

**Postgraduate Student Conference 2014, Literature & Culture Colloquium
Tuesday, 6 May 2014, “Kostis Palamas” Building**

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“Scotland and Celticism in Elizabeth Jane Oswald’s *By Fell and Fjord; Or, Scenes and Studies in Iceland*”

My presentation focuses on the travelogue *By Fell and Fjord; Or, Scenes and Studies in Iceland* penned in 1882 by Elizabeth Jane Oswald. In her travelogue, Oswald is not only intrigued by Icelandic “fells and fjords,” that is, the geological attractions with which the island is endowed. She is equally fascinated by the sagas and the reproduction of Viking imagery in her studying of Icelandic society in the nineteenth century. She identifies as the main purpose of her travel to the island the utopian (pastoral) aspect of the country as well as its unchanged character (peaceful and simple). In this paper I claim that Oswald concentrates on Iceland in order to subvert the anti-Celtic dimension of Anglo-Saxonism, the theory which occupied a prevalent position in British national discourse in the 1850s. The Anglo-Saxon theory was originally formulated to nourish the idea of England as the only centre of British culture and the perpetuation of the Celts as peripheral groups whose presence in British history should be omitted and their cultural elements eradicated. Despite the fact that racial admixture was unfavourably seen by mid- and late-Victorians, influenced by the theories on heredity and mongrel nations, Oswald does not adhere to these principles by referring to the harmonious coexistence of Celtic and Germanic attributes in the national (and physical) amalgamation of the Icelanders.