

apocalypse is not exclusively a future-oriented phenomenon but has historically offered frameworks for understanding past ruptures and continues to shape present responses to real or imagined endings.

From a pragmatic standpoint, the notion of apocalypse operates not in terms of an ontological status but according to its functions: it can act as (1) an emotionally palliative or reality-avoidant fantasy in the sense of a “small-scale, therapeutic redemption” (Hammond and Ortega 2015, 111), that is, as a coping mechanism or even an instrument of manipulation; (2) a dystopian, action-guiding narrative urging the prevention of destruction and catastrophe (Moo 2015), often related to “disappointing” postapocalyptic imagery and narratives (Blanchot 1997; Zupančič 2018; Folger and Stümer forthcoming October 2025); or (3) a constructive conceptual figure, understood as a call for processes of “worldmaking.”³ This multi-faceted conceptualization of apocalypse offers a critical lens through which to approach the Anthropocene. For the Anthropocene, too, engages with the collapse of systems, radical transformations of temporalities, affects of dread, urgency and hope, and narrative frameworks that simultaneously project endings and demand the reimagining of futures.

Apocalyptic narratives and imageries provide channels through which cultural anxieties, social fears, and political ideologies are articulated. At the heart of recent intellectual and cultural representations of and debates on existentially threatening climate change, lies the concept of the Anthropocene. The notion of the Anthropocene was introduced and popularized by atmospheric chemist Paul J. Crutzen and marine biologist Eugene F. Stoermer in their seminal 2000 publication “The ‘Anthropocene,’” in the *Global Change Newsletter*. The term ‘Anthropocene’ was coined to denote a new geological epoch characterized by significant human impact on Earth’s ecosystems and geological processes.⁴ Crutzen and Stoermer argued that since the industrial revolution, and particularly in recent decades with intensified neoliberal capitalist globalization, the so-called Great Acceleration (Bergthaller and Horn 2022, 34–36), human activities have profoundly impacted the planet. Activities such as burning fossil fuels, extractivism, deforestation, industrial agriculture, and livestock farming have drastically increased the concentration of greenhouse gases, leading to global warming, ecosystem disruptions, and species extinctions (Crutzen 2006). Their argument posits that humanity has become a “planetary geophysical” (Chakrabarty 2021, 174) or “telluric force” (Bonneuil, Hamilton and Gemenne 2015, 4), capable of significantly altering the Earth system, a role previously occupied by non-human natural processes alone.

Despite extensive interdisciplinary research and societal debate, the Anthropocene remains a contentious and disputed concept. Notably, its

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³ As Nelson Goodman (1978, 6) claims “[w]orlds are made, not found, and the making involves the invention and application of concepts, the drawing of distinctions, the organization of experience,” which implies that apocalyptic ruptures create the need, and, at the same time, the possibility of the making a of a radically new world.

⁴ Regarding the genealogy and reception of the notion see Hannes Bergthaller and Eva Horn (2022, 25–61).

formal recognition as a distinct geological epoch was officially rejected by the International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) in conjunction with the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) in March 2024 (Witze 2004). The primary rationale for the rejection centred on the insufficient stratigraphic evidence to substantiate the Anthropocene as a formal epoch. Critics highlighted the shallow sedimentary record and the recency of the proposed start date, arguing that these factors did not meet the stringent criteria required for defining a new epoch in the geological time scale. This decision concluded a lengthy evaluation initiated by the Anthropocene Working Group in 2009, highlighting the complexity and contentious nature of defining geological epochs through human impact. Such debates reveal a crucial tension between empirical scientific methods and theories and the broader narrative structures in which these findings are situated, raising important questions about objectivity, cultural biases, and epistemological legitimacy.

Although in its statement the ICS did not acknowledge the Anthropocene on grounds of scientific stratigraphy, it did not reject it summarily: “Despite its rejection as a formal unit of the Geologic Time Scale, the Anthropocene will nevertheless continue to be used not only by Earth and environmental scientists, but also by social scientists, politicians and economists, as well as by the public at large. It will remain an invaluable descriptor of human impact on the Earth system” (ICS 2024). This was an acknowledgment of the intriguing fact that the Anthropocene, a term meant to be strictly scientific, has been widely embraced within social sciences and the humanities; who, it is worth pointing out, the ICS did not consider worth mentioning. This paradoxical acceptance highlights an unusual dynamic: while the narrower scientific community ultimately resists formal adoption, the humanities eagerly incorporate it, accepting “Earth system science” as “the ultimate source of authority” (Chakrabarty 2021, 37), often jeopardizing their critical role as a complement to the sciences. Instead of challenging or problematizing the consequences of scientific findings, the humanities risk reifying as absolute the epistemology and ontology of science, thus undermining their potential to offer genuinely alternative and critical perspectives.

