

# REVISITING POST-VIOLENCE ISLANDS IN LITERARY STUDIES:

An Interdisciplinary Critical Island Perspective

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**ABSTRACT:** This article examines how islands are represented as post-violence spaces in contemporary literary scholarship. Drawing on Critical Island Studies and employing a Narrative Literature Review (NLR), the study synthesises interdisciplinary literary research analysing island narratives in relation to violence, trauma, fear, and resistance. Rather than treating islands as neutral or isolated settings, the article conceptualises them as relational landscapes shaped by colonial structures, mobility, and global violence. Using relationality, structural and cultural violence, and trauma belatedness as analytical lenses, the synthesis identifies recurring patterns across literary contexts. The findings show that island narratives position insularity at the intersection of isolation and connectivity, where colonial domination, displacement, and repression shape spatial relations and social life. Within these conditions, fear, trauma, resistance, and healing emerge as co-present and non-linear processes embedded in memory and everyday relations. By synthesising diverse literary scholarship, the study demonstrates how archipelagic literature illuminates the persistence of violence and relational practices through which communities sustain meaning and continuity. The study highlights the value of interdisciplinary literary approaches bridging island, violence, and trauma studies.

**KEYWORDS:** post-violence islands; literary studies; critical island studies; narrative literature review; trauma and resistance.

## Introduction

Representations of islands in contemporary literary studies offer a critical lens for examining how violence, collective trauma, and global power relations shape human experience. Rather than functioning as neutral geographical settings, island spaces emerge as relational post-violence environments shaped by historical experience, mobility, and

lived social relations. Within Island Studies, islandsness have been conceptualised as a relational condition shaped by the dialectic of separation and connection, in which isolation and connectivity are historically negotiated rather than absolute spatial states (Baldacchino, 2004, 2012). From this perspective, islands are not isolated entities but parts of interconnected networks shaped by mobility, history, and power relations (Baldacchino, 2004; Grydehøj, 2017, 2023; Pugh, 2013). Archipelagic space can thus be understood as a cultural landscape shaped through ongoing land–sea interactions, where surrounding and inter-island waters are integral to island life and shape social relations, mobility, memory, and spatial meaning (Hayward, 2012, 2016). However, these relational configurations are not politically neutral, as colonial legacies and conceptual biases continue to reproduce inequality in island representation (Baldacchino, 2004; Nadarajah & Grydehøj, 2016; Nimführ & Meloni, 2021). Literary narratives register these conditions through memory and lived experience, revealing how islands are culturally produced relational spaces whose meanings are negotiated through violence, trauma, fear, resistance, and healing.

Within literary studies, islands are increasingly read as spaces that illuminate how colonialism, violence, and historical rupture structure social experience. Islands are not merely narrative backdrops but operate as sites through which domination, insecurity, and social exclusion are narrated and contested, including in contexts of migration and displacement (Bojsen, 2021; Ganapathy-Doré, 2019; Kennedy & Calleja, 2022). Historical ruptures produced by war, migration, and colonialism shape collective memory and cultural identity through narrative negotiation, particularly in the configuration of island–mainland relations and postwar memory arrangements (Andermahr, 2019; Joseph, 2020; Saji, 2025). Such ruptures also position islands as memory spaces shaping social practice and cultural perception (Hong, 2020). Across these literary readings, violence is not confined to past events but persists through memory, fear, and everyday social relations. In this article, ‘post-violence’ therefore does not denote temporal closure; rather it refers to conditions in which violence continues to operate through memory, structural arrangements, and lived relations. Despite the growing body of scholarship examining islands and violence, existing studies remain dispersed across individual texts, regional contexts, and thematic analyses, making it difficult to identify broader conceptual patterns that connect these representations across literary contexts. This fragmentation highlights the need for a systematic synthesis that brings together diverse literary studies in order to clarify how post-violence island experience is collectively constructed within contemporary scholarship.

Developments in Island Studies increasingly emphasise relationality, connectivity, and historical tension, positioning islands as historically produced systems shaped by mobility, power, and unequal relations (Baldacchino, 2004; Grydehøj, 2017; Pugh, 2013). As the field has expanded, Island Studies has become increasingly plural, without a single dominant canon, reflecting diverse disciplinary perspectives and methodological approaches (Grydehøj, 2023; Stratford, 2015). Within this evolving landscape, critical approaches have emerged that interrogate the power relations, colonial legacies, and epistemic frameworks shaping island representations (Grydehøj, 2023; Nadarajah & Grydehøj, 2016; Nimführ & Meloni, 2021). What has come to be discussed as Critical Island Studies (CIS) brings together perspectives from the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences in order to understand islands as relational spaces situated within interconnected island, archipelagic, and oceanic configurations (Campomanes, 2023). This orientation challenges essentialist representations by foregrounding island knowledge as historically situated and politically shaped, while emphasising how isolation, objectification, and inequality are reproduced

through dominant epistemic frameworks (Nadarajah et al., 2022; Nadarajah & Grydehøj, 2016; Nimführ & Meloni, 2021; Stratford, 2015). Within this critical orientation, islands are approached as sites where representation, historical experience, and structural relations remain subject to negotiation.

This study draws on Édouard Glissant's poetics of relation to conceptualise island relations as dynamic and non-final processes through which history, memory, and power are negotiated (Glissant, 2010). In parallel, Critical Island Studies emphasises plural and relational readings of island spaces, foregrounding how domination, resistance, and historical entanglement shape island experience (Bojsen, 2021; Grydehøj, 2023; Nadarajah & Grydehøj, 2016). Relationality therefore situates islands within ongoing negotiations among history, memory, and power rather than within fixed spatial or temporal boundaries. Violence and trauma are examined through the theoretical contributions of Galtung and Caruth. Galtung's distinction between direct, structural, and cultural violence highlights how cultural violence helps legitimise harm through enduring social arrangements (Galtung, 1990). Caruth conceptualises trauma as a belated experience that returns through repetition and narrative (Caruth, 1991). In island contexts, colonial violence, forced displacement, and repression sediment into space and everyday relations, positioning islands as post-violence environments where trauma persists as a social and relational condition (Hong, 2020; Ritumban, 2024). Together, these frameworks enable an understanding of post-violence island experience as historically embedded and continuously renegotiated.

