



KÄTE HAMBURGER CENTRE
FOR APOCALYPTIC AND
POST-APOCALYPTIC STUDIES



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

NEWSLETTER
2/21

APOCALYPSE, CATASTROPHE, AND THE END OF HISTORY

DEAR READERS,

We live in a time where we face the threat of not just one, but a myriad of catastrophes. The world as we know it seems to be coming to an end. This apocalyptic aspect can be found in several articles of the second issue of the CAPAS Newsletter. It was also mentioned in the lecture of the famous philosopher Slavoj Žižek on the occasion of the official inauguration of CAPAS, who discussed the conglomeration of catastrophes and how they uncover, in a true revelatory manner, the/an apocalypse (p. 2-4).

CAPAS Fellow Yuderkys Espinosa Miño-so, meanwhile, raises awareness for the fact that there always have been other paradigms of perceiving the world, with quite different outlets and temporalities than those propagated by the dominant European rationality (p. 13-14).

CAPAS thrives on these diverse disciplinary and cultural perspectives.

Enjoy a fun and enlightening read!

If you have feedback on the Newsletter, please don't hesitate to let us know: capas@uni-heidelberg.de

APOCALYPSE, CATASTROPHE, AND THE END OF HISTORY

ŽIŽEK AT THE START OF THE END *by Michael Dunn*

The official inauguration of CAPAS: 675 guests eagerly listened to the keynote of Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek.

The Käte Hamburger Centre for Apocalyptic and Post-Apocalyptic Studies celebrated its official inauguration on the 14th of October to an overwhelming response. Not only was the event entirely booked out to maximum capacity, with a total of 675 guests, but the live stream, in which the entire evenings events were filmed, has been (at time of publication) viewed the staggering number of 10,700 times. Prof. Dr. Thomas Meier, one half of the founding directors of CAPAS, commented that the event “was overwhelmingly well received by our colleagues from Heidelberg and abroad as well as by students and the broader public”; mirroring the power of intellectual academia and advanced research in disseminating societal spheres.



The inaugural ceremony was opened by the Rector of Heidelberg University Prof. Dr. Bernhard Eitel, followed by a short speech by Thomas Rachel the Parliamentary State Secretary for the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Felicitas Loest, Managing Director of CAPAS, and the two directors Prof. Dr. Robert Folger, and Prof. Dr. Thomas Meier introduced

the Centre, welcomed the guests, as well as those watching at home, and introduced the keynote speaker: the infamous Slovenian philosopher Prof. Dr. Slavoj Žižek.



Occupied to the last seat: the Neue Aula of Heidelberg University.

Žižek took the bull by the horns exploring how we are, currently, at a crossroads or rather, to be more precise, Lacan's *Point de capiton* of catastrophe; revealing that we are faced with a plethora of catastrophes rather than a single, isolated threat. His primary argument was that "the struggle against vaccination is also a displaced [and] mystified form of class struggle against those in power" followed by the ominous, and nonetheless crucial, question: "what kind of apocalypse is announ-

ced in this plurality of catastrophes that today pose a threat to all of us?" From this standpoint of catastrophic intersectionality, Žižek revealed that it is the conglomeration of catastrophes which uncovers, in a true revelatory manner, the/an apocalypse. As Žižek guided the avid listeners on an inquisitive expedition, his first point of call was the AI apocalypse, or, rather, the prospect of total digital control in which we see our relationship to the very fabric of reality begin to tear and we "effectively enter a post-human state".

"The struggle against vaccination is also a displaced [and] mystified form of class struggle against those in power."

The apocalyptic image of unbridled totalitarian control leads us, aptly, to another apocalyptic end: "the long-foretold end of philosophy" where we are faced with the distinct divisions of the scientific and the transcendental which, according to Žižek, "do not complement each other, they are mutually exclusive, but the immanent in-

Slavoj Žižek discussed the conglomeration of catastrophes and how they uncover, in a true revelatory manner, the/an apocalypse.



At the reception, the guests engaged in lively discussions – of course in due distance because of the pandemic – about Žižek’s lecture.



sufficiency of each of them opens up the space for the other”; revealing the interdependency, clashes, as well as necessity of philosophy and science.

Drawing on the ‘usual suspects’ such as Hegel and Schelling, Žižek brought into question the division as well as dimensions of truth and derangement or, better said, untruth or madness in these trying and obscure times as Germany struggles with vaccination rates, the rise of COVID-19 cases, and an intensifying of polarised political assertions and be-

liefs. Žižek aptly pointed out, however, that for Hegel madness is not an illness, sickness, or something to be cured. It is, on the other hand, “to be human” or at the very least being human is to have the potential to be mad.

