Indian Residential School in British Columbia; 104 unmarked graves at the Brandon Indian Residential School in Manitoba; 751 unmarked graves at the Marieval Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan; and the latest recovery, at time of writing, of 182 unmarked graves at St. Eugene's Mission Residential School in British Columbia. There are sure to be further recoveries in

the months and years ahead. As a member of the settler community in Manitoba, one contribution I can make to our communal contemplation is to re-visit the intentional and non-intentional meanings evoked by our monuments, important and visible cultural artifacts that contribute to public memory. The Jón Sigurðsson monument, and in particular its bas-relief, offers a rich interpretive field for this reflection.

Introduction

Brautryðjandinn (Icelandic: "The Pioneer" or "The Trailblazer") is a bas-relief set into a stone base which supports a bronze statue of the Icelandic politician Jón Sigurðsson (1811–79). Both the bas-relief and the statue are the work of acclaimed Icelandic sculptor Einar Jónsson (1874 –1954), and together they form a monument to Jón Sigurðsson, a leader of the Icelandic independence movement during the nineteenth century. The monument is on permanent public display in Reykjavík and in Winnipeg, the only material difference the smaller size of the Winnipeg base in relation to the taller Reykjavík base.

I intend to contextualize the Manitoba monument in relation to its subject, Jón Sigurðsson, and the environment in which it is found, the Manitoba Legislative Building Grounds. I also highlight how the two nearly-identical monuments – the one in Iceland and the one in Canada – perform divergent functions in their two settings. In Iceland, the monument was installed during the country's struggle for independence, and now it constitutes a site that marks the political emancipation of the Icelandic people. In Winnipeg, the monument sits within an extensive array of settler-colonial monuments that can be viewed by the general public, but it especially serves as an attraction for the local Icelandic community to view and also as a place at which the Icelandic community in Manitoba gathers to celebrate Icelandic-Canadian identity.

There are three primary limits to this article. The first is spatial, specifically the layout of the Manitoba Legislative Building Grounds, bounded by the Assiniboine River to the south, Kennedy Street to the east, Osborne Street to the west, and Broadway

to the north. Beyond these borders lie Memorial Park and Memorial Boulevard, sections which contain more monuments, though they are not considered here. The second is material, for even though the Grounds are filled with many monuments constructed out of materials other than bronze, including wood, rock, and concrete, not to mention the many gardens and a fountain, the Jón Sigurðsson monument is here only contextualized with other bronzes. The third limit is regional, for even though the Jón Sigurðsson monument in Winnipeg is one of two public art works sculpted by Einar Jónsson in North America, the other a statue of Þorfinnur Karlsefni located in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia statue is not considered here.

The Origins

In 1910 funds were raised in Iceland to commission a monumental statue to commemorate the late Jón Sigurðsson and to mark the centennial of his birth, June 17th, 1911. The statue is now situated on Austurvöllur (The East Field), opposite the Alþingi (Iceland's Legislative Assembly) in Reykjavík. Icelandic settlers in Winnipeg struck their own committee on this side of the Atlantic Ocean to support the monument's production, and upon receipt of the monetary gift, the committee in Iceland sent replica castings of the statue and its bas-relief to Winnipeg.

The Reykjavík statue is centered within the grounds outside the Alþingi, a place where Icelandic identity converges. The grounds are uncluttered, leaving the statue isolated, and therefore emphasized, to mark Jón Sigurðsson's prominence in the country's history. In Winnipeg, the statue is situated within an evolving environment, and therefore in Manitoba, Icelandic identity as represented in the statue diverges among other ethnic identities, including bronzes representing the British colonial roots of government in Manitoba and others in honour of ethnic communities, such as the Ukrainian and Scottish settler communities.

Stability is evident in the Icelandic monument's environs. In Reykjavík, statue onlookers are drawn to the monument, as it is centered in the public square and set on a tall base directly out front of the Alþingi. The statue looks toward the Icelandic Legislative Assembly building. In Winnipeg, statue onlookers who are drawn to the north-east corner of the Manitoba Legislative Building Grounds, where the monument is located, can identify the theme of Icelandic statesmanship, as presented in the dignified presentation of the sculpted figure, but the statue is not centered within the grounds, and it is facing east toward Iceland rather than toward the Manitoba Legislative Building. Also, as noted, it is placed among a diverse arrangement of monuments. What binds the array of Winnipeg monuments together is their shared singularity, each holding amplified meaning for a specific group, whereas in Iceland the Jón Sigurðsson monument is collectively significant for the nation as a whole.

The Politician

Jón Sigurðsson was a politician and writer who is celebrated perhaps more than any other individual in modern Icelandic history, though close contenders might include Nobel Laureate Halldór Laxness (1902–98) and more recently the world-famous musician Björk (1965–). Jón Sigurðsson was a trained philologist who worked at the Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen, Denmark. He did not complete his university education, though he remains one of Iceland's more influential scholars from the nineteenth century. He is best known as a politician, for he took a leading role in politics after residing in Copenhagen for several years. He remained a stalwart in Iceland's pursuit for internal

rule, even though his philological work was funded through grants provided by the Danish state. Iceland gained internal rule in 1874, when the Danish King presented Iceland with its own constitution providing it with autonomy over its own affairs.

Jón Sigurðsson published the *Ný félagsrit* (New Society Papers) journal in Copenhagen from 1841 through 1873. The journal was an instrument for Jón Sigurðsson and his co-editors to communicate with Icelanders in their home country, which at that time was still mostly a rural population, spread out along Iceland's lengthy coast. The journal editors intended to rouse Icelandic identity from dormancy, an identity they perceived to have been repressed during the many centuries of Danish rule. In the inaugural volume's forward, the editors wrote: "[i]t is natural, that when the nations' self-awareness has been in a coma for some time, it will not be awakened very quickly." Their mission would be sustained, requiring an extended campaign in Copenhagen and around Iceland: "[w]e intend, if our undertaking succeeds, that our journal will enliven the spiritual life of our nation, and arouse the nation's interest in useful activity and concern for the future. At the same time, we also intend to strengthen people's knowledge of world issues, and guide their judgments on them, as far as possible." *Ný félagsrit*'s first volume features articles about theological education in Iceland, the history and contemporary medical practice of bloodletting, and, importantly, a longer article by Jón Sigurðsson titled "Um alþing á íslandi" (About Governance in Iceland). The article presents a general history of politics, types of constitutions, the contemporary state of Icelandic politics under Danish rule, and the necessity for Iceland to have its own legislative assembly. Much of the program for Jón Sigurðsson's political career is presented in this early political essay.

In 1845 Jón Sigurðsson became

a *þingmaður* (member of the national assembly) for Ísafjarðarsýslu (The County of Isafjord), a position he held until his death in 1879. Though Iceland would not achieve independent republic status until June 17th, 1944, Jón Sigurðsson's contributions toward Icelandic independence are remarkable, and he remains until the present the most symbolic figure of Iceland's liberation. Notably, in 1851, Jón Sigurðsson led resistance to the implementation of the Danish constitution in Iceland, so from 1851 to 1874, Iceland remained subject to the Danish monarchy, but was not represented in the Danish parliament, and was therefore able to receive its own, though limited, constitution in 1874. Due to Jón Sigurðsson's efforts on behalf of Iceland, it is not surprising that funds were raised to establish a monumental statue to celebrate the centenary of his birth. Fittingly, Iceland's foremost sculptor was commissioned for the project, Einar Jónsson.

The Sculptor

Einar Jónsson, one of Iceland's most influential modern artists, held his first sculpture exhibition in 1901 at the Charlottenborg Spring Salon in Copenhagen. Einar Jónsson was active in the Copenhagen art scene at the turn of the century as a member of the Danish symbolist group of sculptors known as *Die frie Billedhuggere* (The Free Sculptors). His work was also garnering interest in Iceland. At this time, Iceland was still progressing toward independence, even though the country had gained home rule in 1874.

The struggle for independence was evident in the arts. As Ólafur Kvaran writes, referring to the early 20th century, "[t]here was a great growth in the construction of monuments in Reykjavík during the first decade of the century. The monuments had both strong national and political significance, and it is natural to see them both as symbolic of a phase in the nation's struggle for independence and as an important part of Reykjavík's growth as the country's capital." Iceland was in the grips of its own *statuemania*: "the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century craze for erecting statues of mostly male worthies in public locations." Erika Doss remarks, "[s]tatue mania was symptomatic of turn-of-the-twentieth-century anxieties about national unity, anxieties unleashed by the rapid advance of modernism, immigration, and mass culture." For the fledgling nation of Iceland, which had been granted a constitution by the Danish monarchy that awarded home rule but did not yet recognize an independent Iceland, the erection of monuments in Reykjavík was instrumental for garnering continued public engagement in the progression toward full emancipation from Denmark. Einar Jónsson, as Iceland's emerging national sculptor, was situated perfectly to contribute to public art in Reykjavík.

In 1907, Einar Jónsson's statue of Iceland's most celebrated Romantic poet, Jónas Hallgrímsson (1807–45), was unveiled in Reykjavík to great acclaim. Four years later, the sculptor was called on again, this time to sculpt a statue of Jón Sigurðsson. The committee accepted the sculptor's third proposal for the statue, which was then commissioned and erected in Reykjavík later that year, also to great acclaim, as noted by Ólafur Kvaran: "[p]eople gathered at Austurvöllur and left from there with a trumpet band and a blue flag at the front, singing a poem by Þorstein Gíslason. Tryggvi Gunnarsson then gave a speech, the statue was unveiled, 'and the crowd shouted nine times cheers for the memory of Jón Sigurðsson.'"

The statue depicts Jón Sigurðsson standing upright, with his chest out and chin tilted up, with one foot slightly in front of the other. His hands are on his

chest in a position that exudes gravity and dignity.

The committee did not commission Einar Jónsson's symbolist bas-relief, *Brautryðjandinn*. The artist gifted the bas-relief and the committee agreed to include it in the monument. *Brautryðjandinn* had been drafted by Einar as early as 1902, and its imagery illustrates Jón Sigurðsson's groundbreaking efforts in Iceland's struggle for independence from Denmark. Ólafur Kvaran continues:

[i]n *Brautryðjandinn* we see reference to the basalt columns found in Iceland, and a high vertical shape divides the work in two. On the left is a stationary group of people and on the right is the much larger pioneer who paves the way with the columns in his outstretched arms. The formal contrast between the halves of the image causes a certain disruption, on the one hand the inactive or neutral people and on the other hand the active pioneer.

The bas-relief represents Jón Sigurðsson as the pioneer, or trailblazer, laying the foundations for a modern and independent Icelandic society, using what is already in Iceland, its natural resources. The central figure in *Brautryðjandinn* is abstractly represented as larger-than-life, leading the Icelandic people to a better future. The inclusion of the symbolist bas-relief also disrupts the monument itself, for it contrasts the naturalistic statue. In Reykjavík, Einar Jónsson's works are displayed in several locations around the city, and his symbolist aesthetic woven into the fabric of the urban landscape. The contrast between naturalism and symbolism is particularly notable in the divergent context of the Manitoba Legislative Building Grounds in Winnipeg, an environment containing numerous naturalistic bronzes, but only the one symbolist bronze work, Einar Jónsson's *Brautryðjandinn*.

The Grounds

The Manitoba Legislative Building Grounds comprise an environment that is multicultural, and rather than being an anti-colonial space, like the Austurvöllur in Iceland, the Grounds acclaim and reinforce settler-colonialism. On July 1st, 2021, protestors responding to the recent recovery of unmarked graves at former Residential School sites in Canada, toppled the Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II monuments on the Grounds, and subsequently decapitated Queen Victoria's statue, sending the head into the Assiniboine River. The Jón Sigurðsson monument remains on the Grounds, untouched and now arguably foregrounded after the toppling of the two monarchs, but like the other nationalist monuments, contributes to the settler-colonial dimension of the space.

