

ELLAK 2026 International Conference

The End: Reclaiming the Beginning

Dates: December 17–19, 2026

Venue: Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, South Korea

Host: The English Language and Literature Association of Korea (ELLAK)

Keynote Speakers

- **Jongsook Lee** (Professor Emerita of English, Seoul National University; Scholar of Early Modern English and Greco-Roman Cultural Studies)
- **Ursula K. Heise** (Professor of English, UCLA; Scholar of Environmental Humanities)
- **Sean D. Kelly** (Professor of Philosophy, Harvard University; Scholar of Phenomenology)

Conference Theme

The ELLAK 2026 International Conference invites scholars across disciplines to respond to the theme of “the end” as a generative framework for humanistic inquiry. Rather than viewing “the end” as mere finality, the conference will explore it as a complex and dynamic concept—one that reveals the underlying forces of transformation and renewal. “The end” highlights the fragility of human and non-human life and enables us to better understand an era currently beset with international conflict, ecological collapse, technological upheaval, and sociopolitical turmoil. Far from being a cause for resignation, it inspires us to ask critical questions: What is ending? What ideas, values, and forms of life are dissolving around us—and why? What historical, cultural, or ideological conditions motivate claims that particular discourses, identities, or paradigms have ended, will end, or should end? How might attentiveness to endings reshape our understanding of knowledge, language, and existence itself?

For decades, much of modern academia has clung to discourses of “crisis,” reinforcing linear, evolutionary master-narratives that internalize the logics of progress, productivity, and capital. These discourses tend to represent change as a disruption to be managed or exploited, privileging managerial and technological solutions. While crisis discourses have generally stifled the emancipatory potential of the humanities, making scholarship more reactive and conformist, “the end” invites a more liberating mode of inquiry. In shifting attention to “the end,” the conference aims to reinvigorate our engagement with contemporary realities—not only by helping us to address impending environmental, technological, and social challenges, but also encouraging us to examine the very paradigms that structure humanities research and education: their methodologies, disciplinary boundaries, and institutional forms. We hope that scholarly focus on “the end” will elicit a more dialectical understanding of what is being lost and what might still be reclaimed or reimagined.

Our current moment signals the end of Anglocentrism, as the long-standing dominance of British and American cultural authority gives way to a new literary landscape shaped by the

co-evolution of multiple literatures through translation, convergence, and global perspectives. This reconceptualization of literary geography calls on us to examine which authors are emerging to meet the new aesthetic and ethical challenges of our time. The conference honors Han Kang, 2024 Nobel Prize laureate, as a featured author, recognizing the poetic dignity of her work's confrontations with loss, erasure, and silence. In addition, a poetry reading by Don Mee Choi, winner of the 2020 National Book Award, will bring a lyrical and transnational voice to the stage, blending documentary poetics with political resistance. Their presence, alongside keynote lectures and roundtables, will enrich the conference's engagement with how literature and thought reimagine the end—not as termination, but as a portal to new futures.

Suggested Topics

We invite papers and session proposals from scholars working in fields such as literature, philosophy, cultural studies, environmental humanities, and digital humanities. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Post-Identity Politics and Subjectivity Beyond Identity
- Post-Language Aesthetics and Experimental Literary Forms
- Genre Transformations Across Fiction, Poetry, and Drama
- Translation, Translingualism, and the Politics of World Literature
- National and Post-National Paradigms in Literature
- Crisis Narratives, Futurity, and Speculative Imaginaries
- Trauma, Memory, and Modes of Cultural Mourning
- Extinction, Ecological Imagination, and Environmental Ethics
- Posthumanism, Multispecies Entanglements, and Biopolitics
- Platform Capitalism and the Politics of Care
- Technological Disruption, AI, and the Digital Humanities
- Experimental Humanities and Alternative Scholarly Methodologies
- Media Ecologies, Performance, and the Afterlives of Texts
- Korean Wave and the Politics of Cultural Hybridity

Proposal Format and Submission Guidelines

Proposals should be submitted by February 8, 2026, to 2026ellak@gmail.com

An individual paper proposal should include:

- The title of the paper;
- An abstract (up to 150 words);
- The following information about the speaker: full name, title, affiliation, email address, and brief bio (up to 100 words).

A session proposal should include:

- The title of the session;
- A brief description of the session (up to 100 words);

- Titles of the papers (3–4 papers per session);
- Abstracts (up to 150 words each);
- The following information about each participant (the organizer/moderator and the speakers): full name, title, affiliation, email address, and brief bio (up to 100 words). (Before you submit a session proposal, please ensure that all participants have agreed to participate.)

Important Dates

- Abstract submission deadline: February 8, 2026
- Notification of acceptance: March 31, 2026
- Submission deadline for conference proceedings: June 30, 2026

Registration Fee

The standard registration fee is **USD 50**. This fee covers participation in all conference sessions, access to conference materials, and admission to official events and activities. A detailed breakdown of included services will be provided to accepted participants in due course.

We look forward to your participation in what promises to be an enlightening and memorable conference.