Captions to Accompany "Iceland: A Study in Photos"

By: World Folklore and Traditions Spring 2016

Slide 1:

Megan Dunlevy: This is a rock formation in the lava cave called the chandelier or the troll's skull. According to the Reykjavik Grapevine (issue 3 2016) in the past year 1 in 5 jobs created in Iceland due to tourism. Folklore tourism as we see in the troll's skull formation below makes up a large portion of the increase in tourism to Iceland.

Slide 2:

Brenna Robinson: This image depicts a variety of troll figurines on sale in a gift shop. Iceland has embraced their folklore and incorporated it into their tourist industry, especially the legends about trolls and elves. Figurines such as these are found in almost every gift shop.

Slide 3:

Gabe Brown: It's easy to see how the landscape of Iceland, such as this "elf church," contributed to Tolkien's work, and its folklore contributed just as much. Tolkien drew on Iceland's folklore to create many races, scenes, and creatures in his work, which has in turn inspired dozens, perhaps hundreds, of other writings over the decades. This makes Iceland an original source inspiration for literature all over the world, giving it a remarkable scope of influence.

Slide 4:

Bailey Pugh: In downtown Reykjavik, spotting fluffy cats (not just strays, but owned cats wearing collars) roaming around the streets was an unexpected, frequent, and charming experience. The increase of cat spottings around the city has spread across the folk, both the locals and the tourists; a “Cats of Reykjavik” Facebook page has been developed, the Reykjavik Grapevine has published articles about the number of cats seen roaming, even Trip Advisor warns travelers to expect this occurrence if walking around Reykjavik. Makes you wonder; could this unique influx of felines roaming the streets be somehow related to the vicious Icelandic Yule Cat that eats people who don’t receive new clothes before Christmas Eve?

Slide 5:

Ben Sawyer: Icelandic Hidden Folk are considered the protectors of the environment, so the Icelandic people show a respect for nature that is not found in any other places. Almost 90% of homes are powered by geothermal heating, and more of the country is moving towards using windmills as well to almost replace coal and oil usage.

Slide 6:

Claire James: The University of Iceland is the oldest (founded in 1911) and largest higher-education institution in Iceland, and offers curriculum in the humanities, medicine, natural sciences, engineering, teacher education, and social sciences. This picture was of a study lounge at the university, sent to me from a friend that I met who studies there!

Slide 7:

Sarah Stoner: Icelandic runes can still be commonly found throughout Iceland. Whether people still believe in the magic they provide or use them as a symbol or simply as art, they can be seen adorning the walls, worn as jewelry, or inked as a tattoo (human accessorizing is found more outside of the Icelandic culture). The original use of runes were to augment the user by following specific instruction in scripts to create the runes. The most common is the Vegvisir (pictured top left and bottom middle), which is believed to help guide the user.

Slide 8:

Jake Orkwis: Hafnarfjörður Free Church. Located near the “Hidden Worlds Tour”, the representation of Religion in Iceland has, historically, served as a foil for the Huldufolk. While some believe the hidden people stem from Adam and Eve, and still others attesting to the notion that they exist as fallen angels, their prevalence throughout the country embodies the rich cultural connotations that exist in conjunction with religion.

Slide 9:

Kara Detty: Although Iceland has many foods that have allowed their culture to be sustainable such as fish and skyr, imported foods have helped the local cuisine flourish into what it is today. I particularly enjoyed the many coffee shops, Asian noodle restaurants, and pub-style grub that many of the locals also frequented.

Slide 10:

Karissa Schroeter: Many Icelanders grew up hearing stories from Old Norse Mythology. These stories provided explanations for some of the strange geographical wonders that naturally occur in Iceland, such as that of Loki’s eternal punishment in a cave causing all of the earthquakes in Iceland.

Slide 11:

Colleen O'Brien: Trolls are large, malevolent creatures who like to cause trouble in the night, but turn to stone if touched by sunlight. If you look closely enough on the left and right images, you can see the profiles of unfortunate trolls who have been turned to stone. The center picture is a the skull of a troll, who was likely trapped inside the cave

Slide 12:

Lauren Kirgis: In 2015, the music festival Iceland Airwaves joined Urban Nation Berlin in creating a Wall Poetry Series. They paired street artists with musicians in order to create unique street art around Reykjavík. In this piece, the street artist DEIH, from Spain, was influenced by the song “Waterfall”, by the Icelandic band Vök. The project demonstrates the connection of creative minds from Iceland and other parts of the world. This piece reflects how Icelandic culture inspired DEIH and demonstrates the apparent beauty that results from the mixing of cultures.

Slide 13:

Michelle Casey: Icelandic horses are known for their short stature and calm demeanor. They are also unique in that they have five gaits- walk, trot, canter/gallop, and two gaits of their own called the tölt and the skeið, or "flying pace." We enjoyed riding these horses on a beautiful trail in the Icelandic countryside, and try as I might, I couldn't quite master the tӧlt!

Slide 14:

Sarina Schroeter: Iceland was formed by movements from two tectonic plates, Europe and North America. Þingvellir National Park in Iceland is one of only two places in the entire world where you can see two of the earth’s tectonic plates meeting above the earth’s surface!

Slide 15:

Onnie Middendorf: There is a large business in exporting dried fish heads and backbones for protein powders, and also a very popular soup in Nigeria.

Slide 16:

Natalie Prager: The Hallkrímskirkja cathedral is an architectural landmark in Iceland and represents its most widely-followed religion, Lutheranism. All Icelandic citizens are legally required to declare a religious or philosophical affiliation for tax purposes, although they may declare themselves unaffiliated.

Slide 17:

Morgan Eberle: Street art can be described as interactive folklore. Specifically in Reykjavik, Iceland, street art is a very prominent form of expression. Graffiti is encouraged in Reykjavik, and local artists use this medium as a means of expressing thoughts and opinions on local and national news and issues, as a means of advertising, or simply as a means of entertainment.

Slide 18:

Gabrielle Kraemer: Because of the isolation in Iceland, many of the “new” developments in music went unnoticed. However, Iceland is known for their love of jazz music and there was even a jazz concert while we were there! One of the current famous bands from Iceland is Of Monsters and Men.

Slide 19:

Chris Hoover: The Icelandic government encourages the commercialization of their folklore for tourism, such as the display of this troll outside a souvenir shop.

Slide 20:

Shannon Henderson- Iceland: quite possibly the only place in the world to experience such a diverse selection of history, music, architecture, nature, and tourism in such a condense space– all accompanied by the eggy scent of geothermal energy.