Methodologically, this study employs a Narrative Literature Review (NLR) to synthesise interdisciplinary literary scholarship on islands, violence, fear, trauma, and resistance. It also examines how post-violence island experiences are conceptualised across literary representations and related interdisciplinary research. NLR functions as an interpretive strategy that identifies recurring conceptual patterns across studies rather than producing statistical generalisation (Green et al., 2006; Snyder, 2019). In this study, published literary research articles and a small number of relevant book chapters are treated as conceptual data, while theoretical works provide the primary analytical framework, enabling comparative interpretation across Island Studies, literary criticism, and post-violence scholarship. Sources were identified through targeted searches in Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and specialised peer-reviewed journals in island studies using combinations of keywords including "island studies," "island literature," "island fiction," "violence," "terror/fear," "trauma," and "resistance." The review includes primarily peer-reviewed journal articles and a few relevant book chapters, all published in English between 2015 and 2025. These sources analyse literary works across regions and genres (novel, short story, poetry, and play) situated in island or archipelagic settings and explicitly engage with themes of violence, trauma, fear, or resistance, with the discussed literary texts spanning both classical and contemporary works. A limited number of earlier articles were also included when they were considered foundational to the development of these analytical approaches. Studies discussing islands primarily as geographical or environmental contexts without analysing literary representation were excluded. In total, 47 studies met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final synthesis. Screening proceeded in stages, beginning with abstract review and followed by targeted examination of relevant analytical sections. Guided by purposive criteria and refined through iterative screening, the selected studies were synthesised thematically into five analytical clusters corresponding to the article's five sections. Through comparative and cross-textual reading,

the review develops a coherent analytical framework connecting diverse strands of scholarship on post-violence archipelagic experience.

This study examines how islands are represented as post-violence spaces through an interdisciplinary synthesis grounded in Critical Island Studies, violence studies, and trauma theory. Its contribution lies in integrating relationality, structural violence, and trauma belatedness to interpret islands as spaces in which memory, fear, resistance, and healing are negotiated as ongoing and non-final processes. By bringing together diverse literary studies that are often discussed separately, this synthesis clarifies how post-violence island experience is structured through interconnected processes of violence, memory, fear, and relational response. Through this integrative perspective, the study provides a broader conceptual understanding of how literary narratives collectively construct island spaces as environments shaped by enduring violence, historical memory, and relational responses to insecurity. In this framework, island space is approached as a relational field shaped by historical wounds, structural inequalities, and narrative practices that connect violence, memory, and social relations. The Findings and Discussion section is organised into five analytical sections: (1) Islands between Isolation and Connectivity, (2) Islands under the Shadow of Colonial Structures and Global Violence, (3) Islands under Regimes of Fear and Insecurity, (4) Islands as Spaces of Trauma, and (5) Islands as Spaces of Resistance and Healing. Together, these sections trace how post-violence island experience unfolds across interconnected yet analytically distinct dimensions.

## I. Islands Between Isolation and Connectivity

Across the reviewed studies, island narratives frame insular space as shaped by historical processes, mobility, and lived experience, positioning relationality as the primary condition through which island space becomes intelligible. Within Island Studies, islands are increasingly understood as relational spaces shaped by mobility and historical connection, with archipelagic thinking emphasising island-island relations over island-mainland binaries (Baldacchino, 2004; Bojsen, 2021; Stratford, 2015). In literary analysis, archipelagic approaches reinforce this relational framing by rejecting colonial imaginaries of islands as empty or isolated and emphasising their historical and imaginative embeddedness (Nadarajah et al., 2022; Redd, 2017). Islands are thus understood as relational formations continually produced through shifting historical and spatial negotiations.

Building on this framework, literary narratives depict island relations as dynamic formations shaped by mobility, temporality, and imaginative connection. These relations unfold through movement, recurring temporalities, and relational imagination, positioning islandness as a dynamic and heterogeneous structure of connectivity, as explored in Tang's *Port of Lies* (2021), Wang Ji's *Xiyi Meng* ('Chentuan's Dream') (1994), and Campos' *The Fear of Losing Eurydice* (1993) (Feng, 2025; Lu, 2025; Redd, 2017). Connectivity is further articulated as an embodied and epistemic relation grounded in island-sea interfaces, where water and everyday practice structure lived archipelagic space in *Port of Lies* and Joseph's *Aathi* ('Gift in Green') (2011) (James & M, 2024; Lu, 2025). Literary analyses show that island narratives situate islands within broader historical and political networks rather than as isolated settings, connecting insular space to colonial history and Indian Ocean mobility networks linking East Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, as illustrated in readings of Fugard, Kani and Ntshona's *The Island* (1973), Coetzee's *Foe* (1986) and Gurnah's *By the Sea* (2001) (Allahyari, 2024; Harris, 2018; Kirui, 2025). In literary narratives, islands function as active

narrative logics that mobilise relations and spatial meaning (Redd, 2017). This perspective highlights how island crime fiction generates decentralised viewpoints and foregrounds archipelagic connections across insular spaces (Sitbon, 2025). Within this framework, islands emerge as interconnected nodes linked to other spaces through overlapping perceptions, practices, and histories (Bojsen, 2021; Reyes & Gomez, 2024). Island identity, accordingly, appears as an ongoing process, not a fixed state (Glissant, 2010). Taken together, these perspectives establish relationality as the key lens through which isolation and connectivity are understood as historically produced and contested conditions.

A recurring pattern shows that inter-island relations are shaped by enduring structures of power and inequality. Constructions of insular isolation are repeatedly shown to rely on hidden systems of domination that regulate spatial relations and human movement. Island connectivity emerges through performative movement and narrative circulation, while islandness is discursively produced through representational acts that configure isolation and connection, as represented in the Japanese *Heike Monogatari* ('The Tale of the Heike') (Sadler, 1921), *Chikubu-shima* (1897), Doyle's 'The Train' (2003), and Aksyonov's *The Island of Crimea* (1983) (Johnson, 2022; Lucchitti, 2013; Maus, 2019). This pattern is illustrated through colonial imaginaries of isolation sustained by trade networks and utopian or dystopian fantasies in Defoe's canonical *Robinson Crusoe* books (Reddeman, 2023; Su et al., 2022). Comparable mechanisms appear in analyses emphasising how domination operates quietly yet systematically through everyday regulation of space (Ganapathy-Doré, 2019; Nadarajah & Grydehøj, 2016). Within this configuration, everyday oppression severs human attachment to insular environments, as exemplified in readings of Gunesequera's *Heaven's Edge* (2002) (Lauret-Taft, 2016). Across these converging analyses, isolation emerges not as a natural or geographical given, but as an outcome of power and discursive framing that organises separation, surveillance, and spatial restriction, while obscuring lived island experience and inter-island connectivity (Kopaka, 2019; Nadarajah et al., 2022; Nadarajah & Grydehøj, 2016; Redd, 2017; Stratford, 2015). Isolation therefore operates less as a spatial fact than as a political mechanism shaping mobility, belonging, and social relations.