Slavoj Žižek is considered a pop star among philosophers and was not above taking selfies with his fans.

“We hear again and again that we are at the end of history.”

Elaborating on the argument he has made in previous works (*Event 2014*, *Pandemic! 2020*, and *Pandemic! 2 2021* to name a mere handful) Žižek then explored how a number of apocalyptic ends have already happened; bringing to light the inherent problem of temporality. “We hear again and again”, states Žižek, “that we are at the end of history”. However, for the Slovenian philosopher “we passed from catastrophe to apocalypse and then back to catastrophe” suggesting that today “we live in an era that is best characterised as **the end of the end**”.



●●● [read more](#)

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION: APOCALYPSE OR UTOPIA?

by Tommy Lynch & Philipp Schrögel



During the recent [Climate Change Conference COP26](#), Melissa Fleming, UN-Under-Secretary-General, urged to '[dial down the doom](#)' in climate communication, in line with scientist and author [Michael E. Mann](#) and journalist [Michael Shellenberger](#): '[Apocalypse never](#)'. On the other hand, [\(post-\)apocalyptic narratives are present among environmental activists across Europe](#), [civilisatory collapse is on the table](#) and demands for political action use drastic wording. Most publicly recognized, perhaps, is the quote by Greta Thunberg in 2019 'I want you to panic!', addressed towards inactive decision makers. So which side is right? Let's have a look at the arguments and empirical evidence.



© Li-An Lim | Unsplash

Of course there are many people who argue that hope is essential for addressing climate change. Rebecca Solnit's [Hope In the Dark](#) remains a classic defense of the politics of hope. Catherine Keller explores similar ideas in her [Political Theology of the Earth](#). There is a recurring argument that optimism and pessimism are both passive positions. The former trusts that things will work out and the latter says there is nothing we can do. Hope is an activist position.

Yet, the question is not whether or not one should be hopeful, but what one hopes for (Tommy Lynch: [Why Hope Is Dangerous When It Comes to Climate Change](#)). Many people around the world are not worried about a coming climate crisis. They are, however, living through a crisis that has been happening for some time. As Rob Nixon argues in [Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor](#), we should listen to those who are already struggling with the slow violence of climate change.

A more pessimistic or even apocalyptic view of climate change often stems from viewing climate change as symptomatic of deeper issues rather than an isolated problem.

There is no planet B! Fridays for Future activists warn about the irretrievable consequences of climate change for nature and the environment.

A QUESTION OF HOPE – The controversy is not new. David Wallace-Wells ignited a fierce debate about climate change and doomism in his article [The Uninhabitable Earth](#) for New York magazine. The article compiled worst case scenarios from different climate scientists to paint an apocalyptic picture. He expanded his argument in a [book with the same title – The Uninhabitable Earth](#). His work has coincided with becoming a parent, an experience which has shifted his [views of how we should think about climate change](#).

●●● [read more](#)

CAPAS EVENTS

WEDNESDAY

15
12

🕒 7.00 PM 📍 Karlstorkino

Apocalyptic Cinema

ON THE BEACH

In the winter semester, CAPAS, in cooperation with Heidelberg's "Karlstorkino" and the "DFF – Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum Frankfurt", will be showing five films on the topic of the (post-)apocalypse. The screening of the movie "On The Beach" by director Stanley Kramer (1959 | Englisch | FSK 16) will be accompanied by a scientific commentary by Stefanie Plappert (curator of the current exhibition "[Catastrophe. What comes after the end?](#)" at the DFF).

TUESDAY

11
01

🕒 6.30 PM – 8.00 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14

CAPAS Lecture Series

LECTURE BY YUDERKYS ESPINOSA MIÑOSO

The CAPAS lecture series undertakes the task of exploring imaginaries and experiences of apocalypses and post-apocalypses from an interdisciplinary perspective. The lecture of Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso (Instituto Caribeño de Pensamiento e Investigación Descolonial) focuses on "A Never-Ending Historicity: the Anti-Futurist Discourses of Abya Yala and Their Confrontation With the Finite Time of Western Modernity". A digital stream of the lecture is [available here](#). Video recordings of all lectures are available [on our YouTube channel](#).

