The 30th Annual Conference of English and American Literature Association

Call for Papers

Conference Organizers: ROC English and American Literature Association (EALA, Taiwan) and National Kaohsiung Normal University, Taiwan

【Date】 October 29, 2022

【Venue】 National Kaohsiung Normal University (Main Campus), Kaohsiung, Taiwan

Call for Papers

(By January 15, 2022)

Theme: The Era of In/hospitality

The spread of coronavirus disease starting from 2019 is undoubtedly the most serious event since the beginning of the twenty-first century. The virus soon became ubiquitous and turned into different variants rapidly with no sign of being contained. This event reminds one of those deadly pandemics in the past. Those who suffered from the pandemics in the past left us numerous medical records, journals, and imaginative accounts, such as Giovanni Boccaccio's *The Decameron*, Daniel Defoe's *A Journal of the Plague Year*, Katherine Ann Porter's *Pale Horse, Pale Rider*, and Daniel Kalla's *Pandemic*. From those experiences, people learned how to tackle plagues, and quarantine is one of the methods among them. The pandemic we are going through now is an unprecedented one, forcing us to take all sorts of measures to isolate ourselves from, or reduce our close contact with, others to make sure that our bodies are virus-free and healthy.

No matter what methods we have taken, in order to fight against this highly infectious disease, we are forced to enter a state of inhospitality. Here, the conception of inhospitality is drawn from Jacques Derrida's theory of hospitality to re-consider this concept. In his *Of Hospitality*, Derrida explores the issue of how we should treat foreigners/strangers. As he points out, real hospitality means that a good host should welcome all strangers without making any demands on them, like asking their names and backgrounds. Derrida also tells us that this is an impossible degree of hospitality since a host would expect a certain degree of control and regulation over his/her guests under normal circumstances. In other words, a host decides how s/he would like to treat his/ her guests and whether s/he wants to show hospitality or hostility to

strangers. Therefore, the relationship between hospitality and inhospitality depends upon the host's attitudes, and the relations between them are often ambiguous, not based on binary oppositions.

We chose in/hospitality as the theme of the conference, hoping that we can re-consider the issue of how to treat strangers, foreigners, and strange objects. The impact of COVID-19 is just a starting point to re-think issues related to unexpected, invisible, or unknown strangers and strange objects. In our daily life, we might see or confront strange animals, plants, bacterium, machines and other strange objects, and we have to learn how to deal with them. In different fields of literature, there have been innumerable descriptions and metaphors of strangers and strange objects. Take Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* for example. Thirty strangers accidentally gathered together in their pilgrimage. Their choice of story-telling as an entertainment during their journey became an action of showing intimacy to each other although Chaucer's strategy of frame tales also presented the hostility among different social castes at that time implicitly. Emily Dickinson's poetry is another example. Obsessed with death, Dickinson provided several bizarre imaginations to depict death, an invisible but intimate stranger to her. It seems that, for Dickinson, the demise of the flesh is a gift, rather than a source of fear. Also, in the field of medicine and literature, writers describe people's suffering when dealing with diseases due to the "invasion" of advanced medical technologies. In cyberpunk, cyberspace, almost merging with humans, becomes the most intimate invader of humans. In post-apocalyptic novels, one of the most popular scenarios is the changes brought by extreme weather conditions which lead to disastrous events for human beings who have to learn to co-exist with these terrible weather conditions as unexpected strangers. In novels dealing with post-colonial issues, presenting the legacy of the colonial past often creates predicament for writers because it is not merely a problem of combating invaders and their traces. In other literary works, there are also many themes and scenarios examining the boundaries between "me" and "strangers," or those between "subject" and "object," and they are worth discussing.

Suggested topics include, but are not limited to:

In/hospitality and plague
In/hospitality and non-humans
In/hospitality and social consciousness
In/hospitality, cultural production and creativity
In/hospitable social justice
In/hospitality, technology, political management and community

Medical humanities in the era of in/hospitality
In/hospitality, social welfare and public safety
In/hospitality and bodies
In/hospitality and risk
Utopia, dystopia and the post-apocalyptic imagination
Ecology, illness and emotions
Disasters and unexpected visitors
Technologies and invaders

Proposals for papers in English or Mandarin Chinese are accepted. Proposals for three-person panels are also welcome. Please email proposals as MS Word (.docx) attachments before January 15, 2022. Proposals for single papers should be accompanied by an abstract (250 words) and a cover sheet including the presenter's education and employment history, current institutional affiliation, brief list of representative works, and email address. Panel proposals should be accompanied by a panel abstract (under 250 words), an abstract (250 words) for each paper, and a cover sheet including the aforementioned information for each panelist. Please send your email as below:

Email: 2022eala@gmail.com
Subject line: Proposal for the Annual EALA Convention 2022
Mail address: Department of English, National Kaohsiung Normal University, No.116, Heping 1st Rd., Lingya District, Kaohsiung City 80201, Taiwan(R.O.C.)

The conference committee will send out acceptance emails by the March 15, 2022. Accepted presenters must submit a full manuscript by October 15, 2022, and must become a member of EALA before the conference schedule is finalized. For membership application details, please see the EALA website: https://eala.org.tw/.

Important dates
Deadline for proposals: January 15, 2022
Acceptance emails sent by: March 15, 2022
Deadline for full manuscript: October 15, 2022
Deadline to join EALA: October 1, 2022
Conference date: October 29, 2022