Island connectivity is likewise represented as historically entangled with colonial power, not as a neutral condition of openness. Studies emphasise that relations between land, sea, and empire render modern insularity a hybrid formation shaped by shifting spatial logics (Dautel & Schödel, 2017). This dynamic appears in depictions of epistemic boundaries structured through center-periphery relations in analyses of Eco's *The Island of the Day Before* (1995) (Dautel & Schödel, 2017). Similar entanglements emerge in representations of Caribbean shores as sites of colonial trade and survival, where mobility operates alongside domination (Bojsen, 2021). Historical readings of the islands of Jeju and Okinawa, together with analyses of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* trilogy (2007, 2018, 2022), further demonstrate that geographical isolation is produced through forced mobility and imperial governance instead of physical remoteness alone (Cho & Oh, 2024; Reddeman, 2023; Ryang, 2013). These findings show that connectivity does not dissolve asymmetrical power relations but instead reproduces colonial inequality.

Migration and diaspora studies add another layer by showing how island connectivity is marked by encounters among identity, historical wounds, and solidarity. Mobility in these narratives links local experience to regional and global trajectories, revealing tensions between belonging and exclusion. Hopkinson's *The New Moon's Arms* (2007) shows that sea crossings connect Caribbean island life to diasporic histories shaped by colonial migration and memory (Davis, 2021). Similar dynamics emerge in analyses of Caribbean

migration and racialised rejection in Levy's *Small Island* (2004) (Andermahr, 2019), as well as in cross-island relations mediated through letters, recordings, and myth in Bobis's *Fish-Hair Woman* (2012) (Lee, 2023). Comparable patterns of mobility and connection extend across island narratives such as Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004), Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004), Owuor's *The Dragonfly Sea* (2019), Shafak's *The Island of Missing Trees* (2021) and *By the Sea*, linking local histories to wider worlds and longer histories of oceanic mobility shaping island-diaspora relations (Allahyari, 2024; Kabir & Raimondi, 2024; Laheg, 2024; Lauret-Taft, 2016; Schmitz, 2018; Serra, 2017). Epistemological and textual movement across island-mainland boundaries is further highlighted in Behrendt's *After Story* (2021) (Charon & Lehartel, 2023). Across these studies, mobility emerges not simply as spatial circulation but as a relational process through which meanings, memories, and identities are continually reworked.

Another prominent pattern shows that islands function as archives of memory that retain traces of colonial violence and trauma. This dynamic is especially visible in narratives of historical silencing, where state power suppresses public remembrance, as seen in studies of the Jeju tragedy (Ritumban, 2024; Ryang, 2013). Literary interventions by Oceania writers reclaim insular space as a site for sustaining memory and challenging colonial erasure (Kennedy & Calleja, 2022). Transgenerational memory further surfaces through symbolic figures and narrative strategies in *The Island of Missing Trees* and Spitz's *L'île des rêves écrasés* ('Island of Shattered Dreams') (2007), which renegotiate inherited knowledge within colonial boundaries (Charon & Lehartel, 2023; Laheg, 2024). Readings of Kim's 'Death of a crow' (1988) and Lee's *Haenyeo* (1988) further position Jeju as a site where historical narratives and collective memory are densely accumulated and sustained (Reyes & Gomez, 2024). Island memory therefore operates not as a static repository of the past but as an active field where history, power, and identity are continually renegotiated.

Overall, the findings in this section demonstrate that isolation and connectivity operate as a constitutive tension within island narratives, inseparable from power, mobility, and memory. Relations among islands are neither static nor harmonious but unfold through histories of domination, human movement, and contested meanings of space. Relationality clarifies connectivity as an open and layered process (Bojsen, 2021; Glissant, 2010), while structural violence exposes the inequalities embedded within spatial arrangements and mobility (Galtung, 1990). Trauma ensures that historical wounds persist through narrative repetition, shaping how islands are experienced and remembered over time (Caruth, 1991). Island space therefore emerges as a relational formation produced through intersecting histories of movement, power, and memory. In this way, this section establishes a conceptual foundation in which island space is understood as relationally produced, enabling subsequent sections to examine how these relations are structured by violence, lived as insecurity, internalised as trauma, and reworked through practices of resistance and healing in post-violence island experience.

## II. Islands under the Shadow of Colonial Structures and Global Violence

Literary studies consistently frame islands as spaces shaped by enduring colonial domination and global violence, treating these forces as structuring conditions rather than historical backdrops. Rather than neutral settings, islands emerge as sites where histories of conquest, war, and power persist, shaping spatial practice, memory, and belonging. Appanah's *Tropique de la violence* (2016, 2018) portrays the island as a postcolonial space shaped by migration, state neglect, and colonial legacies that produce structural violence

and social marginalisation (Ganapathy-Doré, 2019). These histories continue to organise contemporary conditions of insular life. This pattern is visible in island crime narratives such as Bolton's *Sacrifice* (2008), where insularity intensifies conflict within bounded communities (Crane & Fletcher, 2016). Comparable configurations of violence also surface in studies of racialised brutality in Tasmania and state repression on Jeju, including analyses of Graves's *Exile: A Tale of old Tasmania* (1947) and Kim's *Kazanto/Hwasando* (Volcano Island) (1983), which foreground the systematic silencing of insular communities (Ryang, 2013; Turner, 2019). Collectively, these studies frame insularity as a historical condition through which power shapes social relations and collective memory.