The Manitoba Legislative Building Grounds in Winnipeg are an evolving environment, comprised of monuments, pathways, a fountain, and gardens. Set on the north side of the Assiniboine River in Winnipeg, the current Manitoba Legislative Building was completed in 1920, replacing a building on the same site, which opened in 1884. The oldest monument on the Grounds is of Queen Victoria (1819–1901), though now its future is uncertain. It was sculpted by George Frampton (1860–1928) and installed on October 1st, 1904, to commemorate the monarch's Diamond Jubilee, which had passed in 1897. Every few years since, a new monument has been installed on the grounds, and with each installation there is an influence on the existing network of monuments, leading to a subtle and ongoing transformation of the environment. Some bronzes celebrate European nationalisms, such as the Jón Sigurðsson monument, while others commemorate tragedies, such as the Holodomor famine in Ukraine.

To move through the grounds is to take

in and to navigate networked materials, for an onlooker must select a path through dispersed or distributed monuments and gardens, each monument resonating with those to which it is set nearest, as well as with the whole array. Queen Victoria was situated directly southwest of the Jón Sigurðsson statue, prominently set north of the main doors of the Legislative Building. When the Jón Sigurðsson monument was unveiled on June 17th, 1921, the grounds were already an evolving, manufactured, settler-colonial environment. The emancipatory signification the Jón Sigurðsson monument serves in Iceland is moderated by the colonial signification of Queen Victoria. Directly east of Jón Sigurðsson is a bust of Sir George Étienne Cartier (1814–73), positioned on a large base and installed in 1922. Cartier is remembered as a Father of Confederation and was also involved in negotiating the Manitoba Act opposite representatives from Louis Riel's provisional government in 1870. Jón Sigurðsson's monument is situated between monuments to two colonial figures, though Queen Victoria's monument has been recently toppled.

To the south of Cartier, and southeast of Jón Sigurðsson, is a statue of the Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759–96). Burns, like Jón Sigurðsson, was not involved in Manitoba's history. His monument was donated by members of the Winnipeg Burns Club to recognize the presence of Scottish settlers in Manitoba. Unlike Jón Sigurðsson, Burns was not a politician, so his inclusion in the array is as a national hero whose influence in the literary arts serves as an inspiration to Scots in Manitoba. Both the Jón Sigurðsson and Robert Burns monuments might evoke European nationalist pride among the respective members of ethnic communities in Manitoba. To the southwest of Burns was a statue of Queen Elizabeth II (1926–), Britain's current monarch, and the ultimate symbol of the enduring European presence in Canadian affairs as Canada's Head of State. The statue, before its toppling, further reinforced Canada's membership in the British Commonwealth and its continuing presence as a settler-colonial state on both Treaty and Unceded Lands. The toppling of the two monarch statues is a direct challenge to the colonial space of the Grounds.

On the south side of the Legislative Building is a bronze of Louis Riel (1844–85). Riel was the leader of the Red River Resistance and President of Manitoba's Provisional Government (1869–70). He is depicted holding the Manitoba Act in his left hand and wearing a Métis sash around his waist. The Riel statue is the only bronze on the grounds representing an Indigenous person, and the present statue, unveiled on May 12th, 1996, was sculpted by Miguel Joyal. It replaced an earlier, more controversial statue of Riel by Marcien Lemay and Étienne Gaboury, unveiled on the site on December 31st, 1971, and later moved to the St. Boniface College Grounds. There are no bronzes portraying First Nations or Inuit individuals, which is not surprising considering the European origins of bronze monuments and its settler-colonial applications in North America, in particular the claiming of space by settler groups as reinforced by monumental statuary. However, a group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Manitobans have for several years been planning for a bronze statue of Chief Peguis (c. 1774–1864) to be commissioned for the grounds.

On the west side of the Legislative Building is the "Nellie McClung Memorial." This bronze monument depicts the Famous Five: Louise McKinney (1868–1931), the first woman elected to a Canadian legislature; Irene Parlby (1868–1965), who served as an MLA in Alberta for fourteen years, and was the first woman appointed to Cabinet in Alberta; Emily Murphy (1868–1933), the first female magistrate in Canada;

author and activist Henrietta Muir Edwards (1841–1931); and Nellie McClung (1873–1951). McClung was a leader in the suffragist movement in Canada, and along with other members of the Political Equality League of Manitoba she worked to help gain the vote for some women in Manitoba in 1916. In 1927, the Famous Five advocated for "the Persons Case," which argued that women are "qualified persons" and have the right to sit in Senate, a case that was eventually won.

To the north of the Famous Five there are a series of statues connected to the Ukrainian community in Manitoba, beginning with "Bitter Memories of Childhood." This statue commemorates the Holodomor famine in Soviet Ukraine during 1932–33. In Ukrainian, the word *holodomor* means "extermination by hunger" or "to kill by starvation." This statue, installed on September 21st, 2014, is an exact copy of the statue located at the entrance to the Holodomor Museum in Kiev, Ukraine, and it presents a thin young girl clutching strands of grain to her chest. Directly north of "Bitter Memories of Childhood," and northwest of the Legislative Building, is a bronze of Taras Schevchenko (1814–61). Shevchenko was a Ukrainian writer, regarded as a literary master and an advocate for Ukrainian independence from the Russian Empire. Like the statues of Robert Burns and Jón Sigurðsson, the Shevchenko bronze celebrates the presence of Ukrainian settlers in Manitoba, likewise importing European nationalism to a Canadian context. Just north of Shevchenko is a third bronze in the Ukrainian section, titled "Winnipeg Receiving Station," which depicts a man pointing to himself, as if asking: "me?" The historic Winnipeg Receiving Station was located along Osborne Street in Winnipeg, between the Assiniboine River and Broadway, on the current Legislative Grounds, and from September 1914 until July 1916, the station processed "enemy aliens," persons who were born in countries Canada was fighting against in World War I (1914–18), including Germans and Ukrainians. After processing at a receiving station like the one in Winnipeg, enemy aliens were sent to internment camps. Ukrainians in Canada made up the great majority of those who were interned (5954 out of 8579, or 69.4%).

In the very northwest corner of the Grounds is the "Next of Kin Monument." The bronze statue is set on a large base on which the names of 1658 men and women are inscribed, all of whom were from Winnipeg and died in World War I. The statue depicts a soldier, walking forward with a rifle in his left hand, at his side, with his helmet raised above his head in his right hand.

As described above, there were two statues of British monarchs on the grounds, Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II, both recently toppled. The Queen Victoria statue was one of the two most prominently located statues, set between the front entrance to the Legislative Building and Broadway, on the north side of the Grounds. Louis Riel is also prominently located on the south side of the Grounds, facing the Assiniboine River, and his statue is possibly the most well-known point of reference for Manitobans on the Grounds, other than the Golden Boy, which is cast in bronze but gilded with gold leaf, and set on the very top of the Legislative Building. Many of the statues depict men, including Jón Sigurðsson, Sir George Étienne Cartier, Robert Burns, Louis Riel, Taras Shevchenko, the unknown male in "Winnipeg Receiving Station," and the unnamed soldier depicted in "Next of Kin," though there were two monuments to female monarchs, and "The Famous Five" monument still stands and represents five historical women, as well as "Bitter Memories of Childhood," which depicts a young female. "Bitter Memories

of Childhood," like the Jón Sigurðsson monument, has its replica in Europe. And there is the single statue depicting an Indigenous person, Louis Riel. The Grounds contains a diverse arrangement of bronze statues, though not as diverse as Manitoba's demographic. Some conclusions can now be drawn about how Einar Jónsson's Jón Sigurðsson monument, in the networked environment of the Manitoba Legislative Building Grounds, provides onlookers with a divergent experience from what it provides in Iceland.

Emancipation and Settler-Colonialism

In the centre of Reykjavík, directly opposite the Alþingi, citizens can gather by Einar Jónsson's monument to Jón Sigurðsson and remember their country's emancipation from the Danish Kingdom. Jón Sigurðsson is the most prominent figure from the country's independence movement, and there is no ambiguity as to what an onlooker of the monument, including its bas-relief, is encouraged to perceive: Iceland is a free country and was led to its freedom by "the Pioneer": Jón Sigurðsson. The bas-relief displays this sentiment in an abstract symbolist rendering, with the large central figure laying down basalt columns to form a road on which his compatriots can then follow him to freedom. The figure uses basalt columns found in Icelandic nature to build the road, indicating that everything Iceland needed in order to gain its independence was already in its possession, it just needed a leader like Jón Sigurðsson to work with the materials and form the nation. It illustrates how the Icelandic identity that had been dormant for many centuries was awakened by the pioneer.

In the centre of Winnipeg, set on the Manitoba Legislative Building Grounds, a near-identical monument to Jón Sigurðsson is set into the urban landscape, the only difference is its shorter base. This bronze statue does not function in the same manner as the one in Reykjavík. It does not draw all Manitoba citizens to it to celebrate Iceland's emancipation. The Winnipeg statue was presented to Manitoba's Icelandic community as a gesture of thanks from the Reykjavík monument committee to acknowledge receipt of generous monetary support provided by the Icelandic settlers and their descendants in Manitoba. The Icelandic community in Manitoba then sought permission to erect the statue on the Grounds, which they were subsequently granted. Some Manitobans, especially those who descend from Icelandic settlers, are drawn to the statue, one hundred years after its installation, and perhaps yearly on June 17th, to celebrate Iceland's Independence Day. June 17th is the anniversary of Jón Sigurðsson's birthday, and the anniversary of the statue's unveiling in Manitoba. Some Manitobans who descend from Icelandic settlers in Manitoba gather in order to celebrate their community's enduring connection to Iceland and to acknowledge their ancestors who emigrated from Iceland and settled in Manitoba. The community also celebrates the continuation and cultivation of an Icelandic identity in Manitoba. Other visitors to the Grounds might view the Jón Sigurðsson monument as they pass by, from statue to statue. The Jón Sigurðsson monument is one of many settler-colonial bronzes representing a selection of communities in Manitoba that have had the opportunity to erect monuments on the Grounds. There are also several more broadly-meaningful statues that are located on the grounds, such as the Louis Riel statue, which represents a founder of Manitoba.

When an onlooker views the Jón Sigurðsson monument in Manitoba, they will see the large naturalistic figure that sits on the statue's base. The viewer will also see the symbolist bas-relief, *Brautryðjandinn*,

set into the base slighly below eye-level. The bas-relief is the work of a master sculptor and is publically-accessible fine art. The translated title of the bas-relief, "The Pioneer," evokes a distinctly settler-colonial connotation in its Manitoba context, for the Icelandic settlers who arrived in Manitoba in the late-nineteenth century were pioneers, though they were not trailblazing in the same manner as Jón Sigurðsson and his contemporaries were in nineteenth-and twentieth-century Iceland. The Icelandic settlers who arrived in Manitoba in the last decades of the nineteenth-century joined the European and Canadian settlers already in the Canadian West as a part of the ongoing settler-colonial project of the Dominion of Canada, which served to restrict Indigenous peoples' land use and fortify the border along the 49th parallel against American expansion.

In its Manitoba context, Einar Jónsson's monument to Jón Sigurðsson does not celebrate Iceland's emancipation in the same manner that its matching monument does in Reykjavík. When onlookers gather at the Manitoba monument, they might notice how extensively the Grounds have been covered – even colonized – by public art. Onlookers might also wonder how the toppling of the two statues of British monarchs on July 1st, 2021, influences the remaining network. The next time I walk through the Grounds, I will linger a little longer than usual in front of *Brautryðjandinn*, and I will think about Einar Jónsson's work in its Manitoba context. I will remember how lucky we are to have that magnificent work in our public space, but I will also think about what that space might have been like before the monument was installed, 100 years ago.

