

English abstract

Idyllic Shores: Island Narratives in Finnish Literature

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Stories about islands have often been considered a starting point for Western literature, and island narratives have long literary and historical roots stretching as far back as the adventures of Odysseus. Later island literature has developed into a genre: it has established its own motifs, themes, plots, and characters. Although many Western island stories utilize familiar myths such as the Odyssey or Robinson Crusoe, each national literature has its own cultural characteristics. This anthology is the first introduction to Finnish island narratives.

Even *Kalevala* (1849), the national epic of Finland, depicts a mythical island that is strongly influenced by Homeric epic poetry. Contemporary Finnish literature offers a rich variety of island narratives: it deals with wanderlust, wild adventures, exoticism, escapism, survival, and different kinds of individual and national struggles. These narratives are often attached to the social and political issues that range from national identity to global environmental crises.

Idyllic Shores: Island Narratives in Finnish Literature combines comparative literary studies with interdisciplinary island studies. The anthology maps the island narratives through the history of Finnish literature. The islands are approached as milieus, motifs, themes, and metaphors, and the corpus covers different literary genres: fairytales, children's fiction, adventure stories, travel narratives, satires, science fiction, realism, and poetry. The articles discuss the hopes and fears that Finnish authors have projected onto fictional and non-fictional islands. At the same time, the anthology illustrates the grand narrative of Finnish literature – that of modernization and urbanization – from a new perspective: whereas the utopias of many Finnish classics locate islands in the Finnish wilderness, contemporary works imagine islands in more dystopian and urban settings.