MONDAY

17
01

🕒 7.00 PM 📍 Karlstorkino

Apocalyptic Cinema

THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW

Directed by: Roland Emmerich (2004 | English with German subtitles | FSK 12).

Scientific commentary: Thomas Meier (Heidelberg University, CAPAS) & Thomas Hickler (Senckenberg Biodiversity and Climate Research Centre).

TUESDAY

18
01

🕒 6.30 PM – 8.00 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14

CAPAS Lecture Series

LECTURE BY STEPHEN SHAPIRO

Stephen Shapiro (University of Warwick): “Live and Let Die: Neoliberalism’s Necropolitics and Algorithmic Apocalypse (I am not a Number; I am a Variable)”.

[Digital stream available here](#)

MONDAY

07
02

🕒 7.00 PM 📍 Karlstorkino

Apocalyptic Cinema

THE CASSANDRA CROSSING

Directed by: George Pan Cosmatos (1976 | English with German subtitles | FSK 16).

Scientific commentary: Daniel Winkler (Heidelberg University, Department of Romance Languages and Literature).



TUESDAY

25
01

🕒 6.30 PM – 8.00 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14

CAPAS Lecture Series

LECTURE BY ROSA LEHMANN

Rosa Lehmann (Heidelberg Center for Ibero-American Studies):
“Challenges of the Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy: Socio-Eco-
logical Inequalities and the Energy Transition in Latin America”.
[Digital stream available here](#)

TUESDAY

01
02

🕒 6.30 PM – 8.00 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14

CAPAS Lecture Series

LECTURE BY MICHAEL SCHULZ

Michael Schulz (Bonn University): “The Latin-American Apocalyp-
se of the Radically Other”. [Digital stream available here](#)

TUESDAY

08
02

🕒 6.30 PM – 8.00 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14

CAPAS Lecture Series

LECTURE BY BRUNA DELLA TORRE

Bruna Della Torre (Universidade de Brasília): “The New 'Organiza-
tion': Digital Culture Industry and Right-Wing Radicalism in Brazil”.
[Digital stream available here](#)

MONDAY

21
02

🕒 7.00 PM 📍 Karlstorkino

Apocalyptic Cinema

THE ROAD

Directed by: John Hillcoat
(2009 | English with Ger-
man subtitles | FSK: 16).
Scientific Commentary:
Wenzel Mehnert (Univer-
sität der Künste Berlin).



© Wildbunch/Centrafilm

Registration for all CAPAS events on our [event website](#)



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

STEPHEN SHAPIRO

What were your first thoughts, when you saw the call for applications for the fellowship?

Stephen Shapiro: Tacheles, my very first thoughts were about the chance to live and work again in Germany, especially after the tantrum of Brexit. But also, nearly my entire academic research has looked at questions of crises, whether these be involving the yellow fever plague in eighteenth century America to the contemporary feeling of multiple converging catastrophes. CAPAS appeared as a rare and vital place to think more broadly about the cultural history of responses to social emergencies.

What does the apocalypse and/or post-apocalypse mean for you?

Individually, I have been arguing that the return of horror and apocalyptic culture, from movies to costumed zombie walks, is a way for people to express fear and discontent about the erosion of the postwar liberal State's protections. This is also why we've seen the return of something my generation never expected to ever see again, a popular and unashamed far right movement, be it either with Trump or the querdenker. Horror, however, is also the language in which previously marginalized groups are using to criticize the prejudices of the mainstream. It used to be that horror films taught the audience to be scared of those different from us. Now, so-called normality is seen as the monster.

Post-apocalypse, I think, means trying to think of a better future, but one "without guarantees." In the past, we imagined different utopias as alternatives. These

dreams often had bad consequences. Now we're trying to be more pragmatic.

What is your fellowship trying to achieve, which questions is it addressing?

At CAPAS, I am focusing on how new data-driven business and government policies are creating a different kind of human identity. German sociologist Jürgen Habermas is known and beloved for championing a society of calm discussion and thoughtful public debate. Is this even possible anymore in a world of social network trolls? If offering your opinion stands as an invitation to fall into a hell of abuse, then how is the university supposed to function now?



My background comes from British Cultural Studies, associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (the "Birmingham School") where I studied. I combine this with my own involvement with the so-called "Warwick School," which looks to world-systems perspectives, associated with Immanuel Wallerstein, to help consider questions of culture.