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Remembering Dr. Steinn Olafur Thompson

by Larry Romaniuk

PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF BEN HOLYK

Dr. S. O. Thompson ran his medical practise from 1923 until 1969

In the decades from the 1920s through into the 1960s, Dr. S.O. Thompson earned the reputation of being one of the most loved and respected individuals in the eastern Interlake region of Manitoba. Through his dedication of serving the community as a doctor, politician or leader, he developed an almost hero-worship from his followers.

Steinn Olafur Thompson was born in Winnipeg on November 23, 1893. He was the son of Sveinn Tomasson Thompson, a young immigrant harness maker and his wife, Sigurlaug Steinsdottir. They had met in Winnipeg a few years earlier and married there in 1891.

As a boy, Steinn lived in Arnes and spent most of his youth in Selkirk which was the family home for many years. Later he graduated from Wesley College in Winnipeg with a BA. Following that he enrolled in the Manitoba Medical College. Then he served in World War I, was gassed and wounded, then returned home in 1918. He resumed his medical studies in 1921.

Eventually he began his long and eventful career in Riverton. He steadfastly served the immense area surrounding Riverton until he was forced to retire due to a stroke in 1969 and died in 1972.

Dr. Thompson's many achievements are chronicled in 3 chapters of my dad, Gus Romaniuk's autobiography "Taking Root in Canada", written 70 years ago, in which he comments:

"Of all the men whose civic devotions and unselfish efforts have contributed so much to the progress of Riverton and the surrounding district, one person must be singled out for special mention. His work touched every farmer, every fisherman, every businessman, every child; even reaching far out into the north country to the traders, the trappers and amongst the Indigenous people. He is Doctor S.O. Thompson".

"He first became important to our family that day in 1923 when he delivered our first-born into the world. He had come to Riverton the previous year, a young man just out of the University of Manitoba medical school. Why did a man of so much promise dedicate himself to the rough, primitive, almost destitute district of Riverton? However, it very likely stemmed from a deep inward desire to help his fellow man, a motivation that was evidenced in practically everything he did in the years that followed."

PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF BEN HOLYK

Thordis and Dr. S. O. Thompson with a grandfather clock given to them on the occasion of their 25th anniversary by the citizens of the Riverton area in 1948

Dr. Thompson and Gus Romaniuk developed a very close friendship over the years by working together in politics, public affairs and in social interrelationships. Numerous other examples of Dr. Thompson's work and experiences are recorded in Gus' book.

"Dr. Thompson arrived in Riverton on an evening train in the Spring of 1922. Guests

at Bill Rockett's Riverton hotel, where he registered and was immediately noticed for his athletic stature, his serious but handsome face. The thick-set eyebrows of the newcomer gave him the appearance of sternness, but kindness and worldly wisdom far beyond his years. One guest, bolder than the others, engaged the young man in conversation. Through him, Riverton learned that it had acquired a doctor.

A few days later Dr. Thompson took up residence in the spacious home of Johann Briem, and opened his practice. In the days that followed he was more often seen on foot than in his old Ford car. Of course, our roads in those early days were such as to discourage even a sturdier auto of more recent vintage. In most instances, however, the doctor would be driven to his patients in a farmer's wagon or sleigh depending on the season. When in winter his services were required over 15 miles away, a dog team and toboggan usually dispatched him there. At times he had to travel 50 miles or more to bring medical relief to a native

PHOTO FROM THE COLLECTION OF BEN HOLYK

Riverton Baseball Team. Winners of the Sigurdson-Thorvaldson Co. Trophy 1923 – Bifrost Baseball League. Back row: V. Benedictson (vice-president), W.G. Rockett (pitcher), J. Bjornson (3rd base), Dr. S. O. Thompson (manager), B. Baldwinson (centre field), S. Briem (right field and president), B. Hjorleifson (secretary-treasurer). Front row: G. S. Thorvaldson (first base and captain), M. Thorvaldson (catcher), E. Dahlman (2nd base), S. Thorvaldson (honorary president), J. Stafeld (short stop), E. Eyolfson (left field), O. Briem (substitute).

PHOTO: BEN HOLYK

Dr. S. O. Thomspon and Tryygvi Breim meet Premier Duff Roblin when he arrived in Riverton to inspect the flooding in the Interlake in 1964.

person, a fisherman or trapper. Freezing temperatures, blizzards, the roughest weather, never deterred him. Where he was needed, Dr Thompson went."

Then Gus continues "The poverty that was so prevalent in our district became even more pronounced in the early days of the depression. Then it was common for Dr. Thompson looking at children with hunger-pinched cheeks and patched up clothes, to reassure a sick mother or father whom he had treated "Now don't worry about my fee, and we'll get your medicine at my drug store" He never questioned how, when, or even whether a patient would be able to pay".

Nelson Gerrard picks up Dr. Thompson's career in his book "Icelandic River Saga".

"In addition to filling his humanitarian role, Dr. Thompson was exceptionally active in public affairs, among other things serving as chairman of the school board for 25 years and president of the Riverton Community Club for some 40 years. An avid sportsman as well, he was for many years an organizer and supporter of local sports. In 1945 he was elected to the Manitoba Legislature serving as MLA for Gimli Constituency until 1953. During this time, he succeeded in initiating many projects to open up the area north of Riverton, among them the drainage system associated with Washow Bay and the highway extending 70 miles north to the Matheson Island Crossing.

All this won Dr. Thompson the highest respect and esteem throughout the area, among people of all backgrounds, and he and Mrs. Thordis Thompson were honoured by the community on several occasions".

One such occasion occurred in early 1936 when a special night was set aside in the Riverton Community Hall and he was publicly recognized for his contributions to the area. Several speakers called attention to his meritorious record of medical, social and civic work in Riverton and the outlying district. Mrs. Thordis Thompson was also praised for her social and civic work to which she devoted her tireless energy. At the ceremony the couple was presented with gifts as well as a new car. The money had been raised by "many people whose nickels, dimes and dollars had gone into the gifts". In later years Dr. and Mrs. Thompson were presented with a grandfather clock on their 25th wedding anniversary as a gift and an appreciation of their outstanding work in the community.

Physician, MLA, Humanitarian and friend

The close bond which developed between Dr. Thompson and Gus Romaniuk first occurred when Gus and Emily built a small store in the village of Lundi in 1923. In Gus' autobiography he describes how he was accepted into the Icelandic community without any discrimination or resentment on the part of the local Icelanders. Both ethnic groups co-existed harmoniously and his business thrived over the following years. In his book Gus comments "Although immigration had created somewhat of a melting pot of races and creeds, it never set up social or economic barriers of any kind".

He went on to say,

"We were Ukrainians. Riverton was predominantly Icelandic. Yet we were all Canadians, more than that, human beings –people living and working together in friendship and goodwill. Socially we intermingled…with never a thought for the taboos of racial origins which were so rigidly adhered to in the Old World. In business too, a man was judged by his character and reputation, rather than by the contours of his face, the colour of his skin, or his religious affiliation".

On a personal note, I remember at age 9 accompanying Dr. Thompson and my dad to a town-hall meeting in Fraserwood in an effort to gain support for the Liberal candidate. My dad spoke in Ukrainian, indicating the benefit of having Dr. Thompson as the right person to represent the people in the area. I am sure this effort helped a lot in getting Dr. Thompson elected to the Legislature in 1945.

Although Gus' autobiography focused on himself and his family, it also gives us a glimpse into the struggles and hardships endured by all early settlers to the area. Collectively all ethnic groups eventually contributed to the successful development and settlement of this inhospitable part of the world of the eastern Interlake.

As a final good bye, Dr. Thompson attended to my dad when he passed away in his home in October 1967. Our family and friends will be forever thankful and grateful for having him as a friend and for his dedicated service to all who knew him.

It is hoped that this tribute to Dr. Thompson and his legacy will live on well into the future.

The New Hat

by Stephan G. Stephansson
Translated by Jay Lalonde

Christmas time was approaching, and the Nýjadalur valley had never seen so few people nor heard so little news since it had first been settled the previous spring. Barely half of the land in the valley had been taken and the homesteads were few and far between, so when the neighbour women met – which was not often – they sat around yawning most of the time they spent together. The story about when Hatta calved and how it went, and guesses about when Sigvaldi and Tobba's family would grow, had to come to an end one day, just like all other earthly matters. The farmers had lost all hope that more people would move to the valley that year, and pottered about in silence, but they still wished they lived in a larger settlement, even though no one was reserving the nearby lots.

As a matter of fact, omens and wonders had been happening out in the world, and the valley dwellers could have discussed them in their usual biased and short-sighted ways – as they were educated men and not savages, and were always reading newspapers—but they did not, however, keep much of them in their minds, and forgot what they had read. Mostly, something from the general news would stick and make its way into their discussions if they found it interesting, such as if some crook was said to have committed an old-fashioned crime in a more innovative or more prudent way than they had heard about before. They skipped over the news from the peace conference in the Hague; that did not impact the lives of the valley dwellers in any way. Even there in the valley, in that little patch of grass on the edge of the inhabited human world, were the roots waiting for an individual concerned with the benefit of humanity – whom fate had put in the place of a tyrant – who had to go begging door to door to no avail because of the uncontrolled inherited stupidity of the nation itself. No one is liberal unless he has himself learned it in shackles. Kipling's fighting songs are composed in the minds of honourable English men, while Tolstoy's calls for humanity come from the heartstrings of the Siberian exile.

Generation after generation and century after century, all the forefathers of these valley men had lived in isolation and far out at the extremes of the human world. Their connection to all the important matters of the world weighed on their minds just as little as how the buoys of Reverend Oddur and the steamship of Reverend Jens could have gotten mixed up in the teaching of Christ, as their church writings once mentioned. The people of Nýjadalur were just a little drop in the Icelandic wave known as "going west," which had come to a standstill there up on the plains, in the flat-bottomed hollow they named Nýjadalur – the New Valley.

But when the need for news was strongest in Nýjadalur, help was also nearest, as it always is, except in an execution. One of the valley men came home from town, which was a noteworthy event in itself, but that did not take away from the astonishment that he was wearing a new hat. Not that a hat would never have been seen there in the settlement, as in Nýjadalur lived educated men, and hats were part of everyday

clothing, but those hats were mostly old and inexpensive to begin with; but this hat was new and dapper, and seemed well-made. No one could wrap their head around how much such an incredibly valuable treasure could have cost, and even though almost all the men and women in the settlement tried to suggest an amount as best they could, it still weighed like a shared misfortune on the public consciousness that there was nothing but unreliable speculation, which could be more or less mistaken. Even though this was a great unhappiness that could not be avoided, as the owner of the hat fended them off and never said anything definite, though others tiptoed around him, the one good thing about the matter was that the talk was based on what was undeniable: that the owner of the hat was penniless, like all people of Nýjadalur were in those days. So it went without saying how much more could have been stocked up for the winter, as supplies were scarce everywhere, for the price of the hat if frugal men – as they all were – could have taken care of it.

So the hat story went like this day after day, and it was nearing the solstice. But in the end it was dicussed together with another matter that was also becoming significant. It was less than two weeks till St. Þorlákur's Day, but it had not yet been decided whether anyone in the settlement, and if someone, then who, would have a bit of meat for the blessed Christmas.

