



KÄTE HAMBURGER CENTRE
FOR APOCALYPTIC AND
POST-APOCALYPTIC STUDIES



UNIVERSITÄT
HEIDELBERG
ZUKUNFT
SEIT 1386

APOCALYPSE
QUARTERLY
3/22



THE APOCALYPTIC WORD

DEAR READERS,

In this issue, we are pleased to introduce the new CAPAS journal *Apocalypticica*, the first issue of which has just been published (pp. 3-5). The journal offers its own way of thinking and writing about the apocalypse. Its goal is to confront our many catastrophes head on and with open eyes, so that we can create encounters of thinking and writing that flourish in the face of the end. After all, the *apocalyptic word* is a call for creativity, community, and change. It is an invitation to begin, in the words of Aimé Césaire, “the only thing worth beginning: the end of the world, of course”.

Other topics in this issue include the collaboration of art and science at the Metropolink Festival near Heidelberg in this summer (pp. 6-10), the introduction (Part 1) of the CAPAS Scientific Advisory Board (p. 11), and several reports on workshops and congresses organized by or attended by CAPAS members, such as the K3 Climate Communication Congress in Zurich, which discussed the question of how much apocalypse there can be in climate communication (p. 17).

The CAPAS team wishes you an interesting and inspiring read!

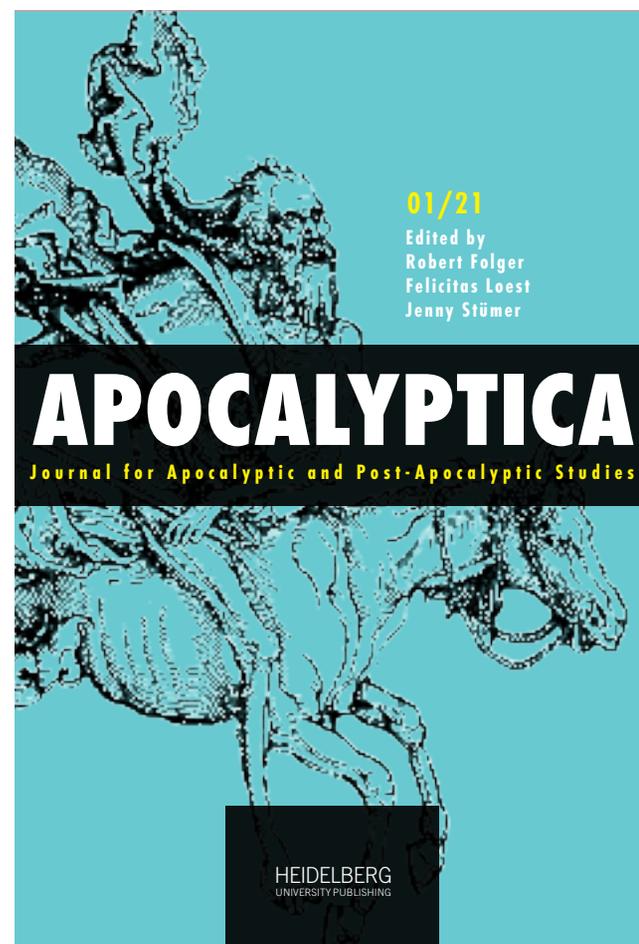
If you have feedback concerning the newsletter, please let us know: capas@uni-heidelberg.de

FIRST CAPAS JOURNAL PUBLISHED **APOCALYPTICA: IT BEGINS...**

by Jenny Stümer

The first issue of our double-blind peer reviewed open-access journal *Apocalypticica* is finally out and we are excited about the great number of intriguing and original contributions we are able to showcase. In initiating this journal, we hope to unfold the myriad sides of the apocalyptic imaginary and to reflect on experiences of apocalypse and post-apocalypse from a broad range of fields.

In our initial call, we asked, what does it mean (and what has it meant) to live through the end of the world or ‘in the end times’, seeking works that champion the imaginative and (potentially) transformative force of thinking with and through the (post-)apocalypse. The aim was to understand the apocalypse “as a theme, a



concern, a fascination, an explicit reference and the horizon [...] of a work or a task,” as Derrida (1984, 30) would have it, but also to unearth the end as an opening, a rupture, a fantasy with consequences, a call for action, an aesthetic, a form, a narrative, a chance!

With this first issue we hope to set the tone for a far-reaching encounter with apocalypse and its varied possibilities. We are proud of the works we were able to select and impressed with the variety of arguments these authors highlight. The approaches differ in their understanding of apocalypse and its potentials for unmaking and remaking the world, but they are notably united in proposing the end as a resourceful lens for political and cultural debate.

“Critical investigations of the apocalypse hinge on the question of its reality.”

Prefacing the first issue, CAPAS director Robert Folger (with a nod to Frederic Jameson) proposes an archaeology of apocalypse which positions the apocalypse (and *Apocalyptica*) in its dialectical orientation toward *Nachträglichkeit* and prophecy. The aim here is to overcome outdated and vague notions of apocalypse as aesthetic escapism (as fiction without consequence). Instead, critical investigations of the apocalypse hinge on the question of its reality: a philosophical endeavour which Robert Folger initiates by assembling eleven theses or initial