Yet, this acceptance within the humanities has proven highly productive in challenging deeply entrenched assumptions such as the binary separation of nature and culture, human exceptionalism, and linear narratives of progress. Critical reflections on and further developments of the original Anthropocene concept, including proposals of alternative notions (most importantly Andreas Malm’s [2016; 2018] and Jason M. Moore’s [2016] “Capitalocene”) that imply different, non-universalizing

causalities,⁵ yet are faithful to the basic idea of the present as an existential crisis due to misguided human activity (Bergthaller and Horn 2022, 25–43), have additionally stimulated important theoretical contributions, particularly in posthumanism, which undermine the ontological dualism between nature and culture and question traditional narratives of human agency and dominance over the natural world. Moreover, the Anthropocene's influence extends beyond academic circles, significantly impacting literature, film, visual arts, and activism, where it has inspired innovative artistic practices and environmental movements aimed at raising awareness and fostering ecological responsibility. In this sense, it also underscores the necessity for transdisciplinary approaches that engage with “pressing societal problems,” as emphasized by Thomas Jahn, Matthias Bergmann, and Florian Keil (2012, 1), bridging scientific, artistic, and activist fields to create new forms of knowledge production.

Central to the potency of the Anthropocene discourse is its inherently apocalyptic dimension, predicated on a linear temporality that emphasizes imminent catastrophe. The Anthropocene thus becomes a powerful narrative device, weaving empirical data and ethical imperatives into a story that transcends scientific boundaries to embody a deeply moral and political critique. Yet, beneath the seemingly neutral and objective rhetoric of scientific discourse lies a complex ideological substratum, deeply intertwined with Eurocentric and colonial legacies, that is ultimately apologetic of anthropocentric teleology (Bonneuil 2015).

As a narrative, the Anthropocene is necessarily ideological in itself; by treating “humanity” as a singular “globalizing agent” (Folger 2024), it obscures critical distinctions of agency, power, and interest, particularly those of marginalized groups not favoured by hegemonic structures, notably in the Global South, and ultimately nullifies, in the name of the Planet, questions of justice (Chakrabarty 2021). In bestowing ultimate urgency on the political agendas associated with the Anthropocene, the apocalypse understood as annihilation functions as an “ideologeme”—a term coined by Fredric Jameson (1981, 87) to describe the smallest intelligible unit of ideology that functions as a “pseudoidea [...] or as protonarrative”—which serves to reinforce specific worldviews and maintain existing power hierarchies by universalizing particular interests and perspectives.

Furthermore, the uncritical support of scientific epistemologies within Anthropocene discourse inadvertently fosters the idea of a technological fix: the notion that, as science has led to the current ecological crises, it alone can provide the solutions to rectify these problems. This technocratic assumption, embedded within eco-modernist and eco-catastrophic paradigms, reinforces the belief in progress as technological mastery over

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5 Moore (2016, 6) claims that “the modern world has not been made by humanity as an undifferentiated whole, but by capitalogenic forces mobilized through empire, class, and commodity-centered relations.”

nature, neglecting alternative forms of knowledge and local, indigenous practices and wisdoms.

The persuasive urgency of this “grand narrative”⁶ is thoroughly critiqued by Delf Rothe (2020), who identifies three predominant attitudes towards Anthropocene thought: eco-catastrophism, eco-modernism, and planetary realism. Eco-catastrophism and eco-modernism both hinge upon human rationality and the scientific management of planetary systems, propagating the continued dominance of Western epistemological frameworks, particularly the mostly unnoticed continuity of eschatology. In contrast, planetary realism argues that the apocalypse is already underway, foregrounding indigenous resilience and promoting local knowledge as superior in ecological adaptability. Yet, even this stance inadvertently perpetuates epistemic hierarchies and reinforces linear temporalities, revealing its limitations in genuinely disrupting dominant hegemonies and accommodating plural epistemologies (Rothe, 2020). Rothe’s argument suggests that apocalyptic thinking, as inherited from the tradition of Western eschatology, paradoxically introduces a notion of continuity into concepts of the Anthropocene, thereby preventing the Anthropocene from essentially constituting what Bergthaller and Horn (2022, 23) describe as a “rupture” (*Unterbrechung*).

