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CALL FOR PAPERS:

International Conference on Imaginary Homelands

8- 10 March 2018



In his essay *Imaginary Homelands* ("Imaginary Homelands" -- "Essays and Criticism 1981-1991") Salman Rushdie voices the political and cultural plight of the migrant and of the writer as an exile, migrant or expatriate in particular. The latter creates from fragments of memory, akin to the broken mirror which may actually be as valuable as the ones supposedly unflawed, an Imaginary Homeland.

If this Imaginary Homeland exists due to the migrant -- whether from one country to another, from one language or culture to another or even from a traditional rural society to a modern metropolis—then in contemporary times the idea of a homeland is increasingly becoming inhabited in imagination.

While on the sub-continent the exigencies of imperialism and capitalism rendered more than 5 million humans homeless in the first half of the twentieth century, during the same time Europe witnessed a high scale of exile and homelessness due to the fascist ideologies of the ruling regimes.

Homeland as a trope in the printed and visual text has followed trajectories that evolved in context to the notion of the nation and the nation-state since the rise of Modern Europe. Since then in Europe national boundaries have repeatedly changed, with the European Union substantively reducing the traditional significance of national boundaries and engendering a pan European identity.

However, most of the erstwhile colonies of the West, where according to Benedict Anderson the nation and nationalism developed in context to colonialism, are markedly grappling to cement the contours of the nation state and confer a national identity to their people. Both these developments, despite their differences challenge the established concepts of the homeland.

A place called home with its ideal of a fixed, rooted space is also being redefined by the waves of migration from *homeland* to *homeland* in the wake of the contemporary forms of globalization. The philosopher, Vilém Flusser, raises questions about the viability of ideas of national identity in a world whose borders are becoming increasingly arbitrary and permeable. Flusser argues that modern societies are in flux, with traditional linear epistemologies being challenged by global circulatory networks and a growth in visual stimulation. The resultant nomadism, rootlessness and homelessness further contribute to the the homeland becoming an increasingly imagined space.

The idyllic, pastoral homestead of the farmer, the bourgeois sentimental celebration of the nation, the ideologies of homeland demonising the Other and the recent habitat of humans in the virtual world, have all been articulated in the various genres of literature, film, painting, sculpture, music as well as in the theories of Space, State, Nation, Empire, Entangled Histories, Cosmopolitanism, Culture, Migration and Exile Studies.

The conference aims to provide space for a nuanced engagement with the idea of Homeland, imagined or real, from its inception to its current manifestations across multiple literary and cultural formulations.

We invite papers from various disciplines to reflect on the concept of *Imaginary Homelands*.

[Deadline for submission of abstracts (200-300 words): 15 January 2018]

The abstracts should be sent to:

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