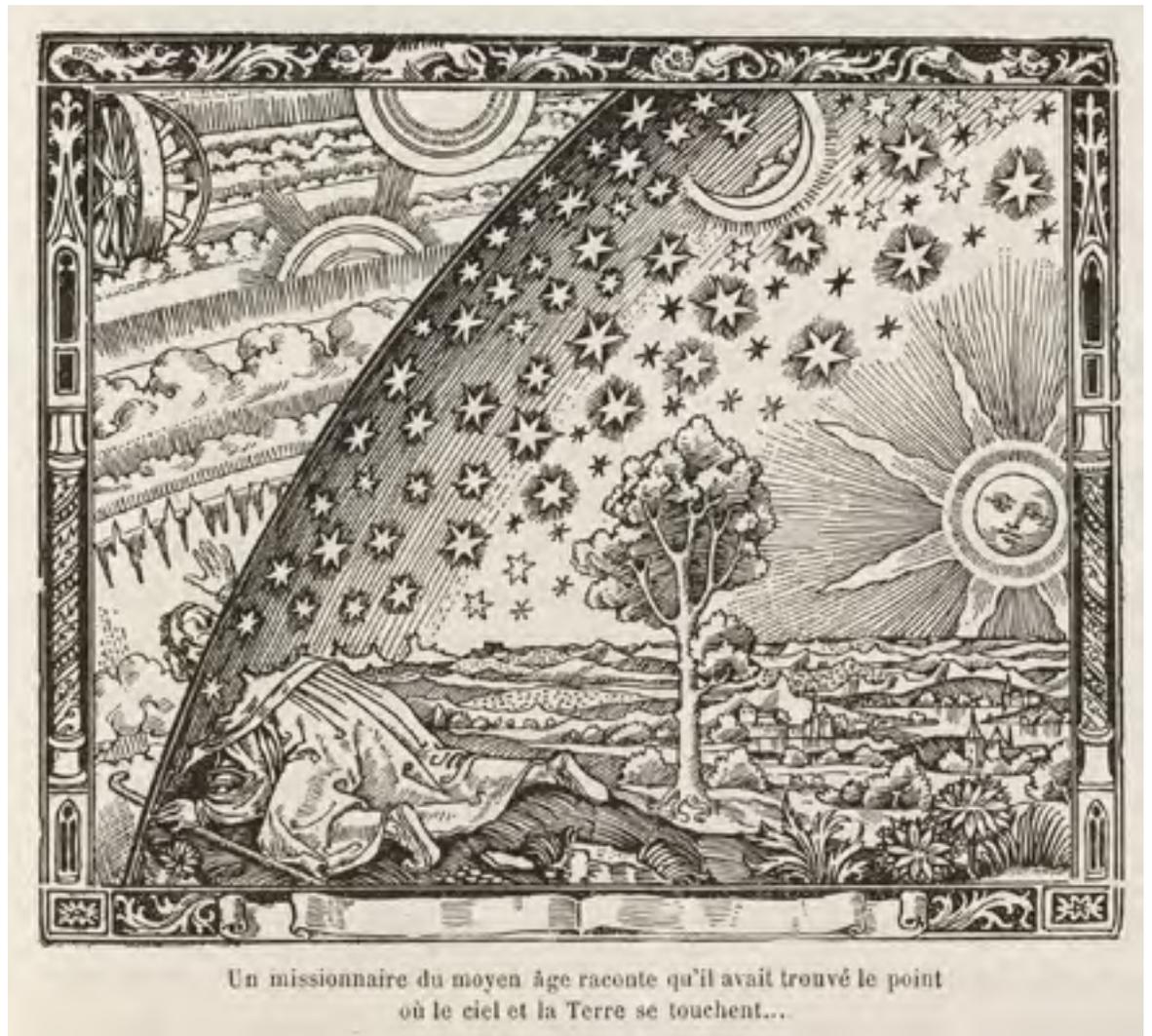
Slavoj Žižek, one of the authors of the first journal, reminds us in his article that the catastrophe has already happened and that our normality is by definition “post-apocalyptic.”

reflections that attend to the theorization of apocalypse as a complex and politically relevant figure of thought.

Following on from this preliminary map, we are honoured to inaugurate this first issue with a contribution from one of the distinguished voices today: the prolific philosopher and cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek. His contribution is a recollection of the inaugural lecture he gave at the opening ceremony of CAPAS in October 2021. In his introduction, Žižek identifies a “weird moment” coalescing multiple apocalypses, all competing for the “quilting point” totalizing all others. Asking us to consider “what kind of apocalypse is announced in the plurality of catastrophes that today poses a threat to us all,” Žižek cautions us not to perceive the end of the world as just another aspect of normality, as something that is coming at us in the near or far future. Instead, he reminds us that the catastrophe has already happened and that our normality is by definition “post-apocalyptic.”



The science historian Amelia Urry interrogates the apocalyptic fiction of astronomer Camille Flammarion. Here: The “Flammarion engraving” from *L’atmosphère* (Flammarion 1888).



Instigating our debate about the end of the world further, we are excited to set the stage by the following authors and their contributions: Maral Attar-Zadeh examines the apocalyptic imaginary through the temporality of the ‘already/not yet’ as an organizing principle of the ‘grammar of the Anthropocene’. Her piece advocates for a different kind of modality, reworking our orientation towards the future. Amelia Urry interrogates the apocalyptic fiction of astronomer Camille Flammarion in order to examine the end of the world as a project of speculative science in the 19th century and to trace early forms of science communication. Neal Curtis examines the role of the red pill metaphor for apocalyptic thinking within the Alt-Right movement, exposing conspiracy, hate, and violence as aggressive responses to perceived precarity as annihilation or a dangerous disappointment in a sense of status in the world. Tristan Sturm contours the apocalyptic geopolitics

of Jews for Jesus with the help of participant observation and interviews examining the varying commitments to prophetic scenarios that have reinvigorated apocalyptic meaning in American and Middle Eastern events. Annika Elstermann theorises cycles of apocalypse through a reading of the TV series *Battlestar Galactica*, invoking repetition as a motif of apocalyptic death and rebirth while considering a sense of shared humanity. Ruby Niemann explores potential survivals at the end through the posthuman and other-than-human figurations made available after the ‘green’ apocalypse via an engagement with Jeff VanderMeer’s *Southern Reach* and Margaret Atwood’s *MadAddam* trilogies.

We hope that these contributions will initiate a rich and thorough engagement with the end of the world in order to shine a light on the apocalypse as a multifaceted intellectual project. ●

**APOCALYPTICA
ONLINE**

<https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de/journals/index.php/apocalyptic/index>



TETZAHUITL, URBAN ARTS & TACOS

A RETROSPECT FROM
11 DAYS OF
TRANSDISCIPLINARY
SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

© Edgar Flores (SANER)

Tetzahuitl ... despite the often-raised question of how to pronounce this word, tetzahuitl was a fruitful subject for the arts meet sciences collaboration at the Metropolink Festival – Festival for Urban Art in Heidelberg in the summer of 2022. This Nahuatl word describes the post-apocalyptic visions of the Mexica people (people of the Valley of Mexico). Inspired by the concept of tetzahuitl, artist Edgar Flores SANER from Mexico City created both a mural at Julius-Springer-Schule Heidelberg and a collection of prints with a corresponding postcard series titled: *Tetzahuitl. Post-Apocalyptic Visions of the 12th Book*. In this artwork, the artist proposes a contemporary approach to the worldviews, myths, and stories implied in the narratives.

Tetzahuitl is a word which, in the narratives of the Nahuatl tradition, refers to manifold events that foreshadow phenomena said to bring about the alteration of the order of individual and collective life. Originally, tetzahuitl referred to eight omens that were part of the story of the destruction of the pre-Hispanic Mexica world. These omens were recorded in Book XII of the *Historia general de las Cosas de la Nueva España*. The story is based on earlier images that were

passed on together with oral narratives. The Franciscan monks wrote the first version of the book in Nahuatl and Spanish, presumably between 1545 and 1551. Hence,

The opening of the exhibition *Tetzahuitl. Post-Apocalyptic Visions of the 12th Book* by Edgar Flores SANER at the festival.





Inspired by the concept of *tetzahuitl*, artist Edgar Flores SANER from Mexico City created a mural at Julius-Springer-Schule Heidelberg. The public inauguration of the mural was celebrated with tacos and music.

the omens referred to in Book XII seem to be the product of a transcultural vision that attempted to find elements coherent to European imaginaries in indigenous cultural narratives. One has to read the *Historia general de las Cosas de la Nueva España* as a comprehensive encyclopaedia of the Nahuatl culture – albeit written under the influence of Franciscan monks and under the impression of the Conquista, making it a quasi-post-apocalyptic product. From that first manuscript, later versions of the text were derived to create the so-called *Florentine Codex* and *Codex Matritenses*.