This inherent conceptual and ideological complexity suggests that the Anthropocene narrative, while initially perceived as an objective scientific construct, is fundamentally a narrative with profound moral and ethical dimensions. It presents itself as a comprehensive worldview, privileging specific narratives, actors, and causal relationships, and marginalizing alternative forms of knowledge. The Anthropocene asks us to rethink or “shatter” classic ontologies (Bergthaller and Horn 20–21) and, at the same time, implies a process of ontologization that not only builds on the reality of climate change but also involves a series of reifications: the Earth System, the human species and the Anthropocene itself assuming a “phantom objectivity” (Lukács 197, 83).⁷ Unless it reflects its totalizing apocalyptic implication, the Anthropocene obscures critical power dynamics, social inequalities, and diverse agencies, thus limiting the scope of genuine critical discourse and action.

The present volume of *Apocalyptica* seeks to engage critically with the potentials, limitations, and implications of Anthropocene discourse, exploring how the intersection of apocalypse and Anthropocene narratives informs and constrains our contemporary understanding of ecological, social, and political crises. By presenting diverse disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives, the essays challenge dominant frameworks and advocate for recognizing multiple “worlds”—each marked by their

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⁶ Stephens and McCallum (1998, 6) define a grand narrative or metanarrative as “a global or totalizing cultural narrative schema which orders and explains knowledge and experience”.

⁷ Regarding the the Anthropocene and its relation to the so-called “new realisms” see Monica Kaup (2021) and also Chakrabarty (2021). Bergthaller and Horn (2022, 90–99) try to defuse the universalizing essentialism of the Anthropocene through a differentiation between “anthropos” (humanity organized in the polis and the actual destructive geological force) and “homo” (the species among other species). However, this resematization is hardly apt to change the political and ideological thrust of a concept commonly referring to humanity as whole as a geological force.

unique looming ends. The contributions aim to highlight non-hegemonic epistemologies and narratives, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity, justice, and sustainability.

Ultimately, following Timothy Clark (2015), I propose viewing the Anthropocene as a “threshold concept,” a pivotal and transformative idea that forces inherited knowledge structures into new constellations and thereby opens up new epistemic fields. As such, the Anthropocene is potentially transformative, inviting novel ways of thinking about human existence, temporality, and planetary relations. However, this transformative potential must always be approached with caution: it is imperative to critically reflect on the ideological components, the eschatological foundations, and the reactionary implications that accompany the Anthropocene narrative.

Having outlined the conceptual and critical framework that informs this volume, we now turn to the individual contributions. While not all articles explicitly articulate the relation between apocalypse and the Anthropocene, each provides important insights into key aspects of the broader thematic field. Collectively, they expand, complicate, and challenge the ideas presented here, offering a multifaceted exploration of apocalyptic narratives of the Anthropocene, systemic transformations, and the challenges of imagining alternative futures.

Michael Löwy’s article “Apocalypse, Anthropocene, Capitalism, Ecosocialism” presents a compelling synthesis of apocalyptic thought, ecological urgency, and anti-capitalist critique within the framework of ecosocialism. Löwy’s central claim is that we are living in a moment that mirrors the prophetic structure of ancient apocalyptic revelations, not because the end is inevitable, but because our current trajectory—under capitalist hegemony—places us on a path of civilizational collapse. He reinterprets the prophetic warnings of destruction (such as “MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN” from the Book of Daniel) as analogues to the IPCC’s climate reports: signs that we have been “weighed and found wanting.”

Crucially, the article also questions the universalizing anthropocentrism often implicit in the concept of the Anthropocene. Löwy critiques the notion that ‘humanity’ as such is the geological force responsible for planetary crisis. Instead, he emphasizes that it is a historically specific mode of organizing human life—capitalism—that drives ecological destruction. Thus, ‘man’ in general is not the problem, but, rather, the way Western hegemony has organized human beings in a globalized world under capitalism, raising questions about climate justice, uneven resources, and vulnerability.

Löwy distinguishes between two types of apocalypse: one as fatalistic and inevitable catastrophe, and the other as a conditional, transformative warning. The former mirrors contemporary climate denial and political inaction; the latter, in his view, remains open to human agency and revolutionary change. He critiques techno-optimistic illusions, market-based pseudo-solutions, and delayed governmental pledges, arguing that only a radical break with capitalist logic—through ecosocialism—can avert irreversible climate disaster. The article concludes with a political imperative: the time for action is now. It is not merely about “saving the planet” but about reimagining our collective future. Löwy insists that hope lies not in adaptation or escape, but in resistance, in dismantling fossil capitalism, and in building a just ecological society.

