

5 Day Symposium
Colonialism versus Imperialism through the Centuries
September 4 – 9, 2022

This engaging week-long symposium will examine the relationship between figures of paradise and the ideologies and economies of colonialism, imperialism, and global capitalism, arguing that paradise myth is the product of a value-laden discourse related to profit, labour, and exploitation of resources, both human and environmental, which evolves in response to differing material conditions and discursive agendas.

The literature of imperialism and conquest abounds with representations of colonies as potential gold-lands to be mined materially or discursively: from the El Dorado of the New World and the 'infernal paradise' of Mexico, to the 'Golden Ophir' of Africa and the 'paradise of dharma' of Ceylon. Most postcolonial analyses of paradise discourse have focused exclusively on the Caribbean or the South Pacific, failing to acknowledge the appearance of fantasies of paradise from Roman Times up to and including New World explorations and exploitations in North America (Canada, South Pacific (New Zealand) and South East Asia (Philippines)).

Discussions will include a comparative analysis of marginalized paradisaical topoi and tropes mainstream postcolonial criticism, mapping the circulations, continuities, and reconfigurations of the paradise myth as it travels across colonies, continents, empires and ideologies.