

Call for Papers: Special Issue of *Apocalyptic*

## **Apocalypotics: Poetry of/at the End of the World**

Special issue editors: Felipe Espinoza Garrido and Lea Espinoza Garrido

When we think of cultural representations of the apocalypse, we often turn to speculative fiction, disaster films, zombie narratives, climate fiction, graphic novels, or survival video games. These genres, predominantly narrative and often visual, have long shaped popular and scholarly imaginaries of the ‘end of the world’. Poetry, by contrast, is rarely centered in such conversations. While individual poems – most famously by William Blake, William Butler Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Lord Byron, Allen Ginsberg, or Emily Dickinson – have of course frequently been read through apocalyptic lenses, what remains underexplored is how poetic form itself can function as a site of (negotiating) apocalyptic thought across aesthetic traditions and media. In response to this, this special issue proposes the notion of *apocalypotics* as both a provocation and a heuristic: a splicing of the apocalyptic and the poetic that calls for attention to the specific affordances of poetic form in conditions of historical, ecological, socio-political, and epistemological rupture. From the Greek *apokálypsis* (uncovering, revelation) and *poiein* (to make), both terms invoke a dialectic of destruction and disclosure, of collapse and creation. *Apocalypotics* thus invites us to consider poetry as a mode of encountering and reflecting the end of the world. In particular, we want to inquire about the ways in which the genre of poetry has articulated, resisted, or transformed (post)apocalyptic imaginaries across periods, geographies, and aesthetic traditions. As such, we are interested in the kinds of formal, affective, and epistemological labor that it performs in response to climate collapse, settler colonialism, or civilizational breakdown.

We therefore invite contributions that draw on fields such as literary formalism, the environmental humanities, Black and Indigenous studies, critical race theory, and queer theory – all of which offer distinct temporal frameworks for understanding the apocalypse. In the environmental humanities and postcolonial studies, Rob Nixon’s concept of “slow violence” foregrounds temporalities of attrition and erasure, where environmental degradation and imperial afterlives unfold gradually and often invisibly. Black and Indigenous studies similarly insist that apocalypse is not a discrete future event but an ongoing historical condition: the result of slavery, settler colonialism, land dispossession, and ecological extraction (Kauanui; Sharpe; Whyte; Lethabo King). Queer theory, meanwhile, challenges the linear, reproductive time of apocalyptic teleology. From José Esteban Muñoz’s utopian “not-yet-here” to Lee Edelman’s “no future,” queer thought often disorients linear chronologies in favor of aesthetic and temporal ambiguity (see also Pyne; Blanco-Fernández; Spice; Woltersdorff). With such concepts in mind, this special issue asks: How can poetic forms hold these contradictory and layered temporalities? How does poetry negotiate the simultaneity of mourning and imagining? What happens when it stages endings that stretch across generations, or futures that fold back into catastrophe? Can poetic form make room for multiple apocalypses at once, i.e., for temporalities of refusal, recursion, survival, and speculation? And what does it mean to read poetic language as both an archive of devastation and a speculative gesture toward something ‘otherwise’?

In this light, this issue on *Apocalypotics* invites contributors to think of the apocalypse in poetry not only as a motif but as a formal and epistemological practice that offers specific “affordances” in the sense of Caroline Levine, i.e., as the potential actions enabled or constrained by formal properties. To think about these affordances across the boundaries of genres and media, this issue also explicitly invites attention to intertextual and intermedial configurations of apocalypotic expression. Consider, for example, the use of a poem in the video game *God of War: Ragnarök* that explicitly references another postapocalyptic franchise: the popular zombie game/TV show *The Last of Us*. This intertextual reference in *God of War*’s diegesis collapses seemingly distinct media worlds and invites us to reflect on the specific affordances of postapocalyptic poetry within

and across different cultural artefacts. It allows us to think of the apocalypoetic as a transmedial aesthetic strategy, which opens spaces for affective resonance and critical thought across platforms, media, and genres: What happens when poetry appears in (post)apocalyptic video games, visual art, speculative television, or as epigraphs in (post)apocalyptic narratives? How might we theorize these poetic moments as aesthetic acts that puncture the boundaries of genre and media? How do they challenge dominant aesthetic regimes of representing the apocalypse?

For this special issue, we seek contributions that engage with these questions either in **scholarly articles (6,000–8,000 words)**, offering either individual case studies or more theoretical reflections, or in more open and **creative formats, such as interviews, book reviews, or poetry**. We are particularly interested in work that foregrounds literary and cultural studies methodologies, including close reading, formalism, ecocriticism, media theory, and critical race studies. While the submissions must be in English, we also encourage contributions that engage with non-Anglophone traditions and transnational apocalyptic imaginaries.

Possible topics include (but are by no means limited to):

- **Apocalypoetic affordances:** What are the specific formal resources of poetry for representing, embodying, or subverting dominant apocalyptic imaginaries? How do poetic devices – such as fragmentation, poetic imagery, rhythm, ellipsis – mediate catastrophic experience?
- **Poetry beyond the printed page:** How do poetic forms migrate across media in (post)apocalyptic video games, digital installations, visual poetry, or speculative film?
- **Environmental catastrophe and poetic form:** How does poetry respond to planetary crisis? What is the role of eco-poetics in narrating extinction, ruin, or repair?
- **Poetry and plural apocalypses:** How does poetry navigate the layered, intersecting, and contradictory temporalities of ongoing catastrophe? (climate crisis, racial violence, settler colonialism, pandemics, nuclear threats)
- **Black and Indigenous apocalypoetic futurities:** How does poetry contest the colonality of apocalyptic narratives? What forms of refusal, survivance, or speculative resurgence emerge in poetic work?
- **Poetic fragments and ruins:** How do poetic texts register brokenness – of language, of world, of future – and what aesthetic or political strategies arise from that condition?
- **Queer poetics and (post)apocalyptic imaginaries:** How do queer temporalities and affective registers reshape the rhetoric of ‘the end’? What alternatives to heteronormative fantasies of survival emerge in queer apocalypoetic engagements?
- **Formal experimentation:** Which new poetic forms and formations does apocalyptic thought trigger? And how do these forms offer new perspectives on the concept and materiality of apocalyptic thinking?

### Timeline for submissions:

Abstracts (ca. 300-500 words) should be submitted by **1 October 2025**; contributors will be notified by mid-October. Full article submissions are due **1 March 2026** and should follow *Apocalypctica*’s formatting guidelines. Please contact us individually for all other kinds of submissions (such as ideas for book reviews, poetry, interviews, or other formats). We explicitly encourage submissions from scholars and poets from all career stages.

Please submit abstracts to Felipe Espinoza Garrido ([espinoza.garrido@uni-muenster.de](mailto:espinoza.garrido@uni-muenster.de)) and Lea Espinoza Garrido ([lea.espinoza.garrido@fu-berlin.de](mailto:lea.espinoza.garrido@fu-berlin.de)), and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.