Priscilla Jolly examines, in “(Sub)Terranean Intimacies: Indeterminacies of Flesh and Crystal in *The Crystal World*,” J. G. Ballard’s novel *The Crystal World* (1966), interpreting its crystalline apocalypse as a profound reflection on the intersections between the Anthropocene and apocalyptic narrative forms. Drawing comparative insights from Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899), the author positions Ballard’s portrayal of crystallization as a speculative engagement with ecological and geological catastrophes precipitated by human extractive activities. The novel’s depiction of tropical regions as focal sites of transformation underscores the colonial and racialized dynamics inherent in Anthropocene discourses. Ballard’s apocalyptic crystallization—turning living organisms into gemstones—represents a radical disruption of capitalist value networks, simultaneously destabilizing categories such as organic/inorganic, human/nonhuman, and life/death. Ultimately, the article argues that *The Crystal World* employs the apocalyptic mode not merely as an end-time scenario but as a critical device for reconsidering humanity’s ethical responsibilities and geological agency in an epoch defined by anthropogenic environmental collapse.

Long Hoang Vu’s article “Vietnam’s Revolutionary Trajectory: Between Leninist Aspirations and Apocalyptic Realities” examines Vietnam’s revolutionary philosophy through the concept of the ‘end of history,’ relating it to apocalyptic visions and Anthropocene anxieties. Focusing on historical materialism blended with Confucian values and pragmatism, it highlights Vietnam’s attempts to leapfrog historical stages via scientific advances, exemplified by Phạm Tuân’s symbolic 1980 space mission. Conversely, Trần Đức Thiệp’s 1992 nuclear accident embodies catastrophic consequences when ambitious ideological plans outpace infrastructure. These cases underscore the tension between revolutionary teleology—viewing communism as an apocalyptic utopia—and pragmatic adaptation required in

the Anthropocene era, suggesting history is shaped more by contingent, interconnected phenomena than by deterministic narratives.

In her article “Ongoing Apocalypse and Ecological Consciousness in Han Song’s Science Fiction” Fontaine Lien explores how Han Song’s *Subway* (2010) enacts a “continuously unfolding apocalypse,” resisting the closure typical of science fiction and ecological narratives. Rather than offering salvation or technological mastery, *Subway* presents disorientation, mutation, and epistemic breakdown as conditions of ongoing ecological collapse. Han’s use of fragmented narrative, ambiguous characters, and destabilizing typography (ellipses, slashes, and unanswered questions) reflects a world in which neither time, history, nor subjectivity can be stabilized. Unlike mainstream Chinese science fiction or nationalist apocalypse cinema, which reassert human control or state heroism, Han’s vision aligns more with Buddhist and Daoist cosmologies of cyclical suffering and impermanence. Across five interconnected stories, characters drift through subterranean ruins, mutated ecosystems, and decayed infrastructures without understanding or agency. Han’s apocalypse is not a singular event but an unresolvable condition—what Timothy Gilmore calls ecological “wildness” (2017). The article argues that Han’s work offers a unique ecological consciousness: not through moral clarity or redemption, but by confronting the reader with the impossibility of mastery.

Subway thus becomes an anti-cathartic text for the Anthropocene—one that refuses resolution and instead demands that we learn to inhabit collapse without illusions of control. Defying the geological certainty the Anthropocene seeks to assert, *Subway* exposes the Anthropocene’s lingering humanism. Rather than dramatizing human impact, it renders the human inconsequential. By foregrounding unknowability, affective unease, and cyclical futility, Han’s work invites us to question whether the Anthropocene is a framework for understanding planetary crisis—or a continuation of the same anthropocentric logic it claims to critique.

The article “Desert Settings and How to See the Apocalypse” by Adam Stock examines how desert landscapes in science fiction function as critical settings through which cultural anxieties about the Anthropocene—particularly as shaped by late capitalism and extractivism—are visualized and narrated. By treating setting as an aesthetic and epistemological category, the article argues that deserts are not passive backdrops but active agents of meaning. In works such as George Miller’s *Mad Max 2* (1981), the desert is a colonial wasteland emblematic of civilizational collapse and the violent continuity of extractive economies. The apocalyptic aesthetic here reinforces a conservative worldview.

