The Seventeenth International Conference of the Taiwan Association of Classical, Medieval and Renaissance Studies (TACMRS)

20-21 October 2023
Chinese Culture University
Taipei, Taiwan

Call for Papers

Harmony and Chaos: The Dialectics of Order and Disorder

The ideas of order and disorder are universal conceptual categories found across diverse disciplines and cultures. They often emerge as a pair of opposites that help humans characterize observed phenomena, experiences, and imagination. Changes in regimes, the development of societies, and the evolution of cultural trends, for instance, are sometimes comprehended through the filter of order and disorder. Representations in arts and literature may also be examined under pairs of similar attributes, such as symmetry and asymmetry, harmony and disharmony, unity and disunity, and so forth.

It is by no means an accident that the creation of the world is often conceived as a process of bringing formlessness into order, as can be found in creation myths in various cultures. Hesiod in *Theogony* and Plato in *Timaeus* both described the world as originating from chaos, the primordial condition of disorder. In Genesis, the earth was first "without form and void" upon creation (Genesis 1.1). God then brought divisions into the world—the divisions of light and darkness, Day and Night, the Sun and the Moon, the land and the seas, and vegetation and wildlife. The formless darkness was characterized as Chaos in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The harmony of Eden—the established order created by God—crumbled after the Fall as Satan brought distrust, discord, and disgrace into the world. Moreover, the ancient Chinese divination text *I Ching* similarly denotes the formation of the world as a process of differentiation from the undivided mixture of original elements.

The waxing and waning of order and disorder may also be found in works involving romantic relations, spiritual struggles, or political conflicts, either as explicit metaphors or underlying structures. In Donne's "Elegy XIII," the poet described the emotional turmoil generated at the loss of love as falling into the darkness of "old Chaos." Similarly, Shakespeare's Moor in *Othello* associated the dissolution of love with perdition and

Chaos (*Othello* 3.3: 90–95). In *The Faerie Queene*, as the Redcrosse Knight was separated from Una under the deceptive schemes of Archimago and Duessa, he fell into a state of spiritual confusion and encountered a series of chaotic perils. Only by the rescue of Arthur and the help of Una (who symbolizes truth and unity) could the knight recover and finally attain holiness. In *The Tempest*, having escaped the political storm in his dukedom, Prospero established a new order on the formerly uncultivated island where untamed creatures and spirits like Caliban and Ariel resided. Apart from the above more well-known instances, numerous illustrations concerning the conflicts, interactions, and syntheses of order and disorder may be explored in different fields under different disciplines.

This conference calls for research from scholars working in art history, literature, philosophy, history, geography, religious studies, cultural studies, classical studies, anthropology, social sciences, and beyond. We also welcome studies on the cultural dialogue between East and West. Topics for consideration might include (but are not limited to) the following:

◆ Explorations of cosmology, creation, or world views in relation to systems and/or chaos, entropy and/or negentropy, etc.
◆ Analyses on art and visualization that involves symmetry, asymmetry, or elements concerning order and/or disorder
◆ Explorations of musical compositions in terms of harmony and/or cacophony
◆ Examinations on issues of religious doctrines, spirituality, heresy, or moral values with regard to unity and/or anarchy, moderation and/or excess, or other aspects in close relation to order and/or disorder.
◆ Critical interpretations of specific works addressing issues of concord and/or discord, *discordia concors*, or other related aspects

TACMRS warmly invites papers in English or Chinese that include and reach beyond the traditional chronological and disciplinary borders of Classical, Medieval, and Early Modern Studies.

Submission Guidelines
1. Paper proposals for 20-minute presentations and panel proposals (with 3 speakers) are welcomed
2. The deadline of submission is **January 6, 2023**.
3. We accept online submissions only. To submit your proposal, please follow these steps:

(a)   Email your abstract (250 words in English or 500 words in Chinese with 3-6 keywords in MS word format) to TACMRS.ccu@gmail.com.

(b)   Fill out the contributor data form at https://forms.gle/2G9HpT9y1j4KF1wq6.

Your submission will **NOT** be considered **without completing the above two steps**.

4.   All abstracts will be subject to blind reviews.

5.   Please note, presenters generally should be members of TACMRS if they reside in Taiwan. Membership application forms can be downloaded from the TACMRS website or via email upon request.

Information & Contact

- For information about the association and membership, please visit the TACMRS website at https://tacmrs.org.tw/.
- For information about the conference, please go to the conference website at https://sites.google.com/view/tacmrs2023.
- Information about the hosting institution may be found at https://eng.pccu.edu.tw/ and https://www.pccu.edu.tw/.
- Conference organizer: TACMRS.ccu@gmail.com

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