People barely remembered the hat after the New Year. Everyone had gotten tired of it as a topic; most had seen it and thought that there was "nothing interesting" to be seen on it. The hat was short-lived and no one mentioned it when it disappeared. It blew off its owner's head in a storm on Ash Wednesday the following year, and it was then dented and tattered. The owner was not long-lived, either. Two summers after the hat story began, one of the people of Nýjadalur wrote a long article in an Icelandic paper, with the title "News from the Nýjadalur Settlement." News it was not, except for the last five lines, but the introduction was much more accurate than those. It noted many times that none of the many intelligent and literate people who lived in Nýjadalur had yet taken it upon themselves to enlighten the world about the events that had happened, though they were in no way more unheard of than news from any other settlement, as the author of the article indeed first admitted himself, albeit half-heartedly: he found it painful that such a difficult task was beyond his power. It was just because more competent men avoided it that it came down to the one least suited for it. At the end of this monologue of heartfelt modesty he added that a man in the settlement had recently had an accident with a thresher and lost his life. The man mentioned here was the owner of the hat.

This shows the superiority of humankind over inanimate objects, as few except for its owner think about a hat that blows away, but a man's death can make it to the newspapers.

In the second volume of the news from Nýjadalur, which came out twelve months later and was written by the same author, it was mentioned that the widow of the man, "the one who had the accident with the thresher and died because of it," was married by "Reverend Baggy" some time ago. It certainly seemed to be comforting news to those who thought that the widow had been left all alone, and pitied her because of it.

Nowadays everyday events – like when someone's hat blows away – attract barely any attention. Had, for example, ancient Ezekiel been able to tell the story of the hat-blowing as a prophetic vision, and Paul of Tarsus a few centuries later to recall the death of the owner in a letter, then our eyes of faith would have opened and we would

profess to see the mysterious connection between these events, fully aware that providence once talked to our fathers in signs. But even though we have lost this apostolic gift to see the omens of new events in the rumours of antiquity, we are now much more familiar with the consequences of what is happening in the world. And no one can yet see the end of the aftermath of the hat appearing in Nýjadalur. Twenty years have now passed since it was first seen there, but the effects of it become more dramatic and more apparent year after year.

You are smirking now, dear reader, and I know why you are smiling. You read what others have written, to their admonition, and see what is happening: there, you are going to beat me up over a big time-error I have made. The peace conference was last year; the hat made its appearance the same fall, and nevertheless, twenty years have passed in Nýjadalur. Well, that is fiction. Break it down as well as you can, my dear, but do me this one favour: do not call it an "anachronism," or one of these big words that regular folks do not understand and are afraid of, just like they make me, one of these people, die of boredom. It is, naturally, childish of us common men to be so frightened of scholarship that it does not need to do more than be pompous in its tone to make us feel threatened, even if we do not understand the words. But there is nothing we can do about that: this is an inheritance that we may not reject. We got it from our fathers, fearful of God, who listened in awe to the priest exorcising evil spirits from the newborns that he was supposed to baptize, in many charges of mumbled Latin. If you now allow yourself to indulge in this trifle I have written, my benevolent and fair reader, then I shall also do you a little favour again. Read no further than to the twenty-year gap, and I shall bet you a brand new silk hat against the hat that blew away, that the spirit of the times in Nýjadalur will fit the date just as it did yesterday. I mean it, and yet I am not planning to lose the silk hat, neither dead nor alive.

Torfi and Teitur lived opposite one another in the middle of Nýjadalur, and were promising farmers and good friends before the hat news broke out. Because of their location in the settlement and the selflessness with which they took part in general discussions about local issues, they did not forego adding to the legend of the shabby hat. At first they disagreed about the circumstances of the case, and each of them stuck to their version. Torfi, to the most widespread one: that the hat had been bought at a high price and was the most unwise purchase, and he also brought up the story of old Franklin and his flute as evidence. Teitur said that the man had been given the hat by an acquaintance in town, and that it was actually a spare hat of some immaculate man who did not think it suited him well and rarely wore it. Teitur claimed to have gotten this hint from the owner himself. Because of this harmless difference in opinion, Torfi and Teitur ended up arguing; first with probability arguments, which soon ran out, then with jokes which did not last long either, and finally with mocking, which did not go away. Neither of them became really angry, but they were then both unhappy with themselves; neither was convinced that he had the upper hand and at the same time doubted whether he did not owe something. They met and talked to one another cheerfully and without any ill will, just like before, but after that they competed with each other in everything. If Teitur went to the right, Torfi turned to the left, in any matter that came up. Teitur did the same. At the same time, they were not aware that the path to leadership in Nýjadalur was not wide enough for both of them – that the crown

was too small for two heads or more.

Teitur's farm was his pride: it was well-built and stately and more than he could afford. Because of this, he was in trouble with debt. He often spent more than a year's worth of the yield from his entire farm to pay interest to others. When the harvest was bad, the financial obligations were heavier than those that Jews in the old days paid to their priests and to Jehovah – a tenth of all their produce – though in bad times they were not asked to take from their income. Teitur was desperate with worry and had his back to the wall all the time, but he thought it was more than worth it when he looked at his new house and compared it to Torfi's old shack on the other side of the valley.

Torfi had little desire for grand buildings. Vast fields and large tracts of land were more to his liking. Wherever there was a strip of land to be had on good terms, Torfi would grab it, not least of all near Teitur. Even though he sometimes felt like the constant work to take care of all the fields was killing him, he always calmed down when it occurred to him that Teitur's house was wearing down and depreciating year after year, but his own land was productive and was steadily increasing in value. The old shack, however, was often a source of irritation for him. His wife told him often and plainly, especially if there were guests to hear it, that it was because of his stinginess and lack of taste that she did not have as nice a house as Teitur's wife.

Both housewives have surely enjoyed many moments of joy because of their beautiful houses and abundant harvests. They probably never suspected how much of that was thanks to the new hat.

It went just like that in politics. Torfi and Teitur never supported the same party. If Torfi was conservative, Teitur was progressive, or the other way around. Torfi was a pillar of the church, and embraced the church policy which is identical to that of usurers: to not upset the ruling class, no matter what it is called, if it has left their interests alone. Institutions protected by law do not put themselves at risk in prospective agreements with future powers unless recessions turn them into allies. Torfi felt, however, that he supported the conservative party even though he was opposed to it, when maintaining the tariffs was the highest priority. He was a frugal farmer, and saw that he was the one to pay rich men interest when money changed hands, but he still argued for it and defended it with the brazenness of someone who is intentionally on the wrong side.

Teitur supported the liberal party and the lowering of tariffs, but he was no more satisfied with himself than Torfi. He was more open-minded, and so he saw what was promised but not kept. The traditionalist government had tightened the purse-strings of expenses for many years in advance, and the reform government, which took over, had to make enough income so the state's purse would not get out of hand. Nothing else could be done, no matter what had been promised. He was so frightened by so many grand economics coming from the national government, that when so much was needed it was not enough to snatch out all the money at once as foxes snatch sheep in the spring. It needed to be trimmed calmly – people get furious even more than sheep when they lose their wool all at once – to that end, a tariff on goods was an essential convenience.

When the conservative party went under, Torfi still felt like he was content with himself about what it had done to him, and like he had nothing to regret, especially as Teitur had asserted himself so firmly against him. Teitur also thought that had turned out well, and that there were enough extenuating circumstances that he helped the liberal party to victory, in which Torfi

was against him.

The next elections went a similar way. Torfi had become a liberal by then, though, as was the government which was in power. He had given a bell to the church; and so it tolled for him. Teitur had also become a conservative. He did not feel that life in the country would have changed for the better with the change in the town hall, save for that the weather was good and there was a poor harvest abroad, for which he thanked another government than the one decided by general elections. It did not matter on which side of the party border one lived; people were the same, the coutryside looked similar, and the colours on the flags were just differently arranged. So Torfi had gone over to the liberal party. Neither of them was satisfied with his stance in every way, though. The hat had undeniably made them pull themselves together intellectually as hard-working activists in their district, but they had not yet achieved the political maturity which "takes its understanding captive" concerning everything a man's party creates, which so readily divides the political world for him into the just – the man himself and his party – and the unjust – the crooks and the villains, all of those who do not vote with him. They had not yet been able to entirely get rid of thinking and drawing conclusions for themselves, even though they did it quietly. Although it is an incontestable sign of a little bit of reason in most matters, it goes poorly with party politics. Torfi knew from his own experince that the liberal party had cheated to lift the tariffs, which he saw had improved its political position, well done; so he was even further from following the party now than when Teitur supported it. Teitur did not like it in his conservative group, either. Even though it made little difference, it was still a little bit more revolting to serve the side that vowed to rule counter to what one found better, rather than to still follow the other one, which agreed with his opinion and pretended that it would carry it out, even though he knew that the promise would prove deceptive.

It is not yet clear what revolutions will be traced to the hat appearing in Nýjadalur.

Torfi was a follower of the church and a guardian of the congregation. Teitur was a dissenter and a Unitarian. Torfi put effort into the building of churches, congregational legislature, and the election of priests, and he was unbreakable in his donations for these purposes. But that was where his religious life ended. He gave, to what he called Christianity, what was material: money and initiative. He had no inner religious life. Whenever he looked over the gentle slope of the prairie, up to his neighbour, Teitur the Unitarian, he could not help but think that it was a blemish on the land on the other side that there was no church to be seen. Then he always decided that the next "offering" would be a little larger than he had thought before, so that the church on his side could buy a fine bell or a beautiful pulpit. Even though he did not believe in the teaching about eternal hell to the letter, because he was an Icelander and actually a kind man, and being the poor follower he was, he only defended it when it was attacked (like priests nowadays), and felt like he had to collect his courage to do it, he could not drive it out of his heart when he looked home to the unbeliever on the other side, that Scripture talked about "unquenchable fire" and "immortal worms." At the very least there had to be a big difference. What use was it to have supported the Kingdom of God with hundreds of dollars and never have lost one's "childlike faith," if everyone was made equally worthy in the end?

The hat had, of course, never turned out to be any omen nor worked any miracle like the casket of Saint Anne. Suprisingly,

it had, however, strengthened the church in Nýjadalur even though few knew that an everyday hat like this one had existed and had come to an end in a congregation that did not care about relics.

Teitur was not a real Unitarian either. He had to take up this name to distinguish himself from Torfi who called himself "Christian" after every other word, after he got involved with the church building. Teitur had many spiritual followers, both within and without the congregation, who believed that Teitur would take the most direct and likeable way to eternal life when all was said and done, even though they were reluctant to call themselves Unitarians.

Even though it was unlikely, the hat still became the first pioneer of biblical scholarship in Nýjadalur, not the priest.

Those unfamiliar with the case might assume that the news correspondent, whom I mentioned, had become a religious leader in Nýjadalur after Torfi and the priest, and not Teitur. The beginning of his news article showed that he was likely to become a leader. The common people respect the great scholarship that is needed to write an article in the newspaper, and they take a liking to the modesty that assesses itself as the least capable of all in learned abilities; it shows that scholarship can be humble and popular. But another thing happened later on: the news correspondent had not overlooked the hat issue when it was at its height, but at the same time had not decided to join either group. When he was staying at the east end of the valley, near Torfi, his opinions on the hat were similar to those customary there. When he came over to the west, to Teitur's secluded lot, his views changed to those that fit best there. This worldly tone seemed suspicious in a remote settlement like Nýjadalur. Adding to it that in some of his articles, the correspondent failed to exactly describe the weather and harvest in the entire settlement – he considered, for example, the average harvest on an acre to be 15 bushels when it was completely correctly calculated to be 16 5/8 on average, but never 15, except in his "patch" – everyone became very displeased with him and thought that he openly disgraced the settlement, which was to be expected. Even though the people of Nýjadalur thought that scholarship, and not trustworthiness, was the foundation of a general news article, they found fault with this, and have since rejected the leadership of the correspondent in most things.

The hat had, in a remarkable way, made people in Nýjadalur poor and rich, and demoted and elevated them.