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In contrast, *Dune* in Denis Villeneuve's recent film adaptation mobilizes the desert as a sublime object shaped by post-Romantic and colonial photographic traditions, particularly aerial surveillance from British Mandate Iraq, forfeiting the more critical stance of Frank Herbert's novels. Stock shows how Claire G. Coleman's *Terra Nullius* (2017), on the other hand, radically reorients narrative perspective and genre mid-novel, using the desert setting to critique colonial violence and reframe the apocalyptic as a decolonial technique of vision. Ultimately, the article positions the apocalyptic as a method of seeing—estranging, historicizing, and politically potent—rather than merely as spectacle or catastrophe.

Saman Mahdevar's article "The Wonderful Apathy of the Oriental": Famine, War, and Apocalypse in Early Modern Iran" examines the apocalyptic framing of famine and war in nineteenth and early twentieth century Iran, revealing how such crises were not only interpreted through Islamic eschatological imagery but also functioned as sites of meaning-making amidst environmental and political catastrophe. Mahdevar demonstrates how symbolic dualities—such as famine and sword—evoked both divine judgement and moral collapse, positioning natural disaster as an active force with agency, rather than as passive misfortune. This reading anticipates concerns central to the Anthropocene: the entanglement of human and nonhuman agency, and the capacity of narrative to render suffering intelligible.

Drawing on marginal texts—laments, religious treatises, and vernacular memoirs—the article situates apocalyptic thought within a cultural logic that understood catastrophe as both cosmological rupture (*qiyāmah*) and inward tribulation (*balā*). These frameworks, intensified by widespread disillusionment with clerical authority and the rise of messianic movements, enabled communities to interpret suffering as spiritually and morally charged. Mahdevar's account, as such, suggests that apocalyptic narratives in early modern Iran operated analogously to contemporary Anthropocene discourses: offering a symbolic grammar for representing the collapse of ecological and social order, while simultaneously reinscribing agency in moments of overwhelming loss. The apocalyptic imagination, here, does not foreclose understanding but animates a poetics of crisis. It reconfigures human-environment relations by sacralizing the nonhuman—bread, soil, sky—transforming them into legible signs of historical and metaphysical consequence. In doing so, the article contributes to broader debates on how cultures process planetary-scale disruptions through narrative form and symbolic excess.

The article "Inheriting Apocalypses: Representations of the Anthropocene in Contemporary Brazilian Literature" by Ana Rüsche and George

Augusto do Amaral examines how Brazilian contemporary novels represent ecological and colonial apocalypses through dystopian narratives that challenge dominant conceptions of a singular, future apocalypse. Rather than portraying the end of the human species or the planet *per se*, these works critique an unsustainable mode of existence tied to colonial-capitalist extractivism and climate crisis. The authors analyse three novels—Ignácio de Loyola Brandão's *Não verás país nenhum* (1981), Joca Reiners Terron's *A morte e o meteoro* (2019), and Natália Borges Polesso's *A extinção das abelhas* (2021)—each of which satirizes societal decline while foregrounding alternative epistemologies and collective resilience.

Brandão's novel envisions a dystopian Brazil devastated by authoritarian modernization and ecological collapse. Terron's work allegorizes the extermination of indigenous worlds, linking them to planetary catastrophe. Polesso's fragmented narrative maps societal disintegration but gestures toward escape through solidarity. Drawing on decolonial and Amerindian perspectives, especially the work of Eliane Potiguara and Ailton Krenak, the article argues that many indigenous peoples have already experienced apocalypses. The authors advocate abandoning the Eurocentric idea of a single world and single end, proposing instead a multiplicity of worlds and situated endings as a critical framework for understanding and resisting the Anthropocene.

The article by Nasreddine EL Guezar titled "Science as a Discourse of Power in Apocalyptic Times in the Film *Don't Look Up*" offers a critical reading of Adam McKay's 2021 film *Don't Look Up*, moving beyond its satirical surface to interrogate the epistemic authority of science within the cultural logic and ideology of the Anthropocene.

While the film is widely interpreted as a critique of political inertia and public apathy toward ecological catastrophe, EL Guezar emphasizes how it simultaneously reasserts science as the singular framework through which apocalypse must be understood and managed. Drawing on Foucault's theory of discourse and power/knowledge, the article argues that the film positions science not only as a bearer of truth, but as a disciplinary apparatus that demands submission to its epistemic order. In doing so, it inadvertently sustains a key myth of the Anthropocene: that technoscientific rationality alone can avert planetary collapse.