A further pattern in the literature emphasises colonialism as a structuring force that regulates territory, mobility, and knowledge simultaneously. This literary scholarship demonstrates that islands operate as spaces of structural violence produced by state power, global capital, and empire, where law, development, and forced mobility organise insular life across land-sea assemblages through logics of extraction, repression, and the normalisation of violence, as reflected in *Port of Lies*, *Aathi*, *Xiyi Meng* and *The New Moon's Arms* (Davis, 2021; Feng, 2025; James & M, 2024; Lu, 2025). Across island texts, colonial power appears as an ordering logic that shapes how space is accessed, governed, and understood (Dautel & Schödel, 2017; Ganapathy-Doré, 2019; Nadarajah & Grydehøj, 2016). Control over mobility and knowledge becomes inseparable from spatial control, revealing colonial domination as an everyday practice rather than solely formal authority. This logic is evident in analyses of Mitchell's *The Thousand Autumns of Jacob de Zoet* (2010), which depict insular life as enclosed within hierarchical colonial arrangements (Schmitz, 2018), a configuration echoed in broader discussions of archipelagic memory and colonial space (Kabir & Raimondi, 2024). Similar epistemic boundaries structure island experience in readings of *Heaven's Edge* and *The Island of the Day Before*, where islands function as sites through which Western knowledge systems assert authority (Dautel & Schödel, 2017; Lauret-Taft, 2016). Within this configuration, colonialism operates as a spatial-epistemic regime governing territory, mobility, and the legitimacy of knowledge.

Colonial domination in island narratives also materialises through sustained interventions in bodies, land, language, and identity, embedding power within everyday social relations. Literary readings depict islands as spaces shaped by colonial domination and political conflict, where dispossession, settler expansion, and colonial boundary-making transform maritime mobility into regulated territorial regimes, restructuring island societies, as illustrated in analyses of *By the Sea* and Dick's *Wild Orchard* (1946) (Allahyari, 2024; Farooqi & Jamil, 2022; Hand, 2010; Turner, 2019). Colonial narratives frame islands as isolated, utopian, and peripheral spaces, a conception destabilised through archipelagic relationality and emancipatory cartographies in *The Fear of Losing Eurydice* (Redd, 2017). These epistemic operations extend into material social relations, as studies consistently show that racial hierarchy, land dispossession, and identity manipulation are central mechanisms through which colonial power reshapes insular societies. These dynamics appear in analyses of constrained Caribbean mobility in *Small Island* (Andermahr, 2019) and in representations of dispossession and linguistic coercion directed at Indigenous communities in Winch's *The Yield* (2019) (Charon & Lehartel, 2023). Historical violence continues to structure island life in *The Island of Missing Trees*, where civil conflict shapes intergenerational relations (Laheg, 2024). Early colonial imaginaries tied to forced labour and the slave trade are traced through the *Robinson Crusoe* trilogy (Reddeman, 2023), while bodily and identity manipulation recur in Glissant's *La Lézarde* ('The Ripening') (1958) and Wells' *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (2005) (Bojsen, 2021; Su et al., 2022). Similar colonial logics extend to representations of Sardinia as a space requiring "domestication" in

Munster's *Die Sardische Hirtin* ('The Sardinian Shepherdess') (1960) (Serra, 2017). Collectively, these narratives frame colonialism as a spatial-epistemic force that reorganises insular identity, social relations, and everyday life.

Global violence further intensifies colonial legacies by introducing war, militarisation, and forced migration into island experience. Nationalism and mainland power operate as modalities of global violence that frame islands as sites of forced integration and legitimise domination across island-mainland waters, as reflected in Tolstoy's 'Sebastopol Sketches' (1986), *The Island of Crimea* and Egan's 'The Great Basket' (1996) (Lucchitti, 2013; Maus, 2019). Literary studies depict islands as sites of colonial and state violence organised through imprisonment, surveillance, and forced displacement, as illustrated in *The Island*, Khan's *The Miraculous True History of Nomi Ali* (2020), the political prison of Ryan's *Green Island* (2016), Zwelonke's *Robben Island* (1973), *Foe* and *By the Sea*, where post-revolutionary detention and island prisons function as mechanisms of state control, entangling insular life with wider structures of political violence and inequality (Alexoae-Zagni, 2022; Harris, 2018; Kharoua, 2016; Olusegun-Joseph, 2025; Rickel, 2018; Schweiger, 2023; Shahzad, 2023). Literary studies further demonstrate that islands frequently become sites where military power and state violence leave deep and lasting scars (Lee, 2023; Ryang, 2013). War and militarisation do not simply disrupt island life but reorganise it around insecurity and control. Such reorganisation is reflected in narratives of displacement and social collapse. The destruction of community life under conditions of "total war" is depicted in *Fish-Hair Woman* (Lee, 2023). State repression is again documented in *Kazanto* (Volcano Island), reinforcing Jeju as a recurring locus of colonial and postcolonial violence (Ryang, 2013). The collapse of social order appears in Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (2001), aligning island dystopia with broader critiques of power (Su et al., 2022; Xiao & Chen, 2022). Japanese colonial hierarchies surface in Kim's *Okinawa Spy* (2024), while technological and environmental threats shape island life in Hyun's 'Dead Silence' (2017) (Cho & Oh, 2024; Reyes & Gomez, 2024; Ritumban, 2024). Across these representations, global violence is normalised as an enduring condition of insular life.

Memory and trauma emerge as central dimensions through which colonial and global violence are negotiated in island narratives. Past violence repeatedly resurfaces across generations, with narrative functioning as a medium through which trauma returns belatedly and persistently (Caruth, 1991; Hong, 2020; Kennedy & Calleja, 2022). This recurrence indicates that violence is not resolved through temporal distance but continues to shape how islands are lived and understood. Across different regional contexts, contemporary Oceania novels present the island as an archive of colonial trauma, while other studies show how emotional archiving enables shared life to persist alongside unresolved suffering (Hong, 2020; Kennedy & Calleja, 2022). In Southeast Asia, expulsion and displacement are rendered in Ferrer's 'Pablo and the Zebra' (2017), foregrounding the traumatic erasure of insular communities (Ritumban, 2024). War trauma and suppressed remembrance also shape representations in *The Island of Missing Trees* and Jeju narratives such as 'Death of a Crow' and *Haenyeo* (Laheg, 2024; Reyes & Gomez, 2024). Similar traces of colonial memory persist in *Heaven's Edge* and *Small Island*, confirming that memory actively mediates human relations to island space (Andermahr, 2019; Lauret-Taft, 2016). Insularity thus appears as a temporal landscape where violence persists through memory rather than historical closure.

