

## **Baltic Islands as Literary Borderlands. Concepts of the Self and Identities in Scandinavian Literature**

Islands cause uncertainty in European literary and cultural traditions: they can be imagined as destinations for either refuge or detention – or as in the case of the Robinsonade both –, as well as settings for fictional utopian or dystopian regimes, not to mention the iconic 'Fortunate Isles'. This ambivalence is closely connected to the westbound colonial expansion in the modern era.

Therefore, Literary Studies analyzed the topic of islands mainly focussing on venues in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean. Postcolonial criticism stated that those literary depictions and the geo- and ethnographical descriptions of those areas influenced one another, while depicting islands as location of the 'other'.

The PhD-Project aims to further investigate the reciprocal relationship between fiction and facts in literary texts about islands for the Baltic Sea Region. The alleged geographical closeness of these islands to the European literary public – at least those of the neighbouring countries – does not necessarily result in less imaginative potential, as e.g. recent historical research on the making of strong regional identities in the sense of imagined communities on the islands of the Baltic Sea Region shows. A central question of the thesis is how notions of islands as 'ideal' spaces for 'self'/'other'-distinctions are transferred and remodelled by literary texts.