After initiating the idea of a collaboration with SANER, CAPAS fellow Adolfo Mantilla worked together with him to look for elements in the omens that relate to contemporary experiences about end times scenarios. Corresponding to the eight omens of the Mexica, the artist created eight pieces that show elements of the pre-Hispanic world as well as the contemporary. When asked how it was to work with this topic in current times, SANER explained: “We just came from different problems, like the pandemic, climate crisis, the political problems with the systems, or the Russian invasion of Ukraine or the challenges in China right now. If you watch the news, you can be scared or feel scared or just try to imagine how hard it is to try to survive today, no?” Clearly, it was challenging content to work on for the creation of a mural, but to SANER, it appeared to have significant importance in its capacity to address these transcultural experiences of world endings in our present time. The topic and artwork allow the observer to find a multiplicity of



CAPAS invited Andrea Paluch, author of the children's book *Die besten Weltuntergänge* (The best endings of the world) for an interactive reading.

Next to the exhibition that accompanied the mural, an information sheet with a QR code was attached to the wall. By scanning the QR code, people could read the information on the CAPAS website.

realities in cultural practices, languages, and representations and, as such, enable the exploration of diverse sociohistorical and cosmopolitical dimensions.

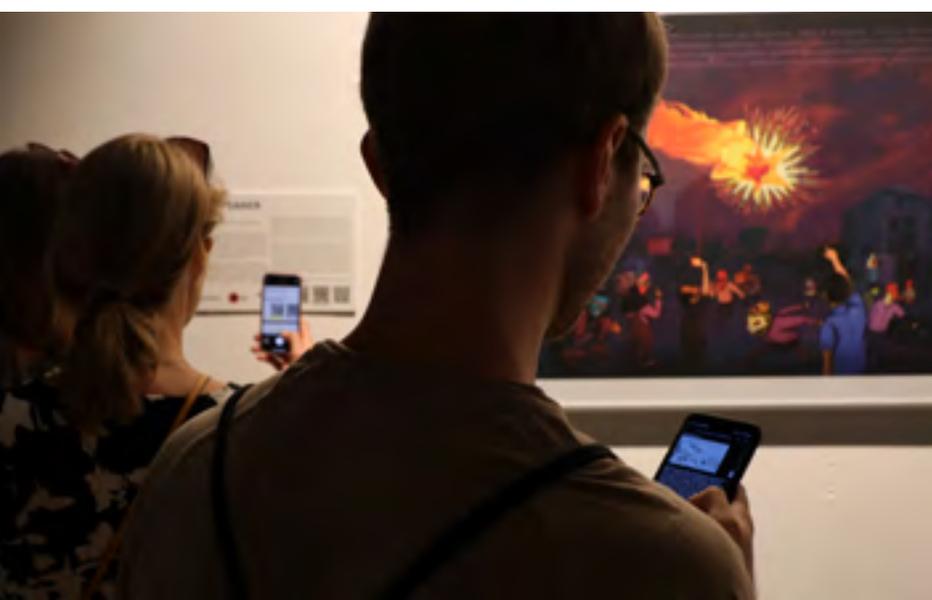
Certainly, the mural and exhibition speak to each person differently. To some people it might be terrifying and to others astonishing artwork. However, urban art can connect people and spark interest or inspiration for discussing a topic. In the case of arts meets sciences at Metropolink, that topic was science. Whether people are on their way to work or taking a stroll with their dog or family; the mural is visible as part of the city's landscape and will be part of the daily routine of many. During the mural's opening event with tacos and music, over 100 guests made the deserted parking lot a lively public space with discussions on arts, culture, music and science. As SANER stressed: "we put the topic on the table and we can create a bridge about something. And, right now, it is about the apocalypse and the people just take something and just start to think. I really loved the final piece and I loved the individual pieces but, in the end, we tried to put just one concept and it is like 'the apocalyptic is here and we need to wake up'". On the one hand, Adolfo Mantilla emphasized that "it is important to make a new interpretation of these narratives, of

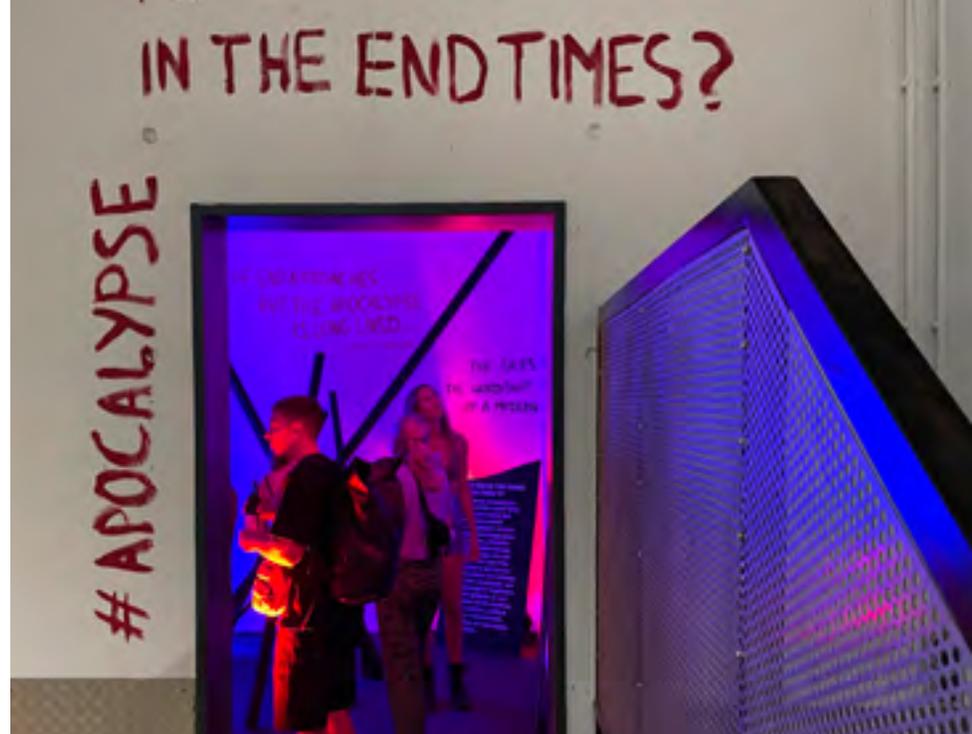
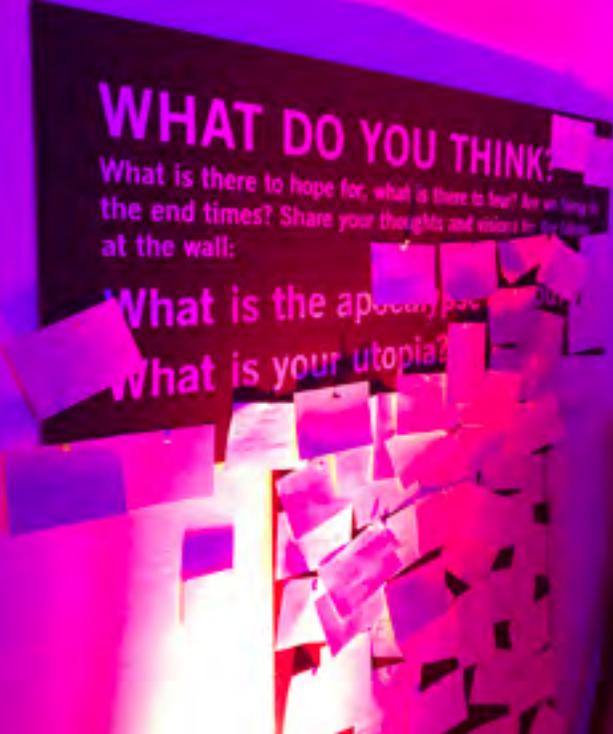


these stories, of this *tetzahuitl*, in order to make it possible to experience the collapsing of civilization in the contemporary". On the other hand, contemporary discourses on these omens also show the possibilities raised with world endings, catastrophes or profound societal changes. In detail, when the *tetzahuitl* were orally transmitted, the people also thought about the beginning of a new era, a new world.