By foregrounding this critique, EL Guezar exposes the film's complicity in reproducing the very logic it seems to condemn—a logic in which ecological crisis is depoliticized and reduced to a problem solvable by elite expertise, rather than by structural transformation. The article thus contributes to apocalyptic critique by challenging the assumption that science can fix the Anthropocene, and calls for a broader interrogation of

the discursive regimes that shape how apocalypse is imagined and governed.

In “Growing Up(side Down): Impending Doom and the Fight Against Otherworldly Monsters as Narrative Devices and Imagery in *Stranger Things*,” Timo Storck interprets the popular series as a cultural enactment of apocalyptic affects and psychic disintegration. Drawing on psychoanalytic theory, he frames apocalypse not as a singular catastrophic event but as a trope for revelation; specifically, the unveiling of doom and the end of a world. This ending may be collective, as in the social unraveling within *Stranger Things*, but also deeply individual, experienced in the form of trauma, loss, and psychic rupture.

Storck emphasizes how the “Upside Down” functions as a spatial metaphor for the unconscious and its buried affects. Here, trauma takes shape as something monstrous and invasive, and the boundary between inner and outer reality dissolves. Characters such as Eleven and Will are portrayed not just as victims of external threat, but as figures of internal devastation which are, in turn, subjectivities shaped by abandonment, violence, and institutional failure. The series’ 1980s retro aesthetics and nostalgia, as well as horror motifs, support this affective atmosphere, combining familiarity with disquiet to expose hidden psychic wounds.

While Storck does not focus on a specific apocalyptic event, his reading illuminates what apocalyptic framing does to the subject: it forces confrontation with uncontainable affect, disorients temporal continuity, and renders the self precarious. In this sense, *Stranger Things* mirrors the psychic experience of the Anthropocene, where slow violence, ecological loss, and existential uncertainty destabilize personal and collective coherence. Apocalypse, then, is less an ending than a disclosure of ongoing disintegration: a crisis of world, self, and relation.

The present issue of *Apocalyptica* concludes with two book reviews. Natalia López discusses the edited volume *Utopian and Dystopian Explorations of Pandemics and Ecological Breakdown: Entangled Futurities* (2024), published by Heather Alberro et al. Against the backdrop of an intensifying polycrisis, the volume frames contemporary emergencies through the lens of urgency as an imminent apocalyptic condition. Federico Divino reviews Dorothy Zinn’s translation of Ernesto de Martino’s *The End of the World: Cultural Apocalypse and Transcendence*, in which the eminent Italian anthropologist offers an innovative analysis of classical apocalyptic themes by examining the interplay between human subjectivity and its cultural embeddedness.

Taken together, the essays in this issue of *Apocalyptica* on the Anthropocene and its Ends demonstrate how the critical lens of apocalypse—far

from being merely a symbol of ultimate destruction—functions as an incisive conceptual tool to interrogate the entanglements of power, knowledge, historical violence, and planetary transformation in the Anthropocene. Yet, this deployment of apocalypse is not without danger: as several contributors suggest, the apocalyptic signifier can itself be instrumentalized, marshalled into justification of exceptional interventions, securitized futures, or technocratic controls. When destruction is framed as inevitable, or when salvation is monopolized by particular epistemologies—most often scientific, colonial, or positivistic—the apocalypse risks of becoming an ideogeme and a legitimating frame for disciplinary governance rather than a radical critique of its conditions. It can become, in other words, a technology of power that mystifies agency and forecloses alternative futures.

Across the contributions, however, apocalypse emerges less as a teleological endpoint than as a mode of revelation and critique: a discursive rupture that exposes the unsustainable logics of modernity, capitalism, and extractivism, and invites radically alternative ways of seeing and being. From Michael Löwy's ecosocialist recovery of prophetic warnings, to Fontaine Lien's theorization of Han Song's "ongoing apocalypse" as disorientation without catharsis, to Ana Rüsche and George Augusto do Amaral's critique of the fiction of a single world and a single ending, the articles resist both fatalism and instrumentalization. They insist instead on the multiplicity of worlds already lost, already inherited, and still in struggle.

A critical apocalypse, then, is not an eschatology of despair nor a blueprint for disciplinary order, but a semiotic and political device; a lens that makes visible the concealed violence of the present and destabilizes the normative temporalities of progress and collapse alike. It stages the Anthropocene not as a geological destiny, but as a contested horizon shaped by colonial legacies, capitalist futurities, and speculative resistances. In doing so, this collection challenges us to engage the figure of the end not as a terminus, but as a recursive site of historical reckoning and imaginative responsibility.

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