In sum, island spaces are shaped by the ongoing entanglement of colonial structures, global violence, and intergenerational trauma. Read across the reviewed literary contexts, post-

violence island experience emerges not as a discrete aftermath, but as a relational condition produced through enduring colonial power, militarised governance, and mnemonic persistence. While saturated by domination and loss, islands remain sites where memory, relation, and ethical response continue to be negotiated. Read integratively, island experience is inseparable from colonial legacies that persist as forms of structural violence sustaining inequality (Galtung, 1990), while trauma returns through narrative within relational histories of conquest (Caruth, 1991; Glissant, 2010). Islands under the shadow of colonial and global violence therefore appear not as passive victims but as dynamic sites where violence settles into everyday life as fear, insecurity, and systems of control, shaping island life after violence rather than marking its closure.

### III. Islands under Regimes of Fear and Insecurity

This section focuses on how regimes of fear and insecurity structure island life after violence. The discussion examines how surveillance, militarisation, and political control generate atmospheres of fear that reorganise everyday life in island spaces. Rather than insulated settings, islands are portrayed as environments marked by fear, restricted movement, and surveillance (Cho & Oh, 2024; Lee, 2023; Ritumban, 2024). Fear does not merely accompany island life but reorganises everyday relations as a governing condition. Across these studies, threat and insecurity emerge not as natural attributes but as outcomes of systemic power that regulate mobility and perception. Read through structural violence and relationality, island fear is embedded within networks of power and trans-spatial memory (Galtung, 1990; Glissant, 2010). Within this configuration, fear operates as an enduring atmosphere that shapes how insular space is inhabited, remembered, and interpreted.

Island narratives further demonstrate how fear structures everyday life as a persistent governing atmosphere. State violence and postwar insecurity restrict community movement in *Heaven's Edge*, where threat becomes a lasting feature of insular existence (Lauret-Taft, 2016). Across literary contexts, archipelagic space under regimes of fear operates as a structure of control regulating mobility through isolation, surveillance, development, and political pressure, thereby normalising vulnerability, as reflected in *Port of Lies*, *Aathi*, *Xiyi Meng* and *The Island of Crimea* (Feng, 2025; James & M, 2024; Lu, 2025; Maus, 2019). Fear replaces stability as the organising principle of daily relations, recasting ordinary space into a site of anticipation. This condition is reinforced in readings that describe the island as being “in a state of terror,” indicating that fear functions as a regulatory structure rather than a temporary response (Lauret-Taft, 2016). Similar patterns appear in Mitchell's *Ghostwritten* (1999), where fascination and danger transform the island into a space of exile and moral corrosion (Schmitz, 2018). In Ewan's *Dark Tides* (2014), geographic isolation intensifies psychological manipulation and criminal threat, amplifying vulnerability (Crane & Fletcher, 2016). Together, these texts show that fear functions as a governing logic reshaping social relations, moral judgment, and belonging within island life.

Historical and colonial violence continue to shape depictions of islands as sites of conflict and repression. Crime fiction such as the *Albiana Nera* series (2004) frames the island as a liminal space marked by unstable security and political tensions (Sitbon, 2025). This instability signals the persistence of colonial violence in transformed forms. Military terror and institutional erasure envelop the island in representations of Jeju in *Kazanto* and 'Dead

Silence', where violence structures collective life (Ritumban, 2024; Ryang, 2013). Wartime paranoia and colonial hierarchy dominate *Okinawa Spy*, turning everyday relations into practices of surveillance (Cho & Oh, 2024). Similar tensions between power and communal survival appear in Wright's novel *Carpentaria* (Su et al., 2022). The escalation of collective violence in *Lord of the Flies* culminates in the destruction of the island itself, marking the collapse of moral order (Xiao & Chen, 2022). Earlier imaginaries of insular autonomy in *Robinson Crusoe* likewise reveal regimes of control beneath the promise of isolation (Reddeman, 2023). Across these narratives, fear emerges as a historical inheritance linking past violence to present insecurity.

Another prominent pattern depicts islands as spaces of surveillance and detention shaped by persistent colonial logics. Literary studies depict islands as spaces governed by regimes of fear organised through surveillance, imprisonment, and restricted mobility, as illustrated in *The Island*, *Green Island*, *Exile: A tale of old Tasmania*, *By the Sea* and *The Miraculous True History of Nomi Ali*, where island life is shaped by detention and political insecurity (Alexoae-Zagni, 2022; Harris, 2018; Kirui, 2025; Olusegun-Joseph, 2025; Shahzad, 2023; Turner, 2019). At the level of everyday experience, this regime of fear is lived through stalled movement, abandonment, and normalised vulnerability across maritime horizons, as reflected in 'The Great Basket' and *The Fear of Losing Eurydice* (Lucchitti, 2013; Redd, 2017). In Boochani's *No Friend but the Mountains* (2018), Manus island is rendered as a landscape of imprisonment within Australia's offshore detention regime (Kennedy & Calleja, 2022). Here, the island functions as a spatial instrument for governing fear through exclusion. Militarised and technologically regulated archipelagos also emerge in *L'île des rêves écrasés*, where power operates through constant monitoring (Charon & Lehartel, 2023). The island as a node of political and criminal threat recurs in Siger's *Target Tinos* (2012) and the *Albiana Nera* series (Crane, 2019; Sitbon, 2025), while forced mobility further intensifies vulnerability in Glissant's *Tout-Monde* (1993) (Bojsen, 2021). These representations reveal how islands internalise confinement and surveillance as routine spatial practices. Surveillance thus emerges not as an exceptional measure but as an ordinary condition of island life under regimes of fear and insecurity.

Across the narratives reviewed here, islands under regimes of fear and insecurity emerge as sites where violence, surveillance, and uncertainty are normalised within everyday life. While domination constrains mobility and erodes social trust, literary accounts also register ongoing efforts to sustain relation, memory, and ethical response under pressure. Structural violence clarifies how insecurity becomes ordinary (Galtung, 1990), trauma endures as latent memory (Caruth, 1991), and relationality persists as a fragile yet vital space for meaning-making amid threat (Glissant, 2010). Read across these contexts, fear does not mark an endpoint or exceptional crisis, but functions as a governing condition through which violence is internalised, embodied, and carried forward within island regimes of fear and insecurity.

