

***Redefining Borders in British Literature:
Global and Local Identity Before and After Brexit***

**Roma Tre University
Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures
29-30 ottobre 2026**

Convenors

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Keynote Speaker

Kristian Shaw (University of Lincoln)

Call for Papers

June 2026 marks ten years since the Brexit referendum, a political event whose reverberations continue to shape the cultural imagination of the United Kingdom across Europe and beyond. A decade on, Brexit is not only a constitutional rupture but also a powerful cultural lens through which questions of identity, belonging, borders, and Britain's place in the world have been revisited, contested, and narrativized. This is even more relevant if we think at the recall and transformation of the historical trope of Britain's supposedly "splendid" distance from Europe, particularly within the current geopolitical scenarios swept by the winds of war. In this light we seek to explore how literary texts have tackled with recent cultural, political, and social questions while interrogating the broader anxieties, divisions, and narratives that have shaped the nation both before and after the 2016 referendum. The conference, therefore, also addresses what Kristian Shaw (2018) has defined as Brexlit, namely "fictions that either directly respond or imaginatively allude to Britain's exit from the EU, or engage with the subsequent socio-cultural, economic, racial or cosmopolitical consequences of Britain's withdrawal", while looking back to the longer cultural and literary trajectories that preceded the referendum and underpinned its emergence.

We welcome papers on British literature from 2000 to the present, including fiction, poetry, and theatre by writers from across the UK and beyond – English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish, and migrant or diasporic voices – whose works reflect the evolving complexities of Britishness in the contemporary era. Possible themes, that are central to both the Brexit debate and its wider cultural milieu, include: immigration and xenophobia; European identity and Euroscepticism; community, division, and social inequality; nostalgia and melancholic ideals of the past; the legacy of empire; and the reimagining of national identity.

The conference organisers invite prospective participants to submit proposals for 20-minute papers. Proposals may address, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Narratives of immigration, mobility, borders, and xenophobia before and after Brexit
- British identity in a changing political and sociocultural landscape
- Pre-Brexit imaginaries of Europe and British-European relations in literature since 2000
- Euroscepticism, nationalism, and the rhetoric of sovereignty in contemporary fiction, poetry, and theatre

- Nostalgia, melancholia, and idealised pasts in Brexit-era writing
- The legacy of empire and post-imperial memory in contemporary British literature
- Depictions of social inequalities, precarity, and regional divides pre- and/or post-Brexit
- Literary representations of Brexit and its cultural, social, and political reverberations, including populism, misinformation, and political fragmentation
- Theatre and performance responses to Brexit and its aftermath
- Community, solidarity, and rupture in post-referendum narratives
- Dystopian projections of contemporary political and cultural scenarios
- Repurposing traditional genres such as satire, allegory, and fairy tales
- The role of migrant, diasporic, and transnational British authors in reshaping debates around belonging and citizenship
- Literary engagements with European futures, cosmopolitanism, or the erosion thereof

Submission Guidelines

Please send an abstract of 250-300 words and a short biographical note (50-70 words) to michela.compagnoni@uniroma3.it and lucia.esposito@uniroma3.it.

Submission deadline: 15 May 2026.

Notification of acceptance: 31 May 2026.

Registration fees: Eur. 60,00 (standard); Eur. 50,00 (PhD students only)