URBAN ART IN HEIDELBERG

Metamorphosis, transformation, and utopia were central impulses of the Metropolink festival this year. In relation to these impulses, the festival gives access to remote locations. Interestingly, SANER's mural at Julius-Springer-Schule is located in the former Mark Twain Village, a housing settlement that was used by the US army. The US army had several settlements in Heidelberg during their almost 70 years of garrison, before their withdrawal from Heidelberg in 2013. Since 2018 the festival ground is also located in a former housing settlement of the US army, the Patrick Henry Village. This area was an abandoned place with only restricted access for the public for several years until the festival was the first actor in 2018 to revivify human life there. It is a truly post-apocalyptic place in which Pascal Baumgärtner, curator and director of the urban arts festival, emphasized: "I see the connection mainly through





CAPAS was present at the festival with a “Creative Information Point”. Visitors were asked to participate by answering the following questions: “What is there to hope for, what is there to fear? Are we living in the end times? What is your apocalypse? What is your utopia?”

the transformation of this isolated place. Only through art can one feel the transience that lies in these places. Street art in particular lives through painting over and destroying. This process does something to the visitor, the viewer. This form of mini-apocalypse gives us the feeling that nothing lasts forever. I think there is a fascination in this process. The combination with the place has a very special energy for me.” Indeed, it is a perfect place to talk about world endings and new beginnings with the wider public. Addressing questions from the public and discussing (post-)apocalyptic topics is part of the understanding of transdisciplinary science communication at CAPAS. “Art can reach the public differently, hence, we can actually transfer different content than by

using science only”, stresses Eva Bergdolt, who coordinated the cooperation between the festival and the centre.

COMMUNICATING SCIENCE AT THE FESTIVAL

CAPAS presented ideas in various formats at the festival ground. CAPAS fellows Bruna Della Torre and Christine Hentschel prepared talks for the public using a truly workshop-like setting. They discussed the influence of climate activism, social media and technology not only on society, but also on each individual person now and in the future. Robert Folger prepared a scientific commentary and critique of Mel Gibson’s blockbuster *Apocalypto*, which was screened during





The *Apocalyptic Cinema* evening took place in the Metropolink gardens, next to the former captain's offices of the military base. Robert Folger gave a scientific commentary before the screening of the film *Apocalypto*.

the *Apocalyptic Cinema* evening in the festival gardens. Since the festival also opens its doors to families with children, CAPAS invited Andrea Paluch, author of the children's book *Die besten Weltuntergänge* (The best endings of the world) for an interactive reading. In her book, she describes utopian but also dystopian imaginaries of humanity's future. Around 40 children attended, mostly at a young age under 10 years. Towards the end of the reading, the author asked the children what they would wish for if they had one wish. One main consensus arose by answering the question: If they had one wish, the children would wish for everything – except war.

Besides the various events, part of the transdisciplinary approach was the creative information point by CAPAS. Philipp Schrögel, with support from Gregor Kohl and others, established a continuous space for exchange during the festival, with a participative information point which could be accessed individually. Many visitors left cards with messages on the boards, referring to their own apocalypse, utopia, or leaving thoughts. After

reading the bunch of cards, one can find a balance between hope and despair for the future amongst the messages left there. Here are some for you to judge for yourself:

- Humans must die out so that the earth could recover from the disease that is us.
- Some dare to claim that life is beautiful and worth living, despite all the disasters and injustices. But he said it quietly as a clown on stage where no one really took him seriously. Make something of it!
- And when the world ended, everyone was too busy to notice it...
- Unique pleasure becomes more important than people's basic values and morals
- First expropriate all, then concentrate all forces for all
- Mae byd natur yn troelli o'n cwmpas o hyd (Bwncath) ("The natural world keeps spinning around us")
- We are bringing the apocalypse
- Colonialism is the origin of the climate crisis
- Un Buen Corazón/Alma. Ver o continuar viendo las cosas buenas del mundo. Solo el final para un nuevo comienzo. Somos combatientes y los cambios ayudan a construir lo que somos ahora y seremos después. ("A Good Heart/Soul. See or continue to see the good things in the world. Only ending for a new beginning. We are fighters and the changes help to build what we are now and will be later.")
- It will go on and on and on. Every second. Every minute. Every hour. It goes on and on.

Inspiring encounters, interesting discussions, delicious food – thank you to everyone who made these arts meet sciences experiments a true success! ●

#PEOPLE
APOCALYPSE

THE CAPAS ACADEMIC ADVISORY BOARD

PART I

The work of CAPAS is supported by an academic advisory board with six renowned international scholars from different disciplines. The board plays a central role in the selection and admission process for new fellows. Furthermore, the members also provide advice to the CAPAS board of directors on the strategic orientation of the centre, and contribute to expanding its international connections. We are going to introduce three of the six members here, the other three will be part of the following newsletter.



Prof. Dr. Shail Mayaram is the chair of the CAPAS advisory board. She is an Honorary Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi and was formerly a Professor at the Centre. From 2019 to 2020, she was Co-Director of the International Center for Advanced

Study (ICAS-MP), an Indo-German research collaboration of six Indian and German institutions. Her research includes sub-altern pasts and moral imaginations of peasant, pastoral and forest-based communities. Furthermore, she is interested in Indic and Islamic knowledge traditions and works on political and non-political Islam, Heresy, and Martyrdom.



Prof. Dr. Santiago Castro-Gómez is a Colombian philosopher known for his genealogical work on colonial legacies in Colombia and for his critical studies on political philosophy. He studied philosophy at the Universidad Santo Tomás de Bogotá and at the University of

Tübingen before he earned his doctorate at the Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt. Since his return to Colombia, he has

been a professor at the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana and the director of the Pensar Institute in Bogotá.



Prof. Dr. Elaine Scarry is the Cabot Professor of Aesthetics at Harvard University. She has published a number of works dealing with two central subjects—the nature of physical injury and the nature of human creation. “The Body in Pain” argues that the willful infliction of pain is the opposite of creation, since it imitates and inverts the ordinary work of the imagination. “On Beauty and Being” Just argues that beauty and justice are alike in having “injury” or “injustice” as their opposite. “Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing between Democracy and Doom” shows that nuclear weapons and democratic governance are mutually exclusive; it specifies the constitutional tools available for dismantling the country’s nuclear architecture. **She will be presenting the CAPAS distinguished lecture on November 10, 2022.**

CAPAS EVENTS

SUNDAY

02
10

🕒 10.30 PM 📍 Karlstorkino

Heidelberger Kinonacht

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

Directed by: George A. Romero (1968 | OV English with German subtitles | PG: 16). Scientific commentary: Stephen Shapiro (Former CAPAS fellow, University of Warwick).

