

**Department of Germanic and Romance Studies  
University of Delhi**



Source: [https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sun,\\_Sea,\\_Sand\\_And\\_Volcano.jpg](https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sun,_Sea,_Sand_And_Volcano.jpg)

**Call For Paper**

**Islands in Literature, Literary Islands, Island Literature**

**2 – 4 March 2023 (Online Mode)**

“It (adventure) is like an island in life that determines its beginning and end”.

*George Simmel*

In the literary imagination the island, a piece of land surrounded by water, (etymologically *insula* is “in” + “salt water”) is portrayed geographically and/or as a lost paradise of fantasy where morality breaks down. We have only to remember the references to phrases such as “crossing the seven seas” where “adventure is an island” (Stephen Gilman). The island has thus become metaphorical. Through this metaphor a new space in fiction has been sought to be created with a singular ethics and politics. However it bears keeping in mind that island territories were initially often ideated as sites of incarceration and have triggered an imagination and literature of outlaw ‘isolation and discipline’ centres.

Islands are a mesh of geography, fantasy, aspiration and writing. Isolational and yet relational, the use of the island motif has led to the creation of new genres over the ages. The island is a bridge between the real and the imaginary, utopias and dystopias. The diaries of Christopher Columbus from the New World were derided as rubbish by Spanish intellectuals because the writing privileged what the Europeans considered magic and fiction to articulate future truths that the kings of Spain wanted to hear, an “island of style”.

In contemporary times, islands are neither center nor periphery. Their geography gives them diverse roots. A curious melding of colonialism takes place with tradition hence they are not prone

to the binaries of post colonial thought. The Caribbean for example has been termed a sea archipelago (Antonio Benítez Rojo) with no periphery nor a Centre and whose histories, societies and cultures are connected to the whole world. Fernando Ortiz has called the culture of the island as one of transculturation because Europeans, Amerindians and Africans first met in the Caribbean. These hierarchies do not align with any time and space: they are not stuck in the past but hearken to a future of mestizaje and bricolage. The violence of colonialism is integrated with difference and has led to the creation of “polyrhythmic” societies with self contained and tough subjects where the center is incorporated with the local distant from the alienation of post colonial subjects bent on “writing back to the Center”.

In this conference we invite presentations that explore the relationship between the geography of islands with their colonial pasts and the literatures of the world.

Papers are invited but not limited to the following themes:

1. Imaginary and Metaphorical Islands in literature (Utopia, Isla Baratavia, Lilliput, etc.)
2. Island literatures of European colonialism.
3. Floating Islands /Fixed Islands of Literature.
4. Cultural identity, créolité, métissage, archipelagicity and multiculturalism.
5. Questions of displacement, belongings, roots and insularity.
6. Questions of alienation, exile and marginality of literary islands and islands of literature.
7. History and memory of cultural, ethnic, racial and class conflicts in the islands in the colonial and postcolonial times.
8. Spatial, temporal, metaphoric and political otherness of islands.

**The conference will be organised from 2 – 4 March 2023 in an online mode.**

Abstracts of not more than 300 words, that include the paper title, your academic affiliation, and contact information, must be submitted to email [grsconference2023@gmail.com](mailto:grsconference2023@gmail.com)

[Abstracts should be typed in Word file (Font size 12, Times New Roman, single spacing).]

**Last Date for submission of abstracts: 15 January 2023**

**Notification of acceptance of abstracts: 22 January 2023**

**Organising Team**

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