Of course, Teitur absolutely denied that he believed in eternal reprobation, even though he did not fully reject that the individual human soul had to be tamed in the spirit world on the other side. But often, when he passed by the piece of land which was next to his own lot, and which Torfi had legally repossessed from a poor man, Teitur could not help it sometimes crossing his mind that Torfi's penance in the afterlife might take quite a long time.

The hat's influence on the spiritual life of the valley dwellers is becoming more and more widespread, and who can say when it will disappear. It is certain that Nýjadalur is now thought to be second only to those Icelandic settlements which are considered the most prosperous and are the most praised for religious life. The hat of providence has now turned the souls in Nýjadalur upside-down, so that when politics and piety can become direct means of subsistence for some gentlemen – as they soon can, just like in other places in this land of progress – then the people of Nýjadalur will be safe to pride themselves on their interests and ideals, just like more distinguished settlements now tend to do.

The Man From New Zealand

by Johann Magnus Bjarnason
Translated by Jay Lalonde

In February 1912, we (that is, my wife and I) took the train west to the Pacific Coast, and we stayed in the tourist car all the way from Winnipeg to Vancouver, B.C. All the seats in the car were occupied by long-distance travellers. Some of them were from Eastern Canada, some from England and Scotland, and some from even further away.

The first morning I was on this journey, I met an Icelandic man whose name was Frank North. I talked to him briefly in the car compartment where men cleaned themselves up and smoked pipes and cigars. I have already described our conversation and told the story that he told me about his journey to Valparaíso in Chile. I remember that I took great pleasure in talking with him and listening to his story. But later that day, there in the car, I talked to another man that I also took a great liking to and whom I remember well. He was sitting in the seat next to us (that is, to my wife and me). And we noticed that sometimes, when we were talking to each other – and we talked in Icelandic – he looked at us and seemed to be listening to what we were discussing. He was about thirty years old, a man of average stature, handsome, blond and blue-eyed, and he seemed kind and intelligent-looking.

"The man who's sitting here in front of us is maybe Icelandic," whispered my wife to me: "He seems to understand what we're saying."

"That isn't an Icelander," I said, "but we're attracting his attention because we're speaking a different language than English."

A few moments later he rose from his seat, walked to us, and cordially greeted us. "I want to ask you to forgive me for being so rude and curious," he said in English, and his voice was clear and agreeable; "but I'd really like to know what language you were speaking earlier."

"We were speaking Icelandic." I said. "That's our mother tongue, and it's more natural for us than speaking English."

"Were you perhaps born in Iceland?" he asked.

"Yes, we were born there," I said, "but we were children when we moved away." "Do you live here in Canada?"

"Yes, in Manitoba."

"When I heard you talk together in a foreign language," he said, "I immediately got the idea that you might be Icelandic."

"Do you maybe have Nordic heritage yourself?"

"No," he said, "My ancestors were Scottish, and my name is Wilson. But I was born and raised in New Zealand, and live in a small town on the North Island, not too far from the city of Auckland. Last summer I took it upon myself to travel all the way to Scotland, to find my relatives, who live in Glasgow. And now I'm on my way home. I'm going this way – across Canada – because I've got a few close relatives in British Columbia, and I want

to find them and stay with them till the spring, and then I'm going to board a ship in Vancouver, B.C., and go home."

"What's your employment in New Zealand?" I asked.

"My father had a large flock of sheep for a long time, and I've been in charge of taking care of the sheep since I was young. So it'd be fair to say that I'm a shepherd, even though I've also worked in mines and in logging from time to time."

"Didn't you take great pleasure in travelling around Scotland?" I asked.

"Oh yes," said Wilson, "I enjoyed it very much. All or at least most people think warmly about the country of their ancestors. I'd long yearned for it, to see Scotland, and to come to the places where my parents had grown up. But believe it or not, it's really true that I've also desperately wanted to go all the way north to Iceland and travel there at that time of year when the day is longest there in the north."

My eyes widened in amazement.

"This I find especially remarkable," I said, "And what's the reason you want to see Iceland so much?"

"Because Iceland and New Zealand have so much in common," said Wilson. "Iceland is the white man's northernmost settlement on this earth, and New Zealand the southernmost one. Both countries are far from other countries, especially New Zealand, which is more than a thousand miles from Australia."

"But New Zealand is without a doubt much better off than Iceland," I said, "you have a lot of agriculture and more sheep farming than Iceland. I've heard that you have deep forests and that you dig for gold and other metals. Isn't that so?"

"Oh yes, that's quite right," said Wilson, "and New Zealand also has its glaciers, hot springs or geysers, and fast-flowing rivers, and it can sometimes be very stormy, and often gets shaken by earthquakes, just like Iceland. Iceland is still, if you ask me, even more of a wonderland than New Zealand. You Icelanders have a longer and perhaps more remarkable history than we do. Our history hardly covers more than some hundred years, with the exception of the history of the native inhabitants, the Maori, but your history covers a full ten centuries. And so I wanted to go to Iceland, if my circumstances had allowed it, mainly to see your books and manuscripts. I've heard so much about your renowned ancient literature. I've heard the name Snorri Sturluson mentioned. I've read the Saga of Njáll in English, translated by Sir George Webbe Dasent, and the English translation of the Saga of Grettir by George Ainslie Hight. And then I got

to know an Icelander – who became a dear friend of mine – and he told me countless stories about Iceland, the Icelandic people, and their literature."

"Where did you get to know him?" I asked.

"In New Zealand."

"What was his name?"

"He's still alive and his name is Hans Westford."

"Is he still in New Zealand?" I asked.

"Yes, he was there last summer, and has been there for more than eleven years. He lives on the east side of the South Island, and runs a sheep farm now."

Now I was getting very curious indeed.

"Are there more Icelanders than him in New Zealand?" I asked.

"Not that I know of," Wilson said.

"How old is Hans Westford?"

"He must be in his late thirties."

"What does he look like?" I asked. "Is he a large and strong man? Or is he small in stature?"

"He's easily of average height, solidly-built and broad-shouldered, handsome with blond hair and blue eyes. And his facial features make it clear that he's of Nordic heritage."

"Did he come to New Zealand directly from Iceland?" I asked.

"He told me," said Wilson, "that he'd been in England for some time, but went from there to Sydney in Australia on a cargo ship, and paid for his passage by working various jobs on the ship. In Sydney, he worked for some time unloading ships, and then moved to the city of Auckland in New Zealand. The first four or five years when he was there (in New Zealand) he worked as a day labourer, at various jobs in various places, and was thought to be trustworthy and a hard worker. He's the strictest of abstainers and good with his money. He quickly made money, and in the end bought a good flock of sheep and now has a large sheep operation on the east side of the South Island."

"Is he well-regarded by his neighbours?"

"Yes," said Wilson, "he's highly respected by everyone who's ever gotten to know him, and it couldn't be otherwise, because he's an easy-going man and very bright, straightforward in all his dealings, and doesn't have to be concerned about his reputation. And he's an outstandingly courageous man. I'll tell you a story about him."

"That story we certainly want to hear," I said.

"The story isn't long," Wilson said, "but it's true and goes like this:

It was 1906 and I'd been working in logging for a few months on the west coast of the South Island. Nearly thirty lumberjacks had gathered, all in the prime of life, and among them was the Icelander, Hans Westford. We were all employed by a lumber merchant, whose name was Sullivan, and who lived close to Wellington, the capital of New Zealand. Only rarely did he come to see his workers. He only came there once in all that time I was there. But he installed a foreman in his stead, who was called Hogg, who had long worked in logging in North America. We Sullivan's workers lodged in a big log cabin, which stood on the mountainside where we were clearing the forest. And we were always well taken care of when the day's work was done. The work was hard, no doubt, but the wages were high. The food was good and the portions generous, and the cooks were reliable and efficient. We wouldn't have anything to complain about, if it wasn't for the way the foreman treated us.

Hogg, the foreman, was a tall man and as strong as an ox. He was loud and had a particularly unpleasant voice. He

was terribly critical and his language very coarse. He thought that some of the men were lazy and too easy on themselves at work, some were klutzes, and some downright crooked. He went from one lumberjack to another all day long, and found something wrong with each of them, and cursed at them badly. If anyone dared to have any objections, it got even worse. The men took this badly, and many of them would've walked out on their jobs right away after the first week if the wages hadn't been so high, and the food so good, and the cabin so warm and spacious. And Hogg was then also usually calm and quiet when he came to the cabin at the end of a day's work.

Right away on the first day when we were logging, Hans Westford got a taste of foreman Hogg's bad mouth. Hogg went to where Hans was felling a huge tree, looked at him for a few moments and suddenly said that he couldn't use an axe and that his cut was skewed, and scorned him at the same time, and tried to snatch the axe out of Hans's hand. But Hans held tight onto the axe and turned his eyes toward Hogg at the same time. Then Hogg turned away and fell silent, and never again tried to take the axe away from Hans. Some of the lumberjacks said that Hans's blue eyes went all dark and sharp that time, and frightened Hogg. And they noticed that Hogg was never as loud and rude after that when he talked to Hans.

So one Sunday came about, when we'd been logging for more than a month, when Hogg went to a small town, which was about five miles from our cabin. This was a good opportunity to talk about a thing or two regarding our foreman privately. We all agreed that his outrageous, rude cursing and his constant criticism were utterly unbearable. A few of us suggested that someone talk to him in private and subtly make him understand than he would become a bitter enemy of all the lumberjacks if he continued with this bullying and ridiculous cursing. Others wanted to send two or three men to meet with Sullivan, the lumber merchant, to let him know about the matter and to get him to suspend Hogg as foreman and install another, calmer and milder, man in his place. Many suggestions came up regarding this matter, and some of them were really ridiculous. At last a young man, by the name of Burns, stood up to speak, and said:

"In my opinion, all of your proposals are too insignificant. You should know that they would only add fuel to the fire, if any of you were so deluded as to try and reprimand Mr. Hogg. It'd also be totally

meaningless to send a representative to meet with Mr. Sullivan, in order to ask him to suspend Mr. Hogg as a foreman, because Mr. Sullivan trusts Mr. Hogg greatly, and he's not at all concerned, even though the foreman he appointed for the job treats his workers harshly and unkindly, as long as the work is done fast and well. He wouldn't consider anything we tell him about the way Mr. Hogg treats us. And Mr. Hogg doesn't respect any of us, and he isn't scared of any of us, except for our Icelander, Hans Westford. So I want to propose that we'll entrust Hans with finding a way to get Mr. Hogg to have a change of heart and to treat us like an honourable man should."

And Burns looked at Hans as he was saying the last words. But Hans was silent. And everyone else was also silent.

Burns and Hans were together a lot later that day. They were walking for some time around the cabin. They were always discussing something in low voices.

Foreman Hogg came back to the cabin late in the afternoon. And when dinner was over, some of the men packed their pipes with tobacco and started to smoke them at an unhurried pace.

All of a sudden Burns called to Hans Westford and said:

"Listen, good Icelander; please, tell us a story about one of your Icelandic great men – some courageous and noble warrior. You told us an interesting story about an Icelandic hero last Sunday, and you absolutely promised to tell us another story that's just as good, tonight."

Hans was silent for a little while and then said:

"I've unfortunately forgotten the story that I was going to tell you tonight. But I can tell you another short story, even though it's not as interesting as the story I told you on Sunday night."

"Yeah, by all means, tell it to us anyway," said Burns.

"I'll gladly tell you, if mister foreman allows me to," said Hans and looked at Hogg. "What kind of goddamned bullshit is this!" responded Hogg. "Am I in the habit of banning you from telling stories in the evenings or what?"

"No," said Hans, "but mister foreman is in charge here in the cabin, just like he is outside on the logging site, and I will gladly obey his permission and act on his words of encouragement, whether I fell a tree or tell a story."