#### IV. Islands as Spaces of Trauma

Trauma emerges as a key lens for understanding how violence is internalised within archipelagic space. Across the reviewed studies, archipelagic spaces are framed as sites that retain traces of violence, loss, and unresolved memory. Trauma in these representations is consistently linked to colonial histories, forced migration, state repression, and social hierarchies that structure relations to space and time (Andermahr, 2019; Hong, 2020; Kennedy & Calleja, 2022; Ritumban, 2024; Ryang, 2013). Within this framework, trauma

functions as a spatial and relational condition through which island life is experienced, remembered, and transmitted across generations.

A prominent pattern shows that islands are depicted as spaces where violence is concealed, normalised, or rendered unspeakable by state power. The silencing of the Jeju tragedy in *Kazanto* transforms the island into a landscape of muted suffering (Ryang, 2013), a dynamic echoed in *Heaven's Edge*, where natural settings become quiet witnesses to everyday oppression (Lauret-Taft, 2016). Recurrent wounds surface across generations in *Kazanto*, 'Dead Silence' and 'Pablo and the Zebra', which depict mass execution, displacement, and repression as unresolved scars (Ritumban, 2024; Ryang, 2013). Comparable traces of collective violence appear in *Wild Orchard* (2019), while militarised landscapes and marginalisation shape trauma in Fritsche's *Die Rückkehr* ('The Return') (2011) and *Carpentaria* (Serra, 2017; Su et al., 2022). Across these narratives, trauma emerges through the absence of recognition, as silence perpetuates rather than resolves historical violence.

Trauma also emerges through loss, displacement, and unstable memory in archipelagic narratives. Across these studies, forced migration and colonial displacement show how trauma continues beyond physical departure. Island spaces, meanwhile, retain traces of loss that sediment into collective memory (Hong, 2020). In colonial contexts, *Robinson Crusoe* reveals a logic of simultaneous visibility and concealment that allows racial violence to persist while remaining obscured (Reddeman, 2023). Literary representations portray islands as spaces where colonial violence produces vulnerability and bodily suffering: insecurity shapes insular life in *Wild Orchard* and *Exile: A Tale of Old Tasmania*, while carceral islands such as Andaman Island in *The Miraculous True History of Nomi Ali* and Robben Island in *The Island* expose prisoners to chains, forced labour, racial violence, and psychological suffering (Harris, 2018; Olusegun-Joseph, 2025; Shahzad, 2023; Turner, 2019). Melancholic landscapes and peripheral lives in Sardinia and Tasmania further embed historical wounds within insular space (Serra, 2017; Turner, 2019), while identity tensions surface in *Okinawa Spy* and *Fish-Hair Woman* (Cho & Oh, 2024; Dautel & Schödel, 2017; Lee, 2023). Rather than resolving trauma, mobility redistributes it, turning movement itself into a carrier of unresolved loss across colonial, carceral, and diasporic contexts.

Post-terror trauma in island narratives reveals how memory and psychological experience are shaped by recurring violence. In *Fish-Hair Woman*, inter-island empathy transforms the protagonist into a keeper of grief and wartime memory, linking trauma to relational responsibility (Lee, 2023). Trauma here is sustained through ethical obligation rather than narrative closure. Comparable patterns of inherited trauma across generations appear in *Small Island* and *The Island of Missing Trees* (Andermahr, 2019; Laheg, 2024). Across these narratives, fear and violence travel with displaced subjects, embedding trauma within diasporic memory and relational identity.

Another recurring configuration further shows that trauma is inscribed not only in memory but also on bodies and landscapes, turning island space into a living archive where personal suffering, political violence, and historical memory intersect. Read across these works, island space emerges as an archive of unresolved trauma, where colonial violence and displacement bind past and present within spatial memory, as reflected in *The New Moon's Arms*, *Xiyi Meng*, O'Callaghan's 'The Great Basket' (1991), 'The Train' and *The Fear of Losing Eurydice* (Davis, 2021; Feng, 2025; Lucchitti, 2013; Redd, 2017). Trauma also persists through memory and displacement: political conflict shapes identity and exile in *By the Sea*, where the retelling of memories sustains connections to a lost homeland and fragmented diasporic identities, while *Green Island* presents political imprisonment as

collective memory transmitting trauma across generations (Alexoae-Zagni, 2022; Farooqi & Jamil, 2022; Goddard & Goddard, 2022; Khelil & Al-Shetawi, 2025; Rickel, 2018). In *Fish-Hair Woman*, the endlessly growing hair materialises wartime violence (Lee, 2023), while other studies describe landscapes that absorb and constrain memory, shaping perception and movement (Schmitz, 2018). Psychological pressure intensifies in O’Flaherty’s *Skerrett* (1988) and Sjon’s *From the Mouth of the Whale* (2011), where silence and separation deepen mental strain (Mastronardo, 2024). Bodily and environmental wounds surface in *Tout-Monde*, *La Lézarde*, *Kazanto* and *The Island of Missing Trees*, linking injury, landscape, and family memory across generations (Bojsen, 2021; Laheg, 2024; Ryang, 2013). In this way, boundaries between personal suffering and collective historical violence dissolve, positioning island space as a shared archive where trauma is lived, remembered, and transmitted across generations and diasporic movements.

Archipelagic trauma further circulates across generations through family and communal memory. Across these narratives, trauma is rendered as an embodied and normalised condition produced by structural exploitation and social erasure, in which violence settles into bodies, forms of labour, and everyday life—often unfolding across watery margins—as illustrated in *Port of Lies* and ‘Sebastopol Sketches’ (James & M, 2024; Lu, 2025; Maus, 2019). Colonial legacies shaping diasporic life are foregrounded in *Small Island* (Andermahr, 2019), while intergenerational wounds shape identity in *The Island of Missing Trees* and Janke’s *Butterfly Song* (2005), where land loss and silenced histories continue to shape women’s lives (Laheg, 2024; Su et al., 2022). Jeju’s representation as a reservoir of historical narratives and memories in ‘Death of a Crow’ and *Haenyeo* underscores trauma’s persistence within insular memory and diaspora (Reyes & Gomez, 2024), while *Carpentaria* reinforces the entanglement of land, community, and violence (Su et al., 2022). Memory work in *The Yield* and *After Story* further positions remembrance as a means of confronting inherited wounds (Charon & Lehartel, 2023). Collectively, trauma appears as a relational inheritance through which island space, memory, and social life remain entangled with unresolved histories of violence.