WEDNESDAY

19
10

🕒 07.00 PM 📍 Karlstorkino

Apocalyptic Cinema

THE TERMINATOR

Directed by: James Cameron (1984 | OV English with German subtitles | PG: 16). Scientific commentary: Elke Schwarz (CAPAS Fellow, Queen Mary University of London).



MONDAY

31
10

🕒 06.00 PM 📍 Karlstorkino

Bunker Special

BUNKER

Directed by: Jenny Perlin (2021 | OV English). Commentary: Jenny Perlin (director) & Robert Kirsch (CAPAS Fellow, Arizona State University).

🕒 09.30 PM 📍 Karlstorkino

Bunker Special

DER BUNKER

Directed by: Nikias Chryssos (2015 | OV German with English subtitles | PG: 12). Commentary: Nikias Chryssos (director).



TUESDAY

08
11

🕒 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14
CAPAS Lecture Series

“ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE (POST-)APOCALYPTIC IMAGINARY”

Public Lecture by Teresa Heffernan (Saint Mary’s University, Canada).

[Digital stream available here](#)

THURSDAY

10
11

🕒 7.00 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 13
Special Event

DISTINGUISHED LECTURE BY ELAINE SCARRY

Cabot Professor of Aesthetics at Harvard University and member of CAPAS’ Academic Advisory Board.

TUESDAY

15
11

🕒 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14
CAPAS Lecture Series

“THE CHILD AND THE BIODOME: VITALISM IN RADICAL CLIMATE FICTION”

Public Lecture by Florian Mussgnug (University College London).

[Digital stream available here](#)

WEDNESDAY

16
11

🕒 07.00 PM 📍 Karlstorkino
Apocalyptic Cinema

BRIEFE EINES TOTEN MENSCHEN

Directed by: Konstantin Lopushanskiy (1986 | OV Russian with English Subtitles). Scientific commentary: Stefan Guth (Heidelberg University, Department of Eastern European History).

TUESDAY

22
11

🕒 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14
CAPAS Lecture Series

“THE CRUSADES AND APOCALYPTIC THOUGHT IN THE MIDDLE AGES”

Public Lecture by Simon John (Swansea University, United Kingdom).

[Digital stream available here](#)

MONDAY

28
11

🕒 07.30 PM 📍 Karlstorkino
Apocalyptic Cinema

ARRIVAL

Directed by: Denis Villeneuve (2016 | OV English with German subtitles | PG: 12). Scientific commentary: Matthias Bartelmann (Heidelberg University, Institute for Theoretical Physics). Part of the Ruperto-Carola-Ringvorlesung “Vom Ende als Anfang”.

TUESDAY

29
11

🕒 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14
CAPAS Lecture Series

“METEORITE IMPACTS AND THE END OF THE WORLD”

Public Lecture by Duane Hamacher (University of Melbourne).

[Digital stream available here](#)

1/2/3
12

🕒 8.00 PM 📍 E-WERK Freiburg
DAGADA Dance Company

HOW SOON IS NOW?

HOW SOON IS NOW? is part of a new cycle of the apocalypse and thematically and atmospherically dedicated to the diffuse fears close to the individual. The dance production is created in exchange with CAPAS.



© DAGADA dance

TUESDAY

06
12

🕒 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14
CAPAS Lecture Series

“BETWEEN DYSTOPIA AND UTOPIA: THE ESCHATOLOGICAL AMBIGUITY OF SILICON VALLEY LONGTERMISM”

Public Lecture by Elke Schwarz (CAPAS Fellow, Queen Mary University of London).

[Digital stream available here](#)

TUESDAY

13
12

🕒 4.15 PM – 5.45 PM 📍 Neue Universität, HS 14
CAPAS Lecture Series

“MESSIANISM AND APOCALYPSE. THE SERTÃO-MYTH AND THE LITERARY AND CINEMATIC CONSTRUCTION(S) OF BRAZILIAN HISTORY”

Public Lecture by Christian Wehr (University of Würzburg).

[Digital stream available here](#)

THURSDAY

15
12

🕒 07.00 PM 📍 Karlstorkino
Apocalyptic Cinema Christmas Special

ANNA AND THE APOCALYPSE

Directed by: John McPhail
(2017 | OV English with
German subtitles | PG: 16).
Scientific commentary:
Lars Fischer & Mike Zeitz
(both: Spektrum der
Wissenschaft).



All CAPAS events at www.capas.uni-heidelberg.de/events.html



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FOR APOCALYPTIC AND
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SEIT 1386

WINTER
2022/23

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TICKET-INFO



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Funded by:



19.10.
7.00 PM

**THE
TERMINATOR**

15.12.
7.00 PM

**ANNA AND THE
APOCALYPSE**

31.10.
6.00 PM

BUNKER

18.01.
7.00 PM

REY

31.10.
8.30 PM

DER BUNKER

15.02.
7.00 PM

ENDZEIT

16.11.
7.00 PM

**BRIEFE EINES
TOTEN
MENSCHEN**

28.11.
7.30 PM

ARRIVAL

09.01.
7.30 PM

NOAH

BUNKER SPECIAL

PART OF RUPERTO-CAROLA-RINGVORLESUNG



K3 CLIMATE COMMUNICATION CONGRESS

HOW MUCH APOCALYPSE CAN THERE BE IN CLIMATE COMMUNICATION? by Alexandra Endres*

Climate communication cannot and must not conceal the potentially catastrophic consequences of the climate crisis. A workshop at the K3 Congress in Zurich explored how to deal constructively with negative emotions such as fear, anger and sadness.

Climate crisis, species extinction, disturbed phosphorus and nitrogen cycles: we are living in a time of multiple man-made crises, which are also mutually reinforcing. Not to mention the Corona pandemic or the Ukraine war. In short: “The apocalypse is everywhere”, as Philipp Schrögel, science communicator and research coordinator at CAPAS, put it.

“Massive fear appeals” can create awareness of the problem. However, they are often ineffective, said Schrögel’s co-moderator Torsten Grothmann, environmental psychologist at the Carl von Ossietzky University in Oldenburg. This is because fear can also generate defensive reactions, excessive demands, repression and fatalism.

How can we succeed in dealing well with our own climate fears? And what does this mean for communication? Katharina van Bronswijk, psychotherapist, author

and spokesperson for Psychologists and Psychotherapists for Future, spoke about these questions. A central message of her input was this: repressing unpleasant emotions such as fear, anger or sadness about climate change is wrong. There is always a need for something behind them; and those who do not want to acknowledge their negative emotions cannot recognise the needs behind them.

“Being afraid is definitely the right reaction in environmental crises,” said Christian Klöckner, Professor of Social Psychology and Quantitative Methods at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim. During his lecture at the congress, Klöckner pleaded for more disruptive communication - that is, communication that disrupts people’s everyday lives and also evokes emotional reactions, with the aim of initiating radical change. Environmental movements often communicate disruptively, he remarked, “with big messages, with intrusion into everyday life. They have achieved a lot.”

