

Call for Contributions

Urban Dis/Connections and Transcultural Encounters in Contemporary Anglophone Writing

Editors

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Volume Presentation

The city has long been a central motif in literary works, functioning alternately as a physical setting, a metaphor for human complexity, and a site of social interaction. In literary production, it has also served as a backdrop for exploring isolation and alienation, and as a symbol of the rise and decline of human communities. Across time, literary representations of the city have evolved, giving rise to narratives that constantly draw attention to the multifaceted nature of urban experience. From the ordered urban landscapes of the nineteenth century to the present-day transnational global cities, contemporary literary representations of urban life have continually reflected tensions between inclusion and exclusion, mobility and stagnation, community and alienation. While modernist perspectives remain relevant, this volume is concerned with contemporary literary depictions of urban transformations in a transcultural context. Within this context of change, cities emerge as vibrant hubs of interaction, hosting diverse agents whose identities are shaped by dynamic cultural exchange. Yet, while often celebrated as sites of cosmopolitan encounter, cities are also spaces marked by exclusion, fragmentation, and disconnection.

In recent decades, the crucial and complex role played by the city in shaping social reality has been brought to the fore by the ‘spatial turn’ that has affected the social sciences and humanities. With the repositioning of space at the heart of social and critical analysis, the city has gained renewed theoretical significance. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre’s ‘right to the city’ and David Harvey’s call for an ‘urban revolution,’ recent scholarship has emphasized the city as a contested terrain of spatial justice. Critics like Edward Soja and Mark Purcell extend this framework to interrogate how urban space is produced, appropriated, and resisted – particularly by marginalized communities. These theoretical debates surrounding the urban landscape have had a deep impact on literature, prompting authors to explore the complexities of urban life through the portrayal of characters negotiating the intersections of class, race, and gender in often-unforgiving urban environments. Emerging literary forms, in turn, feature depictions of bustling cities that function both as vibrant cultural centers and as symbols of modern-day isolation and exclusion. The complexity of such representations in contemporary writing invites inquiry into the role of urban formations in shaping social organization and interaction. As cities become increasingly shaped by global flows of people, capital, and culture, literary representations have come to reflect these transcultural dynamics in both form and content.

It is within this context that this volume explores the city not only as a hub of transcultural interaction but also as a space of both connections and disconnections where social, spatial, and narrative disconnections are produced, experienced, and contested. Contributors are

invited to reflect on the multiple and often contradictory ways in which the city is imagined, represented, and lived, with particular attention to post-millennial fiction and recent literary articulations of urban experiences.

We therefore invite submissions that consider, but are not limited to, the following areas of investigation:

1. Urban Representations and Spatial Dynamics

- The city as site of connection, disconnection, and social fragmentation.
- Literary and cultural portrayals of urban decay, renewal, and shifting spatial dynamics.
- The city as a “dark mirror” of contemporary reality.

2. Cities as Sites of Resistance, Contestation, and Transformation

- Narratives revealing or contesting power dynamics in urban organization.
- Representations of protest, spatial justice, and alternative urban visions.
- Possibilities for coexistence amid social, cultural, and political challenges.

3. Inequality, Marginality, and the Subaltern City

- Depictions of urban inequalities in slums, ghettos, and marginalized spaces.
- Experiences of immigrants, diasporic communities, and other displaced groups.
- The impact of exclusion, spatial constraints, and migration on identity formation and urban belonging.

4. Global and Transcultural Perspectives

- Comparative studies of cities in the ‘Global South’ and ‘Global North’ in contemporary Anglophone writing.
- Transnational and transcultural urban imaginaries.
- The city as a site of displacement, negotiation, and engagement with globalization.

5. Form, Genre, and Aesthetic Innovation

- Literary experimentation, genre transformation, and narrative innovation in urban writing.
- Explorations of urban renewal, nostalgia, and erasure.
- Connections between narrative structure and spatial form, considering how texts reflect the rhythms, and fragmentation of modern cities.

Timeline

- Submission of abstracts (300 words with a short bio note): **30 November 2025**
- Notifications of acceptance/rejection: **15 December 2025**
- Submission of full manuscripts (no longer than 7,500 words): **31 March 2026**
- Please send inquiries and abstracts to: **transcultural.encounters@gmail.com**

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