Stephen Shapiro is the first ever Professor of American Literature at the University of Warwick (the highest held title at Warwick), and has been since 2010. His research interests focus on the writing and culture of the United States, cultural studies, literary theory and Marxism, world-systems analyses, urban and spatial studies, sociology of religion, television studies, and critiques of mental disease.

●●● [read more](#)

#POPULAR
APOCALYPSE

THE LIGHTER SIDE OF THE APOCALYPSE CONTINUATION OF THE APOCALYPTIC CINEMA SERIES

by Eva Bergdolt

© VEGA Film AG

How would life be on earth if the average temperature would rise by 10 degrees due to the rapid increase of solar storms? Tim Fehlbaum developed an interesting interpretation of these precarious living conditions in his 2011 post-apocalyptic film 'Hell' whose screening marked the start of the winter semester's Apocalyptic Cinema series.

In contrast to most cinematic post-apocalyptic wasteland scenarios, the film *Hell* is not situated in the American heartland but, rather, in the Bavarian Forest. Fun fact: the title of the film means 'bright' in German and can be understood in both German or English optionally. Surely, either way, the title depicts the storyline of survival after an ecological catastrophe fairly well. The protagonists are in constant search for shade and water in a dry and bright wasteland littered with cadavers. However, as the story continues, the audience realizes that protection from the sun is not the only form of protection needed to survive in this bleached outworld; as the shelter which is finally discovered turns out to be anything but a safe haven. Although, that's enough spoilers for now.

The film series [Apocalyptic Cinema](#) began as an open-air-cinema in the Mathematikon in July 2021 and continues during the winter in cooperation with the [Karlstorkino](#) and the DFF – Deutsches Filminstitut & Film-museum on the occasion of their special exhibition [Catastrophe. What comes after the end?](#). At each event, a scientific commentary by invited scholars will follow



Prof. Dr. Olaf Bubbenzer, who conducts research on drylands, amongst other areas, presented a critical scientific analysis of the film.

the film screening and we will open up for discussion with the audience afterwards.

The first film *Hell* was screened on November 29th in accordance with the then current COVID-19 regulations of the state of Baden-Württemberg with the 2G+ (vaccinated/recovered + test) rules.



For the start of the series, we were delighted to have [Prof. Dr. Olaf Bubbenzer](#) from the Institute of Geography at Heidelberg University join us and share his scientific input after the film. He dedicates his research, amongst other areas, to geomorphology, soil science, and drylands in various regions of the planet. From the get-go he demystified the storyline of the film and the overall possibility of a rapid temperature rise on earth (which is within 4 years in the film) due to the higher activity of solar winds. The earth is protected by its geomagnetic field, which keeps our planet and us relatively unaffected by the solar winds. At the moment we only witness solar winds activity in the polar regions of this world as aurora borealis. However, in case of an occurrence such as the 1859 Carrington Event (the most intense solar storm in recent history) happening today, we might see such a storm wreak havoc on our electronics, satellites, GPS, wireless communication systems, and electricity networks.

●●● [read more](#)

THE PUBLISHING PLATFORM OF CAPAS **PUBPUB**

**#PUBLIC
APOCALYPSE**

Each year CAPAS invites up to ten international fellows, who engage with the topic of the apocalypse in a series of projects, lectures, and workshops; in order to foster a diverse and international research perspective, many of our fellows' discussions and projects will be presented on our [open-source open access publishing platform PubPub](#) in their fledgling phases to open them up to a broader audience and to encourage transdisciplinary knowledge transfer between our cohorts and international academics engaged in the complexities of the apocalypse.

Our fellows' contributions appear as work in progress and may collate collaborative projects, interdisciplinary exchanges, or article drafts. You will also find information about our soon-to-be launched interdisciplinary, international, double-blind peer-reviewed academic journal [Apocalyptica](#) as well as interviews, reviews, and artistic imaginaries of the (post-)apocalypse – for example, a conversation with UK graphic designer, visual artist, and print maker Laurence Jordan, which is teased on the following page.