Climate change adaptation: The City of Zurich experiments with providing cooling in the city with an installation creating artificial mist at the Turbinenplatz.



* abbreviated and translated teaser for the original article by Alexandra Endres, [license CC BY 4.0](https://www.klimafakten.de/meldung/wieviel-apokalypse-der-klimakommunikation-darf-es-sein-am-wichtigsten-ist-auch-auswege-zu)

●●● **read more (in German)**

<https://www.klimafakten.de/meldung/wieviel-apokalypse-der-klimakommunikation-darf-es-sein-am-wichtigsten-ist-auch-auswege-zu>



#SCIENCE
APOCALYPSE

REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION

by Rolf Scheuermann

Whether Mogadishu, Rostock-Lichtenhagen, or Halle, these names have earned themselves a place in our collective memory. Still, a lot has changed over the years regarding how the state formally responds to such events and how victims of such attacks are cared for.

The question of how care for victims can be further improved necessitated a workshop titled *Acts of Remembering and Commemorating after a Terrorist or Extremist Attack* (“Erinnern und Gedenken nach einem terroristischen oder extremistischen Anschlag”), which took place in September at the Federal Academy of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance, Bad Nauener. It was organized by Pascal Kober, the German Commissioner for the Victims of Domestic Terrorist Activities from the Federal Ministry of Justice, and was attended by the victim commissioners of the various German federal states.

Presentations focused on the historical evolution of German state commemoration, the role of digital portals for mourning and commemoration, the perspective of relatives and survivors, and the role of rituals for trauma and grief management.

On the second day, Anna Katharina Hopflinger (LMU Munich) and Rolf Scheuermann (CAPAS, Heidelberg University) held a three-hour session titled “On Hopes for the Hereafter and Purelands. Death and Commemoration in Religions”. Whether it’s a Catholic mass for the dead, an Islamic funeral procession, a Jewish Shiv’ah, or a recitation of

the Tibetan Book of the Dead, dealing with death and remembrance is central to religions. Consequently, it was discussed how different religions offer hope and comfort in dealing with death and how individual rituals that take place before, during, and after death are structured.

Two particular features were raised during this session. First, the perspective of religions goes beyond death and creates images of the afterlife. Religions may emphasize a phase of transition into another existence or another world, which has a significant impact on the religious culture of commemoration. From a religious point of view, deceased persons continue to be present, perhaps as ancestors or spirits, for example. According to some religions, they can participate in the everyday life of the living or even interact with them. Numerous religious commemorative rituals, therefore, emphasize the presence of the deceased.

The second feature raised during this session was that religions establish norms and values for dealing with death and remembrance, which often reflect ideas on how to live a good life. The commemoration of death is therefore often associated with instructions on how life should be led.

A publication is envisioned that will summarize the key points for victim commissioners and decision-makers. ●

Each religion has its own set of rituals to deal with death and to offer hope and comfort. Pictured here is a buddhist funeral.
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#PUBLIC
APOCALYPSE

NATURALIA

“What if we disappeared tomorrow...?” With this thought, photographer Jonathan Jimenez lets us dive into his collection of images showing urban ruins taken over by nature. His book **“Naturalia – Reclaimed by Nature”** takes us on a journey through the ruins of abandoned mansions overgrown by ivy, remains of cars from whose bodies grow trees, and industrial ruins whose drab gray surfaces gradually give way to the green of ever persistent plants.

Yes, what if we disappear? This question seems less and less hypothetical. Climate change is already making large swaths of land in the global South uninhabitable

for humans. In just a few years, scenes similar to those depicted in the book will almost certainly be viewable in Ukraine. In spite of the gloomy thoughts brought out by the book’s illustrations, these images can also offer comfort. We may disappear, but life goes on. In a probably not-too-distant future, all evidence for the existence of our species, *Homo sapiens*, will be just another layer in the fossil record.

About Jonathan Jimenez

A passionate photographer since childhood, Jonathan Jimenez (Paris) discovered urban exploration more than a decade ago. Starting with the rooftops, subways and catacombs of Paris, it led him to abandoned spaces. His original interest was discovering street art and graffiti, but while photographing, he found a particular interest in the atmosphere and intensity of scenes created by nature reclaiming inhabited spaces. ●



NATURALIA: RECLAIMED BY NATURE

JONATHAN JIMENEZ

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LOVE AND APOCALYPSE

AN ALLEGORY FOR STUDYING THE END TIMES

by Alexander Burton

Apocalypse feels primal. It has been baked into many of our cultures in different ways, to different degrees, with an unequal distribution of its experience on Earth. Others have written about how the specific meaning of ‘apocalypse’ gets lost in its more general use (i.e. Dunn & Weyland 2022; Jones 2022). Confusion about its meaning is matched by the surprise, disbelief, and even humour that comes from explaining that apocalyptic studies is a genuine, diverse field of scholarship. In his article *Love and Apocalypse: An Allegory for Studying the End Times* human geographer Alexander Burton seeks to replace the imagery of ivory towers, dusty theologians and their even dustier eschatological treatises and doomsday sign wavers in the marketplace. The gap between apocalypse as a relevant object of study and its real impacts as a disruption and discovery is closed via a comparison to love. Burton’s article – first published on CAPAS’s open access publishing platform PubPub – makes this comparison through their similarities as co-produced and powerful experiences influenced by spirituality and history, felt viscerally, and lived in the wake and shadow of loss and transformation.

“If someone goes through apocalypse unchanged, then they did not experience apocalypse. Apocalypse is not universal. It is felt unequally across time, space, and body. It discriminates. Or perhaps, the people who bring it discriminate”, states human geographer Alexander Burton.

Talking about the relevance of apocalyptic studies through a comparison with love requires a baseline of why it is studied to begin with. There are three

broad reasons. Scholars may firstly be interested in preparing for apocalypse. This may be individual or shared preparation, as well as material or emotional

preparation. According to Burton, the purpose of this preparation is about building resilience and developing systemic, scholarly fortifications, like academic preppers who prepare for when ‘shit hits the fan’. Secondly, apocalyptic studies can be conducted to imagine how an end of days might be staved off, at least for



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the time being. The purpose of delaying the apocalypse is about placating and counterbalancing the fiends of societal entropy, like doctors or epidemiologists looking for trends and making diagnoses to keep our systems healthy for as long as possible. Thirdly, apocalypse can be a fascination, an aesthetic, and a trojan show pony to be paraded while a scholar's central focus is only tangentially related. Apocalypse is dramatic, cathartic, and gives a synthetic pleasure from an antagonistic society's death howls. Upheaval around the world and in living history gives apocalyptic studies a stylish backdrop. These, alongside the transformations of the past and the ricochet of the future's psychic shriek, can each be metamorphised into zeitgeisty allegory and art for those fortunate enough to view them from a distance.