Across these analyses, trauma emerges as a foundational condition of archipelagic experience, rather than merely a residual effect of past violence. While wounds remain unresolved and recur through memory, body, landscape, and displacement, relational connections continue to shape how trauma is lived, negotiated, and transmitted. Structural violence accounts for how harm settles into enduring inequality (Galtung, 1990), trauma persists through belated return (Caruth, 1991), and relationality sustains continuity without erasing suffering (Glissant, 2010). Within island space shaped by enduring violence, trauma persists as a lived, relational, and spatial condition rather than a closed historical aftermath.

## V. Islands as Spaces of Resistance and Healing

Islands in post-violence literature are represented as relational spaces where resistance and healing are negotiated within damaged social landscapes. Across the literature, resistance emerges through ethical, cultural, and relational practices that refuse the normalisation of structural and cultural violence shaping island life after conflict (Galtung, 1990). Within this framework, relationality foregrounds how islands enable forms of connectedness that resist isolation and sustain social life under conditions of loss and constraint (Glissant, 2010). Resistance and healing are framed as practices embedded in everyday relations, memory work, and shared vulnerability, rather than as exceptional moments outside

violence. This framing shifts post-violence agency away from heroic rupture toward sustained ethical negotiation, where the capacity to remain in relation becomes central to how islands imagine recovery after violence.

Awareness of historical wounds in island literature frequently generates resistance grounded in empathy and relational solidarity, acknowledging the persistence of violence while sustaining human connection under conditions of constraint and historical silencing. Amid layered fear, several narratives foreground solidarity as a vital response to dehumanisation, where collective memory safeguards dignity and nearly erased histories in representations of Jeju and Calauit (Ritumban, 2024). Post-violence resistance appears as a sustained relational practice in which inter-island connectivity mediated by the sea supports remembering, endurance, and fragile recovery, as shown in *Port of Lies* and *Aathi* (James & M, 2024; Lu, 2025). Solidarity does not remove fear but interrupts its isolating effects, and viewed relationally, human connection emerges as an ethical response to shared violence (Glissant, 2010). Acts of care and attentive listening in *Fish-Hair Woman* illustrate how empathy opens space for recovery while also creating networks of solidarity that resist isolation (Caruth, 1991; Lee, 2023). Similar gestures in 'Dead Silence' and 'Pablo and the Zebra' recover voices marginalised by state power (Ritumban, 2024), while interconnected voices in *Tout-Monde* articulate resistance through relation instead of confrontation (Bojsen, 2021). Inter-island solidarity is further articulated in Walcott's *Omeros* (1990), where wounded relations are re-signified through shared history and connection (Pugh, 2013). In these narratives, resistance takes shape as relational labour that sustains survival and dignity, while relational bonds sustain social continuity without denying persistent threat, positioning solidarity as an ethical mode of relation grounded in shared memory and care rather than resolution.

A recurring pattern shows that archipelagic resistance operates through sustained cultural and epistemic acts. Across these readings, literary works critique inherited meanings and dominant narratives, reimagining island space as relational and unsettled rather than fixed or owned, as seen in 'Sebastopol Sketches', *The Island of Crimea* and *The Fear of Losing Eurydice* (Maus, 2019; Redd, 2017). Practices such as marronage position island landscapes as spaces of refuge where colonial relations are renegotiated instead of overturned (Bojsen, 2021). Similarly, multilingual and minoritised language practices sustain local voices and reinforce identity-based solidarities against epistemic domination (Sitbon, 2025). Indigenous and postcolonial writing further challenges colonial knowledge systems by restoring suppressed histories and communal memory, as seen in *L'île des rêves écrasés*, *The Yield* and *After Story* (Charon & Lehartel, 2023). Re-readings of *Robinson Crusoe* also function as epistemic resistance by exposing concealed colonial violence embedded in canonical narratives (Reddeman, 2023). In these studies, resistance reworks meaning, memory, and authority from within inherited textual and cultural forms. Such resistance accumulates through repetition and ethical persistence, not through decisive political rupture.

Affective and imaginative strategies further shape resistance by creating alternative spaces of survival. Island narratives portray resistance through everyday practices that sustain dignity under oppression, revealing how relational practices enable survival within constrained island spaces: in *By the Sea*, solidarity and strategic silence function as forms of agency (Farooqi & Jamil, 2022), while *Robben Island* and *The Miraculous True History of Nomi Ali* depict imprisoned communities sustaining identity and resistance through shared awareness, communication, and emotional bonds in confinement (Olusegun-Joseph, 2025;

Shahzad, 2023). Across these texts, healing in island spaces is framed as an ongoing and relational process rather than a final resolution, where sanctuary, cultural meaning, and affective continuity emerge through ritual expression, sonic and symbolic mediation, and interconnected land–water relations, as reflected in Ni Chinneide’s ‘An Blascaod Mór/The Great Blasket’, *Heike Monogatari*, *Xiyi Meng* and ‘Sebastopol Sketches’ (Feng, 2025; Johnson, 2022; Lucchitti, 2013; Maus, 2019). In *Heaven’s Edge* narrative imagination provides refuge from state repression, allowing inner life to persist where physical mobility is constrained (Lauret-Taft, 2016). Comparable dynamics appear in Force’s *Maid for Love* (2011), where small island communities rebuild meaning amid social and political marginalisation (Crane & Fletcher, 2016). Reinterpretations of land and relational imaginaries in *Carpentaria* enable communities to challenge and transform inherited colonial frameworks through decolonial practices (Su et al., 2022). Here, imagination functions as affective labour that sustains dignity, continuity, and belonging under constraint. Resistance thus emerges through emotional endurance and meaning-making instead of direct opposition.

Inter-island solidarity emerges as a crucial mode of post-violence response enabling collective recovery. Across the literature, solidarity functions as a refusal of isolation and as a relational practice that reconnects fragmented communities (Glissant, 2010). In *Fish-Hair Woman*, testimony and shared suffering form networks of empathy that traverse geographic boundaries and bind individual trauma to collective memory (Lee, 2023). Similar processes appear in narratives of Jeju and Calauit, where remembering suppressed histories sustains dignity beyond state repression (Ritumban, 2024). Curatorial practices in Jeju’s literary museums further demonstrate how memory, mobility, and narrative are woven together to sustain relational continuity across generations (Ryang, 2013). Solidarity enables the continuation of social life despite incomplete justice. It operates as a relational infrastructure, not a final ethical endpoint.