"You're always a fine orator, even though your English's sometimes a bit broken," said Hogg. "Start your story right away, since you sure want to tell it. But make sure you end it sometime."

Hans Westford now told us a story that we all listened to with great attention. He talked slowly and calmly, pronounced every word very clearly, spoke good English, and told the story especially well and so it was easy to understand. His story took a good while, and I have forgotten many details from it. So I can't tell it all, and not quite in the same way he told it. But the main contents of the story are these:

It's about nine hundred years since this story took place, and it took place in Scandinavia. It's a true story, and it was soon written down in Icelandic and has been translated into many languages. The story is about a king who was young when he came to power. His father, who was also a king in Scandinavia, had reigned over his subjects with little mercy, and so many became his enemies, and farmers revolted and went to war with him, where he fell in a cruel battle. When the young king came to power, he began his reign very harshly because he was resentful of the people who had disobeyed his father. The way the young king treated everyone – even his counsellors and courtiers – was

so stiff and stern, and his words so bitter and hurtful, that many who were close and friendly to him were afraid that the people would revolt and dethrone him if he continued to rule like a tyrant. The counsellors and courtiers agreed that one of them should warn and reprimand him. But most of them trembled at the thought of taking it upon themselves. Finally it was decided to draw lots to decide who should go and scold the king. At that time an Icelandic man, who was a great poet and had been a great friend of the father of the young king, was among the courtiers, and all of the courtiers had unfaltering trust in this Icelander, and when they drew the lots, everyone was quiet until the poet's lot came up. The Icelander then composed a long and powerful poem, went before the young king, and recited the poem to him. And in the poem was everything that the Icelander wanted to tell the king. He began the poem with mild and subtle words, reminded the young king of his father, and asked him not to get angry about the outspokenness of his cousellors. Then the poet pulled no punches, and bluntly gave the king a piece of his mind, and said, among other things: "Who makes you break your word? The king shall be a man of his word. Who makes you execute your subjects?" The poet asked him to avoid that. "A friend is one who warns," said the poet. And he ended his poem very skilfully and said he wanted to live and die with the young king, but at the same time also challenged him to change himself and his behaviour as fast as he could. The king listened to the poem with great attention, and it had a good influence on him, because he was a wise man. He followed the poet's words and became a mild and just king who was respected and loved by his people. He and the blunt, outspoken Icelander were dear friends from then on as long as they both lived. And so the fine Icelandic poet was, with one poem, able to prevent civil war and unrest.

"This is the essence of the story that Hans told us in the cabin that Sunday evening," said Wilson, "and the story had an influence much like that of the poem of the Icelandic poet, because foreman Hogg listened to it with particular attention. When the story was over, he went silently outside and wandered for a while around the cabin. When he came back into the cabin, he went to sleep without saying a word. The following day he was unusually quiet and mild. In the two months that I was logging there after this, I never heard him curse or speak rudely with anyone. And for that I thanked the story that Hans told us, about the Icelandic poet and the young Norse king."

Valedictory Speech Delivered at the Graduation Exercises of Jon Bjarnason Academy, May 27th 1936

by Jonas Thorsteinsson, Gr. XII
From the Jon Bjarnason Academy Year Book 1936

Ladies and gentlemen:

I feel that it is a great privilege and honor to have been chosen to convey this valedictory message to you, on behalf of the Grade Twelve students of the Jon Bjarnason Academy. When we students contemplate the fact that we are about to complete another year of school, many thoughts of aspiration, determination and speculation arise in our minds. The nearness of the examinations does not greatly obscure our vision of the future or our understanding of the present. The product of these reflections, I will now, in a few comprehensive words, endeavour to express.

To us, Graduation Day has a twofold significance. Firstly, it marks the culmination of ten months of consistent effort on the part of our parents, our teachers and ourselves, resulting in a definite and substantial step upward in our moral and intellectual development. It observes, by a solemn and impressive ceremony, the occasion of an accomplishment of which, I believe, we may feel justly proud. It brings together all the parents, guardians and friends of the students, the faculty, and the students themselves in a common gesture for a common cause. Thereby Graduation Day recognizes our cherished aims, our endeavors and our achievements and expresses its approval of them. It makes us feel that we have not wasted our time in applying ourselves thus to studies, and that we have accomplished something worthwhile in the eyes of our friends. Because it thus strengthens our faith in the belief that ours is a worthy pursuit, it encourages us to more extensive and more worthy efforts.

In its second aspect Graduation Day is more sentimental but not less significant – it is a farewell. It is an occasion on which to say good-bye, in a formal manner, to our kind teachers, our jolly mates, our revered school, and the happy days in which all have played so large a part. It is a pity to think that we will no longer work and play together as we have so gayly and earnestly done. The few short busy weeks that remain will allow us but little of the good companionship and friendly cooperation that we enjoyed in the days that are gone, and these will soon be but a memory. In the future it will become a subject of pleasant reminiscence to recall the time and the place where duty and pleasure were so happily combined.

It will be a particularly unwelcome

Jon Bjarnason class

necessity to take leave of our teachers, for our associations with them have been exceedingly agreeable. Their worth of character, extent of exertions and depth of kindness can be praised only in superlatives. They have consistently poured their energies into their work in a very unselfish manner. They have ever been ready to help us in any difficulty, to encourage us when we were disheartened, and in general to display their sympathetic interest far beyond the point of obligation. Of their unflagging zeal and their unstinted expenditure of time and energy my feeble powers of expression can convey no just impression. Somewhere I have read that character is mainly moulded by the cast of the minds that surround it. If this be true, then, by virtue of our contact with these teachers, there is good hope that our characters will turn out well. Through their influence we are better fitted for our task of making this a better world. They are well worthy of comparison with the great schoolmaster Thomas Arnold of whom his son wrote:

> "Beacons of hope ye appear!
> Languor is not in your heart,
> Weakness is not in your word,
> Weariness is not in your brow.
> Ye alight in our van! At your voice
> Pain, despair, flee away.
> Ye move through the ranks, recall
> The straggler, refresh the outworn,
> Praise, re-inspire the brave!
> Order, courage, return;
> Eyes rekindling, and prayers.
> Follow your steps as ye go.
> Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
> Strengthen the wavering line,
> Stablish, continue our march,
> On, to the bound of the waste,
> On, to the city of God."

We students owe and do feel similar sentiments of gratitude and respect to the school itself. We are sensitive to and appreciate the inestimable boon it has conferred upon us. We realize that it has raised our educational standing, strengthened our moral character and formed the basis of priceless associations. What it has done for us it can do for others. I am certain that we all sympathize with its struggle and will always do our utmost to encourage its continued existence and wellbeing. Let us then join in wishing long life to the Jon Bjarnason Academy.

One frequently hears the question: Of what use is an education? It no longer

ensures its possessor with profitable employment. Why then do people go to the trouble of acquiring one? We students naturally would like to present a defence of our position. To begin with, although it is only too true that an education does not guarantee an independent living at present, we are not so pessimistic as to believe that this abominable state of affairs will continue long, and we are preparing ourselves to take advantage of the time when it shall not. On the other hand, we realize that an education has a value of its own. That is, it is not merely a means of gaining some other desirable end, but is a worthwhile end in itself. An eminent authority states that education is the organization of knowledge into human excellence. It is not, therefore, a mere accumulation of knowledge but the art of making living an art. For these reasons we feel satisfied that the expenditure of time and expense in acquiring an education is justified.

The present is a fitting occasion for us students to express our heartfelt thankfulness to our parents and guardians for all the acts of love and sacrifice they have performed in providing us with an education. For many of them it has been a hard pull. Their tender devotion to our interests places us in a position of great responsibility. Their trust in us demands that we pledge ourselves to live clean, honorable lives; not merely avoiding evil but performing as many worthy actions as possible. Our parents have paved the way. We are under a moral obligation to travel upon it, and I trust we always shall.

When we emerge from the quiet sanctum of the Academy's walls, those of us who do not continue our academical education will find, more keenly perhaps than hitherto, that the present economic situation is not all it might be desired to be. It will be exceedingly unpleasant to find that after the preparation in which they have invested no little effort and expense, it may be difficult to find a job. We who scarcely remember what it was like before the depression may not be fully aware of the seriousness of the matter. We have become so accustomed to hearing talk of unemployment, its alleged causes, and the conflicting cures suggested. We grow tired of it. It seems so futile. We cannot, however; we must not, take this indifferent attitude. These problems too intimately concern our future well-being. We must not forget that the demand for pioneers has fallen off only with respect to the discovery and settlement of land. New and glorious fields of exploration and promised achievement demand the attention of our adventurous spirits, our thoughts, and our labor. The possibilities are great. Let us not fail to redeem the sacrifices of our parents, the toil of our teachers and the honor of our school. As the poet Browning expresses it:

"No, at noon-day in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be
'Strive and thrive!' Cry, 'Speed, – fight on, fare ever
There as here!'"

Íslendingadagurinn 2021 Poetry and Prose Winners

Poetry Winner

destination funeral Iceland: mamma and pabbi see little sword to his funeral pyre

by Ron Romanowski

because it was foretold in his baby runes—because little sword's dragon's name was stormur—because they revered their beloved bur—landing at Keflavik they began their sacred way: a winged flying dragon electric hearse lead their entourage—an electric boreal unicorn pulled behind it wagons of mourners—little sword's banners fluttered over the highways–his Icelandic horse was tethered among little sword's chests of toys, his favoured blankets, his baby books in Icelandic—whose letters he used to trace with his tiny fingers—there he rides in the open casket carved by artisans from the basaltic rock of fiery Hekla—mamma and pabbi will see little sword home—Hrúta fjord is their destination—where the shark ship Ófeig was found—their weighted steps—the last duties of parenthood carry them on; this great mourning route to the last ship of their little one—with deliberate gravity, as befits their elegiac quest; they travel the whole of the day—then just before sunset they reach the torches that lead them to little sword's ship—his dragon boat will be laden with all his toys—the hero's horns will be sounded—the last rites sung—mamma and pabbi will be the last to embrace him—mamma whispers: I gave my own milk and did not complain when you bit my nipples—and pabbi whispers: I wiped away feces and removed mucus from your nose—we always embraced you gladly little sword ever near the end—they will sing their farewell songs, as all heave little sword into Ram's fjord—alight sailing to the ever welcoming gods

Prose Winner

Chirp

by Melissa Wong

Chirp darted through the waters of Barents Sea as her children chased after her. Chirp's daughters playfully caught up with their mother, before rejoining their pod of white-beaked dolphins, frolicking in the wake of waves.

Chirp had grudgingly come to Iceland to meet one of the humans. A group of divers had convinced her to meet a special human to protect her pod and dolphins all over the world.

The motherly white-beaked dolphin widened her sonar's reach and allowed her whistle to vibrate throughout the water. The reply she was waiting for reached her ears and Chirp followed the sound. It led her to a human diver.

"It is good to speak to finally you." The human said. "My name is Sigrún."

Chirp froze. The human was not using an underwater sound keyboard with symbols and sounds to speak to her. The human was speaking in the language of the white-beaked dolphins, using their mouth to create sounds that Chirp was certain humans could not usually hear and mimicking a dolphin's body language.

"Why did you run away?" Sigrún asked. "I know we agreed to let you raise your calves before considering the experiment, but you disappeared for years."

Chirp had run away from the scientists and didn't know how to explain her actions. Chirp was a mother first, and her children needed her more than these humans.

"It does not matter now," The human said. "All that matters is that you can save dolphins from extinction."

"How can you hear my sonar's ultrasound and reply without a sound keyboard?" Chirp asked.

"I volunteered for the experiment to make sure it was safe for you," Sigrún said.

"Are you making a joke?" Chirp asked.