Scepticism about secular apocalyptic studies is not unfounded. But like it or not,



apocalypse is an influential narrative and deserves attention. Burton's article seeks to bring the above reasons for study into sharper focus through references to a certain apocalypse in miniature: the loss of love. Layered with the story of a breakup, the article presents a symbiosis of academia and art which demonstrates some key themes in apocalyptic studies, including narrative, temporality, resilience, and discrimination.

●●● [read more on PubPub](https://pubpub.org)
capas.pubpub.org

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APOCALYPSE



PLAYING THE END OF THE WORLD

(POST-)APOCALYPTIC ROLEPLAY AND BOARDGAME DAY

The end of the world means serious business – usually. However, the large corpus of (post-)apocalyptic novels and movies shows that, besides their various cultural, political, and philosophical dimensions, such material also has an entertainment value.

One often overlooked element of popular culture and literature plays a highly influential role in forming and transporting (post-)apocalyptic imaginaries and narratives:

games. Such images and narratives can be found everywhere, be it computer games (such as the hugely popular Fallout franchise), analogue board games (for example

Zombicide or Pandemic), tabletop role-playing games (like Apocalypse Worlds, which bears the apocalypse front and centre in its name) or even live action roleplaying games.

At CAPAS, this aspect is not overlooked at all. The centre has its own small (post-)apocalyptic boardgame library. These games even serve as material for part of CAPAS fellow Adrian Herrmann's research on "Tabletop and Computer Role-Playing Games as (Post-)Apocalyptic Story Engines".

In order to bring the discussion and the experience to a public audience, CAPAS organized the first (Post-)Apocalyptic Roleplay and Boardgame Day in July 2022 in cooperation with Heidelberg game store Fantasy Kolosseum. Several roleplaying games and boardgames were available, introduced by experienced game masters so that beginners could also easily join.

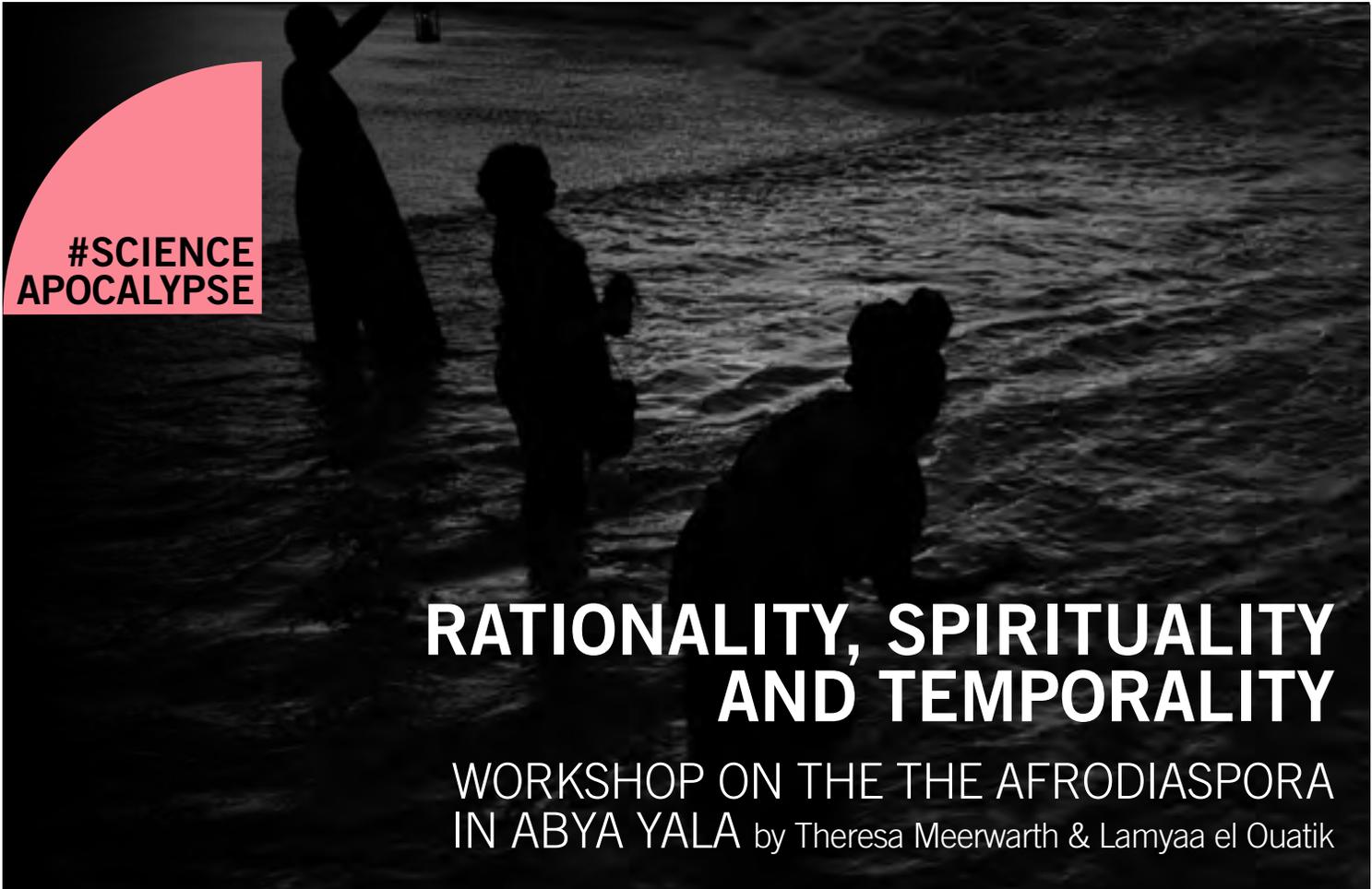
The outcome of this experiment was a huge success. Not only was the turnout overwhelming, but the many discussions among players and researchers from CAPAS were fruitful and exciting. We plan to continue this format in the future, perhaps with the addition of some formal short presentations or a panel discussion. We are also considering

online options such as game reviews or LET'S PLAY sessions.

A first step will be an interactive game session together with Lukas Boch from the project Boardgame Historian during the "Hurra die Welt geht unter" (Yay, the world is ending) conference in November 2022. The conference is jointly organized by two working groups from the society for media studies: comics research, and popular culture and media studies. ●

In July 2022, CAPAS organized the first (Post-)Apocalyptic Roleplay and Boardgame Day in cooperation with Heidelberg game store Fantasy Kolosseum.





#SCIENCE
APOCALYPSE

RATIONALITY, SPIRITUALITY AND TEMPORALITY

WORKSHOP ON THE THE AFRODIASPORA
IN ABYA YALA by Theresa Meerwarth & Lamyaa el Ouatik

Together with former fellow Yuderlys Espinosa Miñoso, CAPAS organized a workshop on Rationality, Spirituality and Temporality of the Afrodiaspora in Abya Yala, an indigenous term for America, that took place at the beginning of July in Heidelberg.

We were delighted to host Agustín Lao-Montes, Ashanty Dinah Orozco and Danielle Almeida as keynote speakers. The workshop centered around the experiences and the senses of temporality present in the rationality, community practices, narratives and forms of creative expression of the peoples of the African diaspora in Latin America and the Caribbean and was guided by the importance of art, spirituality and memory as modes of resistance, and as part of a programme of liberation and good living [buen vivir] beyond racial capitalism and coloniality. The plenum discussed these non-occidental onto-epistemologies as sources of decoloniality and liberation, and as possible confrontations with the idea of linear and finite temporality of occidental modernity.

