End Times: Toward the Collapse of Ego, Empire, and Earth

2025 Acacia Group Annual Academic Conference
California State University, Fullerton
Friday, March 14th and Saturday, March 15

Perhaps my best years are gone. When there was a chance of happiness. But I wouldn't want them back. Not with the fire in me now. No, I wouldn't want them back.
[KRAPP motionless staring before him. The tape runs on in silence.]
~ Samuel Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape*

The Acacia Group at Cal State Fullerton invites graduate and undergraduate students to our Spring Conference for a conversation about past and future. While we are an English studies group, we welcome scholars from any discipline to share their creative work or critical research. This conference offers an opportunity for students of all levels to engage in academic discourse and gain experience at academic conferences.

Our theme this year is "End Times." As many of us grapple with a sense of impending doom, dreading myriad futures, we find some solace in reimagining a peaceful past. Through technological advancement, we can exchange our drab reality for a natural beauty most accessible through stories and screens. The past, though, lacks the glamour of potential the future holds. For us, both "future" and "past" exist as subjective constructs, with any one individual capable of designing what suits them. It is the nature and impact of imagining a "progressive past" and "changed future" that interests us because this yearning is not unique to the twenty-first century.

We, and those who came before us, use creative self-expression to decry the past in hopes of a better future or condemn any future emerging from a shaky past. Sometimes, even both. Nostalgia becomes, then, an enemy and a friend. This seeming contradiction pulls in separate directions and begs the questions: How do we reconcile the idea of "progress" amidst the extreme nostalgia and sense of impending doom present in our culture? How does our understanding of the past shape our future desires? How have our visions of empire altered our relationship with earth, space, and its environment, as well as shaped our conceptions of history?

Some fields of interest include Futurisms, Memory Studies, Creative Writing, Personal Narratives, Critical Theory, History, Philosophy, Geography, Psychology, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Cultural Studies, Genre Studies, Film Studies, and Literary Studies.

Papers touching on any of these ideas are welcome. We look forward to seeing your research and hope to foster productive discussions surrounding these topics.

Submitting Abstracts

For creative or critical presentations, please send a 200-to-300-word abstract as a .doc or .pdf attachment to theacaciagroup.csuf@gmail.com by February 21st, 2025. In your email, please include your name, institution, and academic standing (undergraduate, graduate, doctoral student, professor, or independent scholar). Please include a brief third person bio of up to 50

words. If your abstract is accepted, you will be asked to confirm your commitment to attend the conference and, at least ten days before the conference, to email a draft or outline of your presentation to your panel coordinator. Each presenter will be given 10 to 12 minutes to present at the conference. To propose a panel, please send a 200 to 300-word panel explanation as a .doc or .pdf attachment, including its title, topic, and format, as well as the abstracts for each presentation, listing each presenter's name, institution, and academic standing.

About the Acacia Group:

We are a California State University, Fullerton organization designed specifically for students pursuing graduate studies in English. Throughout the year we host academic development workshops, informative panels from alumni and professors, writing group sessions, and our annual academic conference every Spring. The Acacia Group works to offer opportunities for students to obtain invaluable information that will facilitate their educational experience and help build their academic curriculum vitae. While you do not have to be a member to participate in our conferences or other events, social membership with the Acacia Group offers additional distinction and discounted access to merchandise/conference food. If you are a CSUF English graduate student interested in joining, please email theacaciagroup.csuf@gmail.com. Thank you!