



Sveučilište u Zadru
Universitas Studiorum
Jadertina | 1396 | 2002 |



Filološki fakultet

CALL FOR PAPERS

Online conference: May 29, 2026

Explorations of the City and Urban Identity Across Disciplines: From Machine Age to Sixth Extinction

Organisers:

University of Zadar

University of Sarajevo - Faculty of Philosophy

University of Montenegro, Faculty of Philology

The relationship between urban space and human subjectivity constitutes a central concern in urban literature. The dynamic interplay between the individual and the urban environment—how the city shapes identity, and how individuals, in turn, influence and transform the city—has been a recurring theme in anglophone literature from the age of Classicism and the works of Daniel Defoe to the present. The emergence of the modern city as both a site of political organisation and social disorder, as well as a source of intellectual stimulation and challenge (Richard Lehan), is closely linked to the rise of the novel as a literary form.

As the development of the modern city is intrinsically tied to technological advancement, much of anglophone modernist literature reflects a spirit of techno-optimism and a celebration of progress. However, beneath this surface lies an ecological subtext that reveals the darker aspects of the so-called “machine age,” expressed through anti-modernist themes and discourses of degeneration. Critiques of urbanisation and progress continue into the literature of the late 20th and early 21st centuries, engaging with issues such as anthropocentrism, climate change, and the “sixth extinction.” Recent approaches to urban space also consider the impact of decolonisation, the global reconfiguration of power, and the rise of globalisation, which collectively contribute to the formation of new, hybrid identities.

Contemporary challenges—most notably the COVID-19 pandemic and associated social distancing and mask wearing—have prompted further shifts in urban identity. The city has been reimagined almost as a dystopian site, where the alienation and fragmentation of individuals are accentuated like never before. As Richard Sennett notes, in the city we wear a “mask of civility,” treating one another as strangers, and this has become especially evident during the pandemic.

While anglophone literature remains a central focus of this conference, we also seek contributions that explore how urban space and identity are represented across other artistic media and popular culture. From visual art and performance to film, television and digital storytelling, we warmly invite presentations that reflect the diversity of urban imaginaries in the anglophone world.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- ‘green worlds’ within urban space
- the evolution of urban subjectivity in literary texts
- dystopian and posthuman visions of urban life
- the legacy of the machine age and its discontents
- urban decay, adaptation, and resilience
- urban nostalgia and future imaginaries
- gendered, racialised, and postcolonial experiences of urban transformation
- Anthropocene, climate change, sixth extinction
- non-places and urban isolation
- COVID-19 pandemic and the city; masks, social distancing, loneliness

Bibliography:

Bridge, G. and S. Watson, eds. *The New Blackwell Companion to the City*. Wiley Blackwell, 2013.

Lehan, R. *The City in Literature: An Intellectual and Cultural History*. UCP, 1998.

McNamara, K. R., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature*. CUP, 2014.

Perfect, M. *Contemporary Fictions of Multiculturalism: Diversity and the Millennial London Novel*.

Palgrave, 2014.

Sennett, R. *The Fall of Public Man*. Penguin Books, 1977.

We invite you to submit your abstracts (between 250 and 300 words) along with a short biography (up to 150 words) no later than **March 15, 2026**, to vukic@unizd.hr and/or mbregov@unizd.hr. Notifications of abstract acceptance will be sent by April 15, 2026.

Kind regards,
The Organising Committee