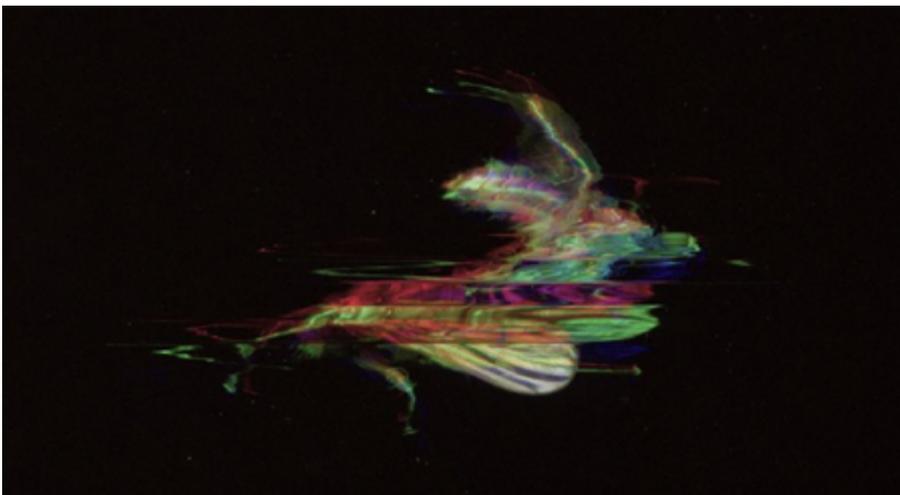
DUNGENESS, PAGANISM, AND NUCLEAR APOCALYPSE

by Michael Dunn

AN INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST LAURENCE JORDAN

What do the Green Man, the uncanny and ominous presence of the Dungeness nuclear power station, and the apocalypse all have in common? It would appear that all three of these things exist in cursory anti-thesis to one another. And yet, all of these symbolic subjects dominate the artistic narratives of Kentish artist Laurence Jordan.

As we live through anthropogenic climate change, the burden of which is a heavy reminder of the desperate hope or stark reality we must all now cling to, we also find ourselves in a post-romantic age; surrounded by brutalist architecture and, in many parts of the world, unbearable living conditions due to capitalist industry, petrochemical companies, and big business.



Two of Laurence Jordan's images that have gone through a process of 'slit scan' distortion.

Despite (and maybe in spite of) this many artists, both literary as well as audio visual, look to nature for inspiration even finding spiritual solace in its pertinent power.

We asked Laurence Jordan, a UK graphic designer, visual artist, and print maker, who grew up on the Romney Marsh ab-



out his relationship to the country he calls home, his art, nature, and his understanding of the/an apocalypse.

What kind of relationship does your art have to your surroundings or, rather, what role does your habitat play in your art?

Laurence Jordan: The series of images in question were all recorded on site and act as a visual metaphor of the landscape they were found in and the state of flux one observes in Dungeness. Topographically speaking, Dungeness is officially a desert; consisting of 72 square kilometres of shingle, it is a designated nature reserve and is home to a myriad of rare and endangered species, yet one is also greeted by two nuclear reactors situated on the coastline. The coastal erosion is so severe that approximately 100 tons of shingle has to be shifted by machinery every single day, perpetually in order to preserve the nuclear power station from destruction (as well as from entering a phase of atomic meltdown). The images themselves have all gone through a process of 'slit scan' distortion as a means of reflection on this landscape which is in a constant state of apocalyptic flux between the 'man' made and the natural world.

●●● [read more on PubPub](#)

#FELLOWS
APOCALYPSE

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

YUDERKYS ESPINOSA MIÑOSO

What does the apocalypse and/or post-apocalypse mean to you?

Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso: To me the apocalyptic narrative is part of the teleological production of the West, and it is intrinsically associated with the emergence and development of Christianity. This narrative announces the end of time is near, and when it comes, the Judgment Day will happen and it will be decided who has been just and who has not, and as a result, some will reach eternal life while others will burn in hell. In this teleology, the world has an end and that final moment will definitely be catastrophic, causing chaos, despair, and general destruction. This would be a result of human acts, according to this narrative.



Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso is a writer, researcher, professor and activist of Afro-Dominican origin. She earned a BA in psychology, an MA in social sciences and education, and a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires. Through her work, she explains the necessity of adopting a decolonial feminist perspective by reflecting on and confronting the hegemonic, Eurocentric, racist and classist perspectives that are intertwined in the feminist movement.

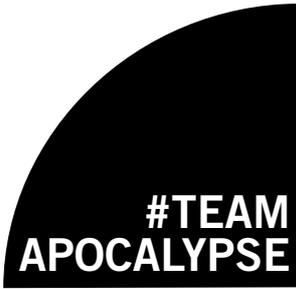
Contrary to that discourse, to me, it is interesting to see that this narrative and

concern is not at all present in indigenous and Afro-descendant communities with whom I have had the opportunity to discuss and exchange perspectives of the world. In the voodoo tradition, for example, I have been told that there is no heaven and hell, no Judgment Day, no idea of god and devil. In some Mesoamerican Mayan communities, an often-used slogan is: “The future already was.”