Healing is represented as a relational process linking people, memory, and space. The reviewed studies consistently show that wounds are not erased, but negotiated through ethical relations and practices of remembering, in line with understandings of trauma as an ongoing process (Caruth, 1991). Postwar insular landscapes are often positioned as reflective spaces where past violence and future possibility remain in tension, as seen in readings of island environments shaped by memory and loss (Schmitz, 2018). Comparable representations in *Small Island* and *Fish-Hair Woman* frame healing as the courage to remain connected through empathy and solidarity rather than as completed reconciliation (Andermahr, 2019; Lee, 2023). Even in *Lord of the Flies*, moments of utopian imagination gesture toward the possibility of ethical reordering amid collapse, a pattern echoed in postcolonial island narratives such as *Carpentaria* and Soobramanien’s *Genie and Paul* (2012) (Kabir & Raimondi, 2024; Su et al., 2022). Healing therefore appears as an ongoing ethical stance grounded in vulnerability and relation.

Language and narrative play a decisive role in sustaining recovery by transforming memory into shared ethical practice. In *By the Sea*, the exchange and retelling of memories enable characters to revisit past conflicts, showing how narrative and memory reinterpret damaged relationships and sustain relational recovery through dialogic storytelling (Goddard & Goddard, 2022; Hand, 2010). Storytelling enables acknowledgment of suffering and resists the erasure of violence through relational engagement (Caruth, 1991). In *Fish-Hair Woman*, embodied empathy refuses silence and enables communal recovery through listening and testimony (Lee, 2023), while narratives of the Jeju tragedy reopen cultural space to confront state violence (Ryang, 2013). Similar restorative functions of language appear in *The Yield*, where Indigenous lexicography reconnects land, language, and identity

(Charon & Lehartel, 2023), and in renewed readings of *Robinson Crusoe* that reveal obscured colonial harm (Reddleman, 2023). Across these works, narrative is not a medium of resolution, but a practice of ethical witnessing that sustains relational responsibility over time.

In the reviewed studies, memory and diaspora further show how recovery resists a politics of forgetting by sustaining continuity across generations and spaces. In *The Island of Missing Trees*, family memory functions as an intergenerational bridge that reconstitutes identity after conflict (Laheg, 2024). Comparable dynamics appear in 'Dead Silence', 'Pablo and the Zebra' and Jeju narratives such as 'Death of a Crow' and *Haenyeo*, where acts of remembering counter historical erasure and enforced silence (Reyes & Gomez, 2024; Ritumban, 2024). In short, these narratives affirm that recovery unfolds as a collective and relational process, binding dispersed communities through shared remembrance rather than through individual healing alone.

This section demonstrates that islands are relational spaces where resistance, memory, and healing remain inseparable and unfinished. Before offering closure, the reviewed works portray recovery as a continuous ethical practice sustained through narrative labour, shared remembrance, and everyday acts of relation. Relationality clarifies how connectedness resists isolation (Glissant, 2010), trauma explains the recurring nature of wounds (Caruth, 1991), and structural violence reveals the conditions that healing must continually confront (Galtung, 1990). Within this unresolved tension, island narratives articulate healing not as a final state of reconciliation, but as a durable commitment to sustaining relation through relational, ritual, and affective practices of care, empathy, and ethical persistence in the aftermath of violence. In doing so, this section completes the article's analytical arc by showing how archipelagic spaces remain ethically alive under unresolved violence.

## Conclusion

This article shows that post-violence archipelagic experience cannot be understood as a linear aftermath or through a single lens. Across the five sections, islands emerge as relational landscapes shaped by history, mobility, and lived experience. Literary representations frame islands as spaces where violence, trauma, fear, and ethical meaning are negotiated rather than resolved. Archipelagic space emerges through historical relations and cross-border connections, while remaining persistently shaped by colonial structures and global violence that generate isolation, forced mobility, surveillance as an ordinary spatial practice, unequal access to space, and the accumulation of historical memory within island landscapes. These conditions are lived through recurring trauma and collective memory and are continuously negotiated through practices of resistance, solidarity, and care that sustain social life within everyday regimes of fear and insecurity.

Drawing on an interdisciplinary synthesis of literary studies across regions and genres, the article identifies recurring patterns in representations of post-violence islands. Rather than offering exhaustive coverage, it traces how island narratives repeatedly position insularity at the intersection of isolation and connectivity, domination and relation, and fear and ethical response. These tensions operate simultaneously rather than sequentially, revealing island experience as structured through overlapping historical layers rather than a linear progression after violence. While contemporary texts dominate this scholarship, earlier

works function as critical reference points for understanding the persistence of colonial power, violence, and memory within archipelagic imagination. Taken together, the findings show that post-violence archipelagic experience is sustained through unresolved historical tensions. Relationality operates as the organising condition through which island space becomes intelligible, revealing isolation and connectivity as historically and politically produced rather than spatial givens. Violence, trauma, and recovery remain co-present and non-linear, shaping island life as continual negotiation under normalised insecurity and vulnerability.

At an interpretive level, archipelagic literature functions as a moral archive of post-violence experience. These narratives sustain memory, resist repression, and enable empathy and solidarity under conditions of fear and loss. Trauma emerges as an intergenerational and spatial inheritance shaping relations among bodies, communities, and island spaces. Within these narratives, recovery rarely appears as closure; instead, it unfolds as an ongoing relational process sustained through memory, care, and ethical responsibility across generations. Taken together, this article argues that archipelagic literature offers a critical way of reading the contemporary world as shaped by enduring violence, trauma, and collective memory. Islands are therefore approached not merely as geographic locations, but as relational fields in which humanity, power, and ethical responsibility are continually negotiated under post-violence conditions. This study highlights how island narratives illuminate the persistence of violence and the fragile practices through which communities sustain relation under conditions of insecurity and historical trauma. The article therefore calls for further interdisciplinary work that continues to examine how violence, trauma, fear, and collective memory shape archipelagic literary narratives across diverse literary and cultural contexts.

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