"I have implants that allow me to hear ultrasound and my vocal cord range can now reach the 40 types of dolphin's whistles, clicks, and sonar sounds," Sigrún said. "Afterwards, I learned the language and body language your pod of dolphins uses. I went through the process and I can guide you through it later."

"Is that how you plan to convince me to get implants so I can speak to humans?" Chirp asked. "Why does it have to be me?"

"You are the most intelligent dolphin we have found in decades, Chirp," Sigrún said. "Most dolphins are intelligent and your species brain size compared to their average body size is second only to humans."

"You don't understand what you are asking me to do!" Chirp said. "You are asking me to leave my community and children to become something more human and less dolphin."

"If you speak to our leaders, then you could save the seas," Sigrún said. "…This will be the last time we approach you; dolphins usually only live to be fifty so…"

"I will be too old to be a sideshow," Chirp said. "Some humans take healthy dolphins from their homes so they can perform tricks in pools. Can you promise that this will be different?"

"No," Sigrún said. "I suppose not."

"Why did you really alter your body, Sigrún?" Chirp asked. "Why do you have implants in your ears and vocal cords?"

"They said you could recognize lies," Sigrún said.

"I know what doubt sounds like," Chirp said. "Most dolphins do."

"Dolphins hear so much more," Sigrún said. "I only realized the limits of the human spectrum when I could hear with the ears of another."

"You can never experience the world as you once did," Chirp said.

"No, it is not," Sigrún said. "The world is still around me… but I feel like I know it better. I can hear your pod waiting for you to return to them. Every sound is magnified, and it paints a better picture of the world."

"It was only about the sonar?" Chirp asked.

"It was the only way to experience the world as you do," Sigrún said. "When I was a child, I fell off a boat and was dragged down under the water. I thought I would die, but a mermaid saved me."

"A mermaid?" Chirp asked.

"At the time, I thought a mermaid saved me," Sigrún said. "But it was not a mermaid, it was you, Chirp. Before calling me a liar… hear me out. You have distinctive scars across your beak that I recognized when I saw your picture in the newspapers. I didn't tell anyone you saved me, and I don't think you told anyone about me either."

"What if I never saved a human girl?" Chirp asked.

"Even if it was not you… a dolphin still saved me," Sigrún said.

"Let me see your face without the scuba mask," Chirp said.

Sigrún embraced the dolphin and closed her eyes. The mother dolphin brought the smaller human to the surface as if she was weightless. They broke through the surface of the water into the salty air which was waiting for them. Sigrún removed her diving mask. Under the bright sun, in the embrace of the Barents Sea, Chirp knew this was the girl she had saved all those years ago.

"Why didn't you tell me you were that girl?" Chirp asked.

"I just told you now… during our first meeting," Sigrún said. "I'll fight for dolphin rights and the seas, regardless of your answer, but I want to know why you saved me."

"Dolphins understand death," Chirp said. "We all mourn our dead. You might not have been born a dolphin, but I could not let you die, not when I had the power to save you."

"There are plenty of stories about dolphins saving people," Sigrún said. "In 2004 and 2007, dolphins circled surfers for over half an hour to protect them from some great white sharks. I guess they felt the same as you."

"Do you think your leaders would feel empathy if they heard me speak?" Chirp asked.

"I don't know," Sigrún said. "Some humans treat other humans badly and they can speak the same languages, but those treated badly still fight for their right to speak."

"Thank you for your honesty," Chirp said. "You cannot promise me this will be a sure thing, and I respect the truth. Yet, the more I speak to you… the more I realized that the only way to ensure the future of my species… and of my children is to leave them. I will volunteer for the vocal implants if you promise me, your leaders will listen

to my voice."

"I will never leave your side," Sigrún said. "And I promise no one will silence you."

"All I ask is to have the chance to say goodbye to my children," Chirp said.

Sigrún nodded.

Chirp called out for her children. Her signature whistle vibrated through the water and her excited children leaped out of the water as they swam to her. Chirp felt her heart cry out… they expected her to go home with them. She closed her eyes and prepared to tell her offspring everything. If she could not explain everything to her children, then how could she explain it to the people on the land when she has a human voice?

Prose Honourable Mention

The Land of Fire and Ice … And Letting Go

by Lindsey Harrington

The seatbelt light turns on. Grace looks around as if her head is on a swivel, left, then right, backwards, then forwards. She assesses her fellow travellers as they adjust their neck pillows and thumb through their in-flight magazines. Some pull sleep masks over their eyes and roll earplugs between their fingers and thumbs, florescent sponges aimed at blocking out the world around them. *Who could sleep at a time like this?*

She and Roger only took regimented vacations to safe locations: seven-day stints at highly rated, interchangeable resorts. This is Grace's first time *really* travelling and she's doing it alone.

"Clean break," she whispers to herself as she tightens the seatbelt across her hips and powers down her phone. She won't turn it on again until after her full three weeks in Iceland. Her only planned communication is an email to her mother every three days. She's the only one who knows Grace is gone, though Roger will find out soon enough.

Grace's mother chastised her when she revealed her plan. "Don't run away from things Grace. Run towards things." *Why not both?* Grace had wondered.

The first three days in Reykjavík, she thinks she's made a huge mistake. She spends her nights in a hostel, crowded with drunk, horny students, feeling ancient. Each morning, she boards a tour bus bound for the golden circle: congested tourist sites and sheets of rain. She constantly thinks about the ring she left on the dining room table along with the note: *This isn't working anymore. I'm sorry.*

She decides her itinerary isn't working either, so she'll get out of the city. The rental agent looks like a Viking. At his suggestion, she gets an all-wheel-drive SUV and plugs a place called Landmannalaugar into the

GPS. He tells her about the F-Roads, gravel highways that run through Iceland's interior, assuring her that she will love it. "You know how to drive through a river, right?" Grace's eyebrows shoot up on her forehead.

Making her way through the roundabouts leading out of Reykjavík she feels like she did on the airplane. Once again life is exciting and overwhelming in equal measures. She sees a lava field and pulls over to read the interpretive panel.

Grace picks up a volcanic rock, dark and granular like a lump of coal. Back home, Santa leaves coal in stockings for bad children. Here, it's Yule Lads and potatoes in shoes, same but… Different. She squeezes the jagged stone in her palm, letting the sharp edges cut into the flesh. She gets back in her car, lays the rock in the cupholder, and drives on.

The next few days, she spends hiking and sleeping in the car. She carries the lava rock with her wherever she goes. Occasionally on the trails, she sees another person but mostly she is alone with the rock and her thoughts.

Surprisingly, what she thinks of most isn't the breakup, it's food. She is hungrier than she's been in years and she sees food everywhere: marble cake mountains and glaciers the artificial blue of corner store slushies. All she has to eat are gummy instant noodles and packets of oatmeal but even these taste delicious. She eats voraciously.

After supper, Grace braves the natural hot springs at the campground. Surrounded by strangers, she self-consciously uncoils her towel and rushes into the water, her aching muscles protesting. Even in her modest swimsuit, she crosses her arms across her chest and sinks low into the bubbling pool, the

smell of sulphur tingling her nostrils.

On her last day in Landmannalaugar, a river cuts off her trail. Instead of turning back, she decides to traverse it. Grace ties the laces of her hiking boots together and hangs them around her neck. She rolls up her pant legs and submerges her feet in the icy water. The chill sucks the air from her lungs. She lets a string of expletives echo across the landscape as she hobbles across, rapids licking her calves. Roger would have condemned her unladylike conduct. She makes it across and lies on the opposite shore, smiling as the wind whips her exposed skin dry.

Back in her rental car, she retraces her journey down the F-road and turns back onto the ring road circumnavigating Iceland. She rubs the bare flesh of her ring finger. The rest of the trip she drives aimlessly, heading down whatever dirt road catches her eye. She stays in modest motels and fuels herself with gas station pyslas. Iceland's version of the hot dog consists of a lamb sausage with sharp mustard and onion, on a steamed bun. She imagines Roger, his nose wrinkling and the corners of his mouth turning down in disgust. This makes her like the pyslas even more.

Every evening, she goes to a bathhouse. Every town, no matter how small, seems to have one. The first time Grace is scandalized by the women. They carry on casual conversations without a stitch of clothes on, while their equally naked children shriek and chase one another around the locker room. She keeps her eyes averted and tucks into corners to change, peeling her bathing suit off from underneath her towel.

Day after day, waterfall after waterfall washes away her heaviness. The roar floods her head and drowns out any thoughts other than the here and the now. *More waterfalls than you could shake a stick at,* she exclaims to her mother in an email.

The last day of her trip comes out of nowhere. Grace is driving down her last F-road and thinking about the empty house she will return to. She can see the outlines left by paintings taken off the walls, and the closets and medicine cabinet, half-empty. Roger won't be there, but his ghost will be.

Grace sees a small waterfall on the roadside and slams on the brakes. She makes a half-hearted attempt to pull over and jumps out of the car, leaving the door wide open. She jogs down the gravel road, stripping along the way, abandoning her Gore-Tex jacket and new wool sweater on the ground. Grace stops when she reaches the falls and takes a deep breath: in through the nose, out through the mouth. She's used to the sulphur now.

She unhooks her bra and discards it too, then her hiking boots, jeans, socks, and last of all, her underwear. She stands naked, face to face with what will be the last waterfall of the trip. It is only a trickle compared to the others, but it is all hers on this abandoned sideroad.

Grace takes another deep breath and steps underneath the glacier-fed falls. The shock sharpens all her senses. Everything looks clearer. She steps out from underneath the pelting water and runs a hand through her hair, drenched and near freezing. She arches her back and looks toward the sky; it is the uniform gray she has become accustomed to.

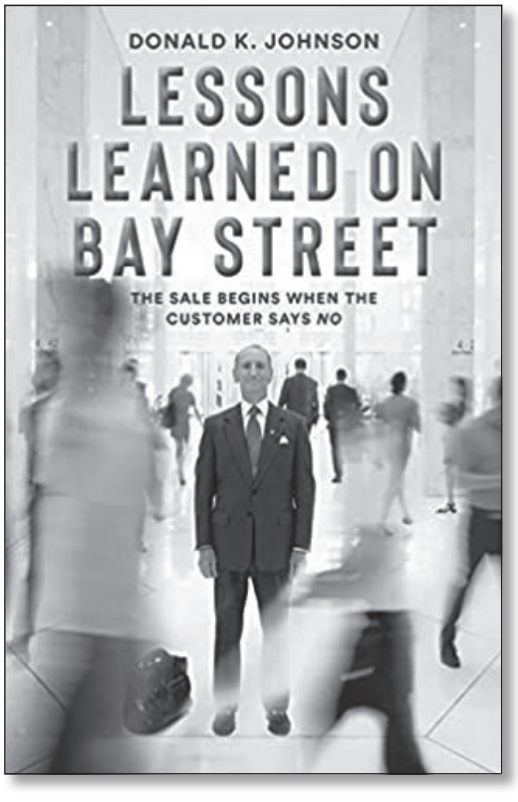
She doesn't want to go home. She *is* home. Grace jumps back under and her shrieks of laughter mingle with the surge. She lets the lava rock she's been clutching drop into the pool churning at her feet.

Book Review

Lessons Learned on Bay Street
The Sale Begins When the Customer Says No

by Donald K. Johnson

Reviewed by Linda E. Sigurdson Collette



Lessons Learned on Bay Street
The Sale Begins When the Customer Says No
By Donald K. Johnson
Toronto: Barlow Books, 2021, 168 pages

What can I say in this review of Donald K. Johnson's book published and dispersed during the recent Covid-19 pandemic that surrounds this World, our World? We are not in isolation.