I wonder, along with my sisters at [indigenoussaction.org](http://indigenousaction.org), why it is easier for the West to imagine the end of the world rather than the end of this model of death, the end of capitalist and racist colonialism? I believe that this narrative of the end as imminent is part of the fetishization of Euro-nor-centric modernity; it is part of a European way of experiencing time and history. European modernity already contains an apocalyptic ideal.

What is your fellowship trying to achieve, which questions is it addressing, and with which methods?

The research project I am currently working on aims to highlight the narratives and discourses of native peoples of Abya Yala and Afro-descendants, who have been systematically ignored and silenced by the dominant and imperialist modern narrative. My endeavour is a political and epistemic project that seeks to validate the views and interpretations of the world coming from indigenous and Afro-descendant communities, which have been erased from the history of humanity, in order to show that there are and there have been other paradigms of perception, experimentation and production of the world, with outlets and temporalities



INTRODUCING CAPAS THE EVENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

Who are the people working at CAPAS? What are their backgrounds and what are their areas of expertise and interests? After introducing the team of the Administrative Office in our last issue, we are focussing now on the CAPAS Events Team.

The academic programme showcases the Centre's research, but also acts as a crucial link that fosters the interdisciplinary exchange of visiting fellows. Amongst our recent events are the inauguration with a lecture by Slavoj Žižek and our [CAPAS Lecture Series](#), a format that makes the research at CAPAS accessible to members of Heidelberg University and the interested public. Our internal events, the colloquia and working groups, undertake the task of exploring imaginaries and experiences of apocalypses and post-apocalypses from an interdisciplinary perspective.



The event management team: **Rolf Scheuermann** and **Theresa Meerwarth**

Responsible for the event management at the Centre is CAPAS research area coordinator [Rolf Scheuermann](#). He grew up in Mannheim and went on to study Tibetan and Buddhist Studies for 20 years at the Karmapa International Buddhist Institute, New Delhi, and the University of Vienna, from where he obtained a doctorate in Buddhist Studies. Before returning to the Rhein-Neckar region, he worked as a research coordinator at the Käte Hamburger

Centre of the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg and as a substitute of the Junior Professor of Central Asian Studies at the University of Leipzig. His dissertation focused on the origin and the dissemination of the famous Four Dharmas of sGam-po-pa, a short work on the stages of Buddhist meditation authored by the monk yogi sGam-po-pa bSod-nams-rin-chen (1079-1153). His further research focuses on Tibetan eschatology, Tibetan strategies for coping with the future, the Jo-nang traditions gZhan-stong-Madhyamaka philosophy and its specific interpretation of buddha nature, the translation of Buddhist works as well as cultural exchange processes. He is also a passionate art collector and is in the process of establishing a collection of art prints on the (post-)apocalypse.

[Theresa Meerwarth](#) is a CAPAS research associate within the Event Management Team. She studied Romance Philology and Political Science at Heidelberg University and the University of Seville, Spain. Her interest in Latin American literatures and cultures comes from her personal and professional travels throughout South America. Most recently, she spent a few months at the University of Chile in Santiago after receiving a BWS-plus research scholarship.

In addition to her position at CAPAS she is also a doctoral candidate at the Faculty of Modern Philology where she is working on a thesis concerning representations of national socialism in the writing of Roberto Bolaño. Her research interests concern conceptions of the uncanny in relation to the apocalypse as well as de- and postcolonial studies.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

MICHAEL SCHULZ

What does the apocalypse and/or post-apocalypse mean for you?

Michael Schulz: As an originally Catholic theologian, I have given lectures on topics of eschatology; apocalypticism is a late Jewish form of eschatology, which was also customary in the New Testament and gained great importance in the theological and cultural history of Europe at various times. This professional study made me develop a critical attitude towards apocalypticism, which has often served as a source of great theological nonsense and crazy political opinions.

Many sects concoct fantastic visions of the future inspired by the last book of the Bible, the Apocalypse of John, which engages in a kind of biblical science fiction without ever having dealt scientifically with the genre of these texts. Historically speaking, it became dangerous and deadly when people thought they could bring about the end of the world or a change of times themselves. The apostle Paul, on the other hand, says: “Do not avenge yourselves, dear brothers, but leave room for the wrath [of God]; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord” (Letter to the Romans 12:18f). But this conflict-avoiding function of the apocalypse has often been overlooked. People preferred, on the other hand, to act as riders of the apocalypse themselves. That is why I personally had little interest in apocalypticism.