In order to guarantee access to the four rich and thought-provoking keynotes to those who missed the workshop, we recorded the following talks: “Cultivating Ubuntu / Vivir Sabroso: Exploring Caliban’s Reason and the Maroon Rationalities of Exu-Legba” by Agustín Lao-Montes; “Eco-Poetics of the Ship in the Middle Passage” by Ashanty Dinah Orozco; “Afro-Caribbean maroon rationality and temporality: Against catastrophe and modern-colonial annihilation” by Yuderlys Espinosa Miñoso; and “Ofó: Time and art within the voice of Black Latin American singers” by Danielle Almeida. You can find the videos on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXwg83r-wDdAJVljhYMbS48Q/playlists>.

We were also very glad that Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez and Pinar Tuzcu accepted our invitation to present their book on Migrant Feminism in the German Feminist Movement (1985-2000) and agreed to share the results of their research with the participants of the workshop and the public. ●

#PUBLIC
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CLIMATE CRISIS & CATASTROPHES

WHAT DOES IT MEAN LOCALLY?

The climate crisis is a global challenge, as the abundance of worldwide reports on droughts, forest fires and extreme weather events show. But the questions of causes, possible developments and countermeasures also arise directly and concretely at the very local level – questions that are being asked by science, politics and many citizens alike.

The Participants of the panel discussion: Kathrin Foshag (HCE & Transdisciplinary Lab Geography), moderator Philipp Schrögel (CAPAS), Marvin Knapp (HCE & Institute of Environmental Physics), Laurens van Bussel (Federal Agency for Technical Relief) and Nadja Thiessen (emergenCITY – Center for Emergency Responsive Digital Cities & Institute of History at TU Darmstadt).

This observation was the starting point for a transdisciplinary panel discussion aboard the exhibition ship titled MS Wissenschaft, which dropped anchor on the Neckar River in Heidelberg in early September. It was organized jointly by CAPAS, the Heidelberg Center for the Environment (HCE) and Wissenschaft im Dialog, the operators of the MS Wissenschaft. The exhibition on the ship changes yearly depending on the scientific topic proclaimed by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research. The 2022 topic, “My question for science”, fits quite well in the context of climate crisis and catastrophe, with hundreds of questions opening up when one thinks about the specific local implications of the worsening climate crisis.

How can CO2 emissions be locally measured? How can directly perceptible effects of the climate crisis like increased overheating in cities be better unders-

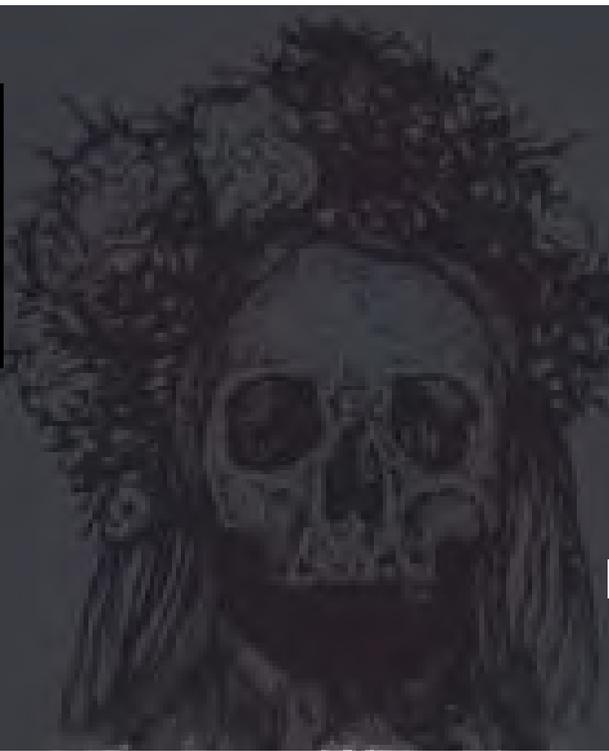
stood and mitigated? What can we learn from past catastrophes in a region? How can we better prepare for future extreme weather events and natural disasters, and counter the consequences? How are we talking about these serious challenges? What do we make of the frequently proclaimed “apocalyptic conditions” in media reports?

The discussion, moderated by Philipp Schrögel from CAPAS, included – in the truest transdisciplinary sense – experts from a variety of different areas: Kathrin Foshag (HCE and Transdisciplinary Lab Geography), Marvin Knapp (HCE and Institute of Environmental Physics), Nadja Thiessen (emergenCITY – Center for Emergency Responsive Digital Cities and Institute of History at TU Darmstadt), and an expert from the practical side – Laurens van Bussel from the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (Technisches Hilfswerk). Most importantly, the discussion provided the opportunity for several insightful questions and personal remarks from an engaged audience. Several audience members respectfully challenged the presented scientific insights, with some questioning the focus of the research question or its applicability. Conversations regarding disaster preparedness and preemptive crisis communication continued between panel guests and some audience members beyond the official end of the event. ●



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DECOLONIZING THE UNDEAD

RETHINKING ZOMBIES
IN WORLD-LITERATURE,
FILM, AND MEDIA

Looking beyond Euro-Anglo-US centric zombie narratives, the book *Decolonizing the Undead* reconsiders representations and allegories constructed around this figure of the undead. In twelve articles, the book's contributors examine the cultural and historical weight of zombie narratives in different nations and its significance to postcolonial, decolonial, and neoliberal discourses. Editors of the book are Stephen Shapiro (former CAPAS-fellow), Giulia Champion, Roxanne Douglas.

Taking stock of zombies as they appear in literature, film, and television from the Caribbean, Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa, India, Japan, and Iraq, this book explores how the undead reflect a plethora of experiences previously obscured by western preoccupations and anxieties. These include embodiment and dismemberment in Haitian revolutionary contexts; resistance and subversion to social realities in the Caribbean and Latin America; symbiosis of cultural, historical traditions with Western popular culture; the undead as feminist figures; as an allegory for migrant workers; as a critique to reconfigure socio-ecological relations between humans and nature; and as a means of voicing the plurality of stories from destroyed cities and war-zones.

Interspersed with contextual explorations of the zombie narrative in American culture (such as zombie walks and the television series *The Santa Clarita Diet*), contributors examine such writers as Lowell R. Torres, Diego Velázquez Betancourt, Hemendra Kumar Roy, and Manabendra Pal; works like China Mieville's *Covehithe*, Reza Negarestani's *Cycolonopedia*, Julio Ortega's novel *Adiós, Ayacucho*, Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*; and films by Alejandro Brugués, Michael James Rowland, Steve McQueen, and many others. Far from just another zombie project, this is a vital study that teases out the important conversations among numerous cultures and nations embodied in this universally recognized figure of the undead. ●

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DECOLONIZING THE UNDEAD – RETHINKING ZOMBIES IN WORLD- LITERATURE, FILM, AND MEDIA

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