In Lestrarfélagi› Gleym-mér-ei, our 25 year book club, we begin by observing what information the cover tells you, all selected by the author and publisher. In the centre is Donald K in a suit with his large briefcase. Impeccable. He takes on the world with us aboard his ship. He is the product of the Viking Age where travellers on ships were explorers, merchants, traders and investors. Donald K, the child of parents of Icelandic heritage, possesses this in his DNA going back more than 1000 years.

Inescapable on the cover is the title in large gold letters. GOLD!!! The definition of success. His book cover front and back with two pages of "Advance Praise" from notable people strikes a secure impression. Is this all we will learn? I question how Bay Street or the Investment World will mean something to me? Will it stop readers? Then, I spot the word "Memoir"on the left inside flap.

Memoirs are complex works. To record

intimate details about your life takes skill. DKJ approached this project as, I think, he conducted all others in his 85 years of life, learning as he went, researching, consulting knowledgable people, researching, assessing the product, altering where necessary, celebrating the result, rewarding others, feeling positive with his achievement no matter the outcome.

A cursory view inside this small hardcover book of 168 plus pages delights me with a dedication to his late wife of thirty years, Anna, a list of chapter titles, photos and index. Index? My heart skips a beat and I think of the saying from Aristotle, 2500 years ago, tell what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them. Simple, direct and memorable.

In the first four pages, we are introduced to elements of DKJ's life and his words of wisdom that he calls "rules of the road." From " The sale begins when the customer says NO" to "You're never too old to learn something new." There are seven like the seven seas of the world. The ship has set sail.

The first port of call is Chapter 1 entitled Buffett to the Rescue. In an engaging raconteur style of eighteen pages, we encounter how DKJ operates in his business and social life as he negotiates the deal. DKJ met "The Sage of Omaha" twenty-three years before and their friendship sails on. Good first story.

Chapter 2 is titled From Lundar to Bay Street where he gives his personal story. I knew some of it, as I am next door to where he grew up. The house is gone, but the memories are not. He and his siblings value their foundation here and return every year to meet with friends and relatives. With this chapter, DKJ secures our interest and we become his friends. In

Lundar, we celebrate the Donald K Johnson Reading Corner in the Pauline Johnson Library. He supported his hometown in this project and in the establishment of the Coldwell Community Foundation (in 2010). I checked the Index and yes, it is mentioned on page 33.

By now, I am starting to understand this book can be read in segments as if the ship's storyteller kept us entertained and in each taught us lessons. DKJ navigates the waves with the ups and downs of business and life. He steers through the business conflict within his family with the same techniques he has learned. Read about it in Chapter 5. He ends with "I'm grateful...amazing success story...the best is yet to come."

The role DKJ has developed within himself is that of the Servant-Leadership. Chapter 6 begins with his discussion of the discovery of "the world of philanthropy." He mentions his mother, Fjola, and how she cared for the needs of people. In 1984, he started to emulate her example. Dr. Carolyn Crippen in an abstract for an article states that these are "10 characteristics of servant-leadership: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization and foresight, commitment to the growth of people, stewardship, and building community." As you read further in his book, consider these points.

When on a Viking Age voyage, the leader and shipmates are away for extended periods of time. When DKJ was on a project his full concentration focused on it. In the little that is mentioned in this memoir, his family came third. How did he take care of himself? Chapter 8 entitled HBN:Horizontal By Nine contains some insight and ends with a separate area called "Lots to be Grateful For."

Chapter 9, *Lessons Learned*, begins with a synopsis of why he wrote the book. Warren Buffett who is in age similar to DKJ leads the bullet point information. This continues for the rest of the chapter and has ease of flow for contemplation. DKJ included Transcendental Meditation in his routine fifty years ago.

Chapter 10 ends his saga with a discussion of his silver linings. He writes this in our Covid-19 pandemic 2020. He lost his sister Margret in April 2019, his brother Paul on July 15 and his wife Anna on August 15, 2020, yet silver linings? His positive attitude prevails throughout the book and our voyage concludes with contentment and happiness. Our ship docks laden with untold wealth and stories for many a long winter's night. This book is a keepsake to be passed on through the generations as the underlying thread is immortal. One thousand years ago our ancestors followed Hávamál, the poem teaching the code of conduct. Has my review of this book made a sale?

To learn of all Donald K Johnson's accomplishments, read the book. To end this review, Aristotle was right. DKJ was right. On this one lesson, Better to give with a warm hand than a cold hand, I thank him for writing the book while he has control of his saga and knows the truth. Now, with all I learned about him, I can no longer see him as the boy that had lived next door or my dear cousin. Donald K Johnson has conquered the world.

The Goodman Writer's Grant

PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER JOHN BUCHAN

Do you have a complete or near-complete manuscript that you dream of having self-published? Maybe you have a personal five year goal to get your novel finished or your writing published? Then this is for you, my dear writer friend.

I'm very excited, and honored in fact, to be able to announce the establishment of The Goodman Writer's Grant. This is a $4000 grant administered by the Canada Iceland Foundation and offered through the journal *Icelandic Connection*, who have made up a selection committee. The grant's aim is to assist an emerging writer whose intention is to publish a work of writing. It will be offered every year for the next five years, ending in 2026.

Your work must be written in English. You can write in the form of your choice (novel, treatise, collection of poems, historical documentation, etc.). There are no criteria around word count, but the writing should be of a length appropriate to the format and content. If the work is longer than a novella, it is suggested that you submit a representative chapter for the application. Your work must be unpublished at the time of application and you should provide clear intentions of the publication plans for the piece. The work may be complete or incomplete, but if incomplete, you should provide sufficient content to clearly demonstrate the character of the finished work. Lastly if selected, yourself, the grant recipient, should be prepared to provide acknowledgement of the grant's support upon publication.

Icelandic Connection will be accepting submissions for the 2022 award until Friday, October 1, 2022 at 4PM CT, with the award recipient being notified by December 1, 2022. Please fill out the application form provided on the *Icelandic Connection* website and forward your completed application form and writing submission via email to editor@icecon.ca.

This grant would not be possible without the generous support of Dr Ron Goodman.

Contributors

LINDA FAY SIGURDSON COLLETTE, in 2021, celebrates the 50th year as cancer survivor and 25th year of Lestrarfélagi› Gleym-mér-ei, the Reading Society Forget-me-not. She attributes and thanks her Icelandic ancestors for their strength and firm foundation. Like Donald K. Johnson, she values her connection to positive-thinking people. Her Canadian-born parents are the late Jóhann Straumfjörð Sigurdson and Helga G.J. Sigurdson of Lundar. Though she has lived in various cities in Canada, she returned home to the Heart of the Continent in 1981 and has since been active in both Icelandic and Canadian communities. She treasured wearing the mantle of Fjallkona 2015 at Íslendingadagurinn in Manitoba.

LINDSEY HARRINGTON is a writer in Nova Scotia, Canada. *The Land of Fire and Ice* ... And *Letting Go* was inspired by a life-changing three-week trip she took to Iceland in 2015. It is part of a collection of short stories about break-ups called *Coming Apart* she is currently pitching to publishers. Follow her on Instagram @lindseyharringtonwriter.

JAY LALONDE is currently starting a PhD in History at the University of New Brunswick. He has completed degrees in Icelandic and Translation Studies at the University of Iceland. His research is focused on the Icelandic Immigration to North America and Icelandic-Canadian and Icelandic-American writing, and immigrant writing in general.

ANDREW MCGILLIVRAY is an assistant professor of Rhetoric and Communications at the University of Winnipeg. He has written about medieval Icelandic sagas, Old Norse mythology, and Icelandic culture in Manitoba.

RON ROMANOWSKI is a Winnipeg writer whose most recent poetry anthology, *If 30,000 Strikers Marched Today*, commemorated the Centennial of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike. Ron won the Lake Winnipeg Writers' Group Adult Poetry Prize, and was one of the poets featured in the *Winnipeg Free Press* Writes of Spring Poetry Page, both in 2020. Recently Ron's poetry has been published in the *Write to Move*, and *The Selkie Resiliency anthologies in Canada.* Ron's recent US publications include *Solum*, *Passengers Journal*, *Tempered Runes Press: Bluing the Blade*, and *Eternal Haunted Summer: Pagan Songs and Tales*.

ELIN THORDARSON, the editor-in-chief of the *Icelandic Connection*, is a writer, translator and mother from Winnipeg, Manitoba.

JONAS THORSTEINSON is a Graduate of University of Manitoba with a PhD in Entomology. Dr Thorsteinson was a professor in the Faculty of Science at UofMb in the 1950s and 1960s.

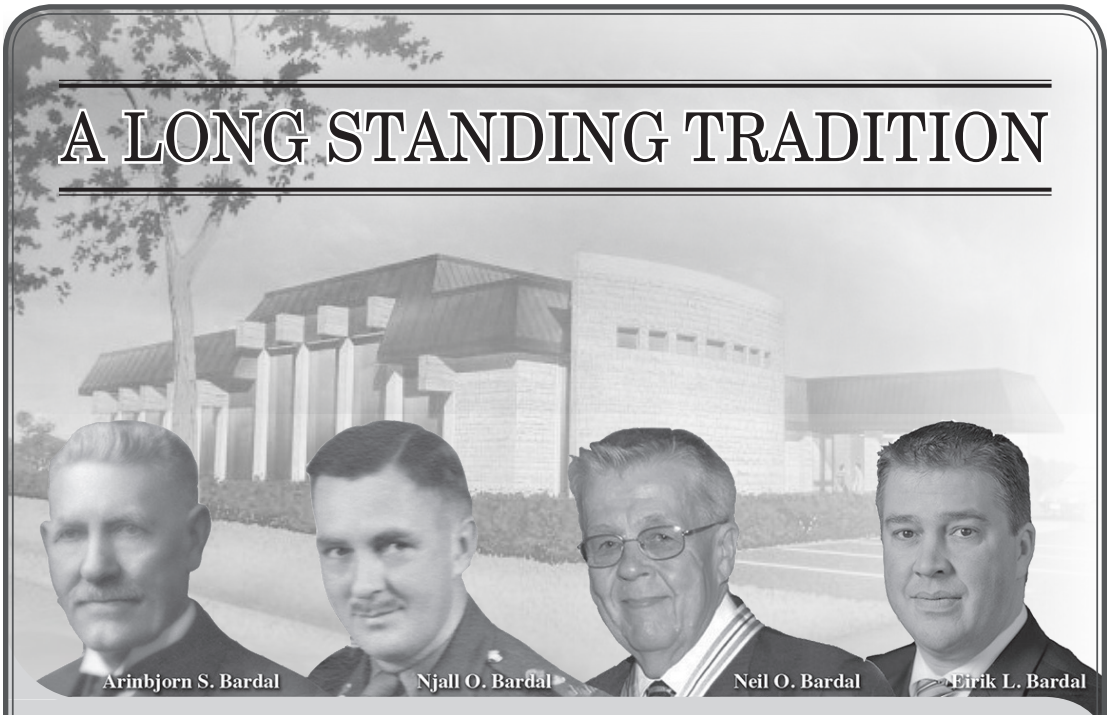
MELISSA WONG is a freelance writer. A MUN alumni with a B.A. (Hons) and a diploma in journalism. Wong's painting "In the Pink Sky", won the 2016 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Arts and Letters contest and was exhibited at The Rooms. Wong's works have been published with *The Newfoundland Herald, Truth Serum Press,* Pure Slush, Applebeard, and Engen Books, and her latest story "Earrings" was published in Pure Slush's anthology *Growing up*. Born and raised in St. John's, Newfoundland, Wong spends most of her free time reading, painting, and working in the garden. Please view her portfolio at https://www.muckrack.com/melissa-wong-8.

PHOTO: DRIES DESENDER

"Raven"

The Back Page

A LONG STANDING TRADITION



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