I became interested in the subject in the context of my Latin-American studies. The apocalyptic mood that determined the so-called discovery of America and the missi-

on of the New World explains both the violence with which the mission was carried out (in order to save time because Christ was going to come again) and defence strategies: through so-called sermons of hell, the missionaries tried to save the indigenous people; whoever enslaved them would end up, post-mortem, in the kingdom of darkness. I am currently looking to examine the specific mixture of Christian apocalypticism with pre Colombian, indigenous ideas of turning times and apocalypses, which can be found, for example, in the Mayan Chilam Balam books and are again directed against colonial brutality.



What would be the three things that you would definitely need in a post-apocalyptic world?

A good wine, optimism, and Siegfried's cloak of invisibility. In the biblical sense, heaven comes after the Apocalypse and for such an eventuality, according to Luther, one would need a gracious God.

Michael Schulz is professor and director of the Arbeitsbereich Philosophie und Theorie der Religionen (Department for Philosophy and Theory of Religions) within the Philosophical Faculty (humanities) of the Rhenish Friedrich Wilhelm University of Bonn. He is also speaker for the Interdisciplinary Latin America Centre (ILZ) at the University of Bonn. His research interests include studies on the truth claims of religions, Trinitarian theology and philosophy, theories of evil, and Latin-American philosophy.

●●● [read more](#)

BOOK REVIEW *by Philipp Schrögel & Florian Scheuermann*

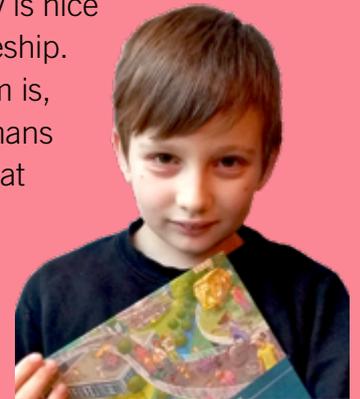
THE BEST ENDS OF THE WORLD

#BOOK
APOCALYPSE

Our youngest
book reviewer:
Florian Scheuer-
mann (8 years)

Talking with children about the (post-) apocalypse? There is a book for that. And although the title somewhat misleadingly reads “The Best Ways for the World to End”, the book by Andrea Paluch and Annabelle von Sperber includes dystopian as well as utopian scenarios: from a global flood to a sustainable eco-future or a world with only children in it. However, since I am not the target audience of the book, I was pleased to be able to have Florian critically review the book and give me his opinion.

Well, it certainly is nice to sit in a spaceship. But my criticism is, that not all humans would fit into that spaceship. Many would have to die and surely that is bad.



There are also some concerning scenarios in the book. What did you think about them? For example the age of drought?

Philipp: *Let's have a look at the first described scenario: people are forced to live in large glass domes due to the bad air quality outside.*

Ah, this is governed by the law of the strongest, which I do not find very good. This has happened in war times, but I do not believe that anybody wants to experience that again. There you also see refugees, who want to traverse the country.

They want to access the water sources?

Florian: Well, I think the problem is that they will run out of oxygen. Ok, in the larger domes there are plants, but still...

Yes, they try to. But there are soldiers who are pushing them from the ladder at the fence. This makes me think of the people in Africa who need to flee. I think it is really horrible when you have to live through something like that, a horrible scenario.

Which, you could say, is very much like the next one, which is also a quite dark and scary vision.

Yes, the virus pandemic. But for me, this is actually rather normal, daily life I would say; because all the people are currently wearing masks and need to keep 1,5 meters distance. As is happening in the current COVID pandemic.

And what do you think about the assumption in general – that air pollution is becoming so bad that people can no longer breathe it?

It does not surprise me; it is almost somewhat normal for me. I have thought about something like this already.

And what about this: humanity living in a spaceship, after planet earth is destroyed?



“[The Best Ways for the World to End](#) [What will become of us? Twelve existing visions of the future](#)” written by Andrea Paluch, illustrated by Annabelle von Sperber.

●●● [read more](#)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

ADOLFO MANTILLA OSORNIO

What does the apocalypse and/or post-apocalypse mean for you?

Adolfo Mantilla Osornio: I am more interested in apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic experiences as an axiological, epistemological, poetic, and aesthetic phenomenon. Those experiences and their images enable us to understand different “realities”. Their symbolic qualities enable us to have an access to different phenomenon that operate in different realities and contexts.

