

# Dr Eloise Grathwohl Presents Faculty Distinguished Lecture: 'The Glacier Stands Open'

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I sat down with Dr. Eloise Grathwohl, a Professor of the Department of English here at Meredith to discuss her Faculty Distinguished Lecture, 'The Glacier Stands Open.' She explained the topic of the lecture and the origins of her research project.

Dr. Grathwohl said that the lecture is connected to a project that began when she read Halldór Laxness' book *Under the Glacier* and found allusions to the Tao te Ching, one of the manuscripts connected to the Taoist religion. Dr. Grathwohl mentioned that the project is a departure from her specialization in Medieval English literature, but she explained that this research comes from her teaching the book on the study abroad program in Iceland and she was interested in investigating further something she

had found out about *Under the Glacier* and its author.

In 2008 Dr. Grathwohl joined Dr. Michael Novák, the Head and a Professor of the History Department, in taking Meredith students on an awe inspiring and greatly educational trip to Iceland. I was able to travel there the summer of 2010 and while there we read *Under the Glacier* by Halldór Laxness, a story about a little village located in the westernmost peninsula of Iceland, right next to the glacier, Snæfellsjökull. Dr. Novák suggested the book because it is shorter and more accessible than Laxness' most famous work, *Independent People*. The geographical aspect of the story also played a part for, as Dr. Grathwohl reminded me, it was set in the area where Mr. Novák's sheep family lived,

allowing our group of travelers to visit the beautiful peninsula where Laxness' book was set and connect the area to our text and our professor.

When Dr. Grathwohl read *Under the Glacier*, she noticed references to the Tao te Ching. The realization that Laxness used Taoist works in his own works was a fact that some scholars pointed out, but had not investigated any further. This realization sparked the project of analyzing Laxness's use of the Chinese text in *Under the Glacier*, and Dr. Grathwohl plans to expand her study to several of his other works as well. Last night's lecture introduced this project to the Meredith community and hopefully sparked a need to look and experience a similar bout of inspiration in the listeners.

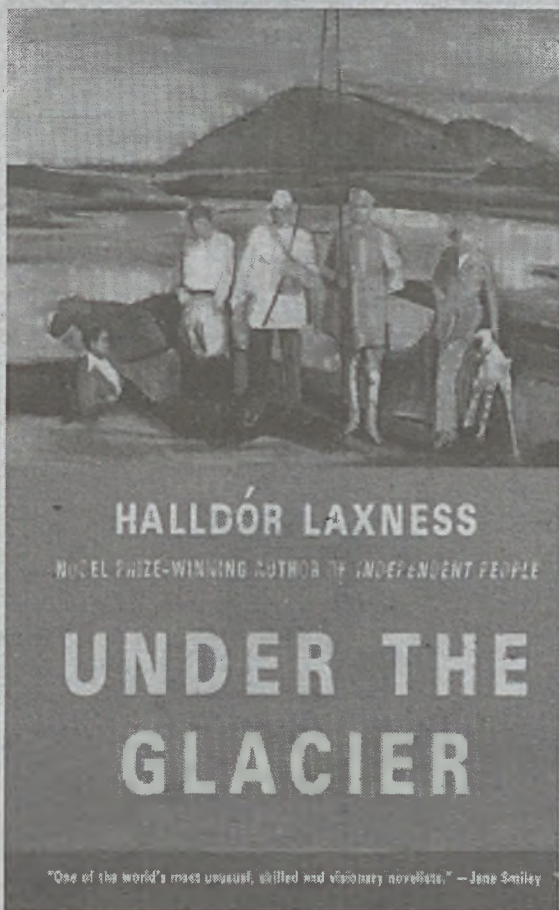


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Joyner 126, Tuesdays @ 5:30

## Campus Announcements

**Library Video Contest:** Carlyle Campbell Library and the Friends of the Library are co-sponsoring a Video Contest. All Meredith undergraduates are encouraged to enter! The first place winner will receive a cash prize of \$250 and have the video featured on the library's website! Contact Carrie Nichols for more information ([nicholsc@meredith.edu](mailto:nicholsc@meredith.edu)).

**Free Food!** Come to the Sociology/Criminology Club meetings to eat. Contact [towlehile@email.meredith.edu](mailto:towlehile@email.meredith.edu) for details.

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