#FELLOWS
APOCALYPSE



Since 2017 **Adolfo Mantilla Osornio** has been an academic coordinator for the Academy of Arts, in Mexico. He has coordinated and/or curated dozens of national and international exhibitions. Throughout his work, he focuses on the fields of anthropology, art history, museology, cultural management, postcolonial studies, as well as semiotics, communication, and culture economics.

What is your fellowship trying to achieve?

I will examine apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic images, especially those produced after the conquest of America, in order to collect an abundant corpus of images and to analyse their different axiological, epistemological, poetic, and aesthetic structures

and dimensions. By doing this, I will try to achieve, analyze, and understand some potentially (post-)apocalyptic figures of thought, narratives, texts, images, and scenarios. Through a transdisciplinary perspective of scientific work, I also aim to achieve a transversal knowledge of the apocalyptic imaginaries using different theoretical references with which to analyze the images. Ultimately, the research I am conducting at CAPAS will form the basis for an exhibition and book on apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic imaginaries in Mexico.

What are some of the aspects you are looking forward to while working at CAPAS?

Working at CAPAS is wonderful because the centre provides a great academic environment to think about the “end of the world” from different perspectives. Every day here I have conversations that cross disciplinary and cultural boundaries. I get to discuss with colleagues from such fields as philosophy, religious studies, critical theory, American studies, architecture, and philology.

What are some of your favourite pop culture references to the/an (post-)apocalypse? What can you recommend?

I am particularly interested in the book [*Apocalipstick*](#) by Carlos Monsivais (2009). The author describes a place (Mexico) where the end of the world is inherent. In the narrative, the people are informed the final countdown will begin very soon and humanity will enter its last, final phase. The book offers an interesting way to think about an apocalyptic time and experience.

●●● [read more](#)

#SCIENCE
APOCALYPSE

CAPITAL AND RESENTIMENT: THE FERMENT OF A NEW PREWAR ERA?

Storming of the United
States Capitol on
January 6th, 2021.
How is it possible that
this event could be
framed as a “normal
tourist visit”?



How is it possible that the Capitol attack of January 2021 was frameable as a ‘normal tourist visit’ by Congressman Rep. Andrew S. Clyde? How could naming the event an insurrection itself be called a ‘boldfaced lie’ despite the evidence conveyed in widespread live media coverage? It is the conditions of possibility for this crisis of factuality – and its consequences for power, democracy and society – that Joseph Vogl traces in his latest book [‘Kapital und Ressentiment: Eine kurze Theorie der Gegenwart’](#) (C.H. Beck 2021/ Polity 2022).

Prior to publication in English, the forthcoming issue (7(2), 2021) of [Finance and Society](#) presents an extract from the book along with reviews by Nina Boy, Aaron Sahr, Ute Tellmann and Franziska Cooman. Boy, who is currently a fellow at CAPAS, sees in Vogl’s analysis a sequel to Mary Poovey’s (1998) [History of the Modern Fact](#). If Poovey conveyed how facts acquired the status of neutral description of the world, independent from political, moral or theological argument, Vogl imputes the loss of this epistemic authority to the effective fusion of financialization and platform economy. Rather than a pathology on the fringes, populist resentment functions both as structural affect of and vital resource for information capitalism, usher-

ing in a plurality of hostile social monads that are unable to communicate.

The dystopian note of a prewar era that Vogl ends on brings home the point that we find ourselves at a turning point. But for Boy, his self-admittedly ‘apotropaic gesture’ – a warning and attempt to summon the power to avert evil – signifies more than that: it includes the imperiled status of the humanities, for which this book may be a last rearing up, demonstrating the subtle grasp and scope of an expertise that is itself fighting for life.

Nina Boy, “Endgame: the false destruction of the social imaginary” in: Nina Boy, Nathan Coombs, Amin Samman (eds.), *Finance and Society* (7(2), 2021).

IMPRINT

Publisher

CAPAS
Käte Hamburger Centre
for Apocalyptic and Post-
Apocalyptic Studies

Editors

Eva Bergdolt
Michael Dunn
Ute von Figura
Philipp Schrögel

Translation

Michael Dunn
Laura Mendoza

Layout

etgrafik, Heidelberg

The CAPAS-Newsletter is
available online here:
www.capas.uni-heidelberg.de/newsletter.html