



Don't Panic.

The Apocalypse in Theory and Culture

Failure and the *Phantastikon*: Ezra Pound and Apocalypse

James Leveque: *University of Edinburgh*

Contesting Capitalist Sorcery: 'Peak Everything' as Apocalyptic Prophecy

Paul Reid-Bowen: *Bath Spa University*

The Projection of an Ending and Systems Theory: a Sociological Reading of Apocalypse as a Genre

Anita Dremel: *University of Zagreb*

Apocalypse as Religious and Secular Discourse in *Battlestar Galactica* and its Prequel *Caprica*

Diane Langlumé: *University of Paris VIII Saint-Denis*

Ghosts in the Flesh

Walking Dead

April Lodge: *University of Huddersfield*

From Hungry Ghost to Phallic Mother: Linda Lê's Doubling of the Vietnamese Ancestor in French Exile

Alexandra Kurmann: *Macquarie University, Sydney*

COVER IMAGE: 'The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha' (1852) — John Martin (1789–1854)

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Acknowledgements

With the publication of this double issue, we would like to thank everyone who was involved with our conference in 2012 and 2013, *Don't Panic. The Apocalypse in Theory and Culture* and *Ghosts in the Flesh*, both of which we tried to bring together in the choice of our cover image for this issue. In particular, we take this opportunity to thank Ivan Callus and Esther Peeren, who were the key-note speakers for, respectively, *Don't Panic. The Apocalypse in Theory and Culture* and *Ghosts in the Flesh*. Thanks are due to those who submitted abstracts and articles for consideration as well as peer reviewers, copy editors and proof readers of the following publication process. We thank all of them for their hard work to keep up the quality of the journal.

On a personal note, we must say farewell to several of our members. Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone and Guillaume Collett, who were very active in the last conferences, leave *Skepsi* after many years of good and loyal service. Maureen Kinkaid Speller, who devoted much of her time in the copy-editing team, has also turned a new page. Finally, Jo Pettitt, Mathilde Poizat-Amar and Nina Rolland, who contributed much to this issue, have also retired. We wish them all well. In their place, we welcome Marine Authier, Melanie Dilly and Rocío García-Romero, who have joined the Editorial Board since becoming involved with our conference in May 2014. We would also like to thank two new editorial assistants, Sabina Sitoianu and Louise Willis, for helping us with the technical aspects of assembling the issue and proof reading.

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Foreword

Although this double issue may seem to have been planned as a series — questioning both the end of the world and the afterworld — it actually reflects the proceedings of two separate conferences: *Don't Panic! The Apocalypse in Theory and Culture* held on 25–26 May 2012 and *Ghosts in the Flesh* held on 24–25 May 2013. The articles collected in this issue nonetheless offer a certain continuity, not only in their examination of questions of time but also in their approach of materiality.

Discourses on the Apocalypse have envisaged the idea of ‘end’ in different lights. On the one hand, a renewal of apocalyptic discourse seems to go against the deconstructive tendency to ‘de-dramatise the end’ (Scherpe 1986–87). On the other, this return does not necessarily lead to an unquestioned revival of metaphysics but rather may open up the way to a third alternative. This third approach could consider the Apocalypse as something neither culturally constructed nor unrelated to human and technological actions but as something neither wholly internal nor external.

Beyond the idea of other-worldliness, the concept of ‘Ghosts in the Flesh’, the topic of *Skepsi*'s sixth conference, was interpreted as interrogating the limits of not only corporeality and incorporeality but also self and other, inside and outside. As the thematics of both ‘Apocalypse’ and ‘Ghosts’ share the idea of exploring some of the limits of the material world, we considered that a single issue could, with advantage, contain articles on both themes.

The issue begins with two articles on the Apocalypse theme. In the first, James Leveque examines the presence of the Apocalypse in Ezra Pound's work. Drawing parallels with biblical apocalyptic literature, his article shows how Pound's apocalypticism is driven by a sense of the failure of modern poetry to affect genuine change in the social or political sphere, with particular reference to his involvement with Imagism and Vorticism, and how Pound's early idea of the *phantastikon* is an attempt to construct a universe that is simultaneously derived from and an alternative to this universe. This is followed by an offer of a pragmatic apocalypticism in Paul Reid-Bowen's article, in which he examines the relationship between apocalypse and collapse theories and explores the idea of apocalypse in the light of crises of civilization in a global industrial world.

In the first of the articles on the ‘Ghosts in the Flesh’ theme, in this case the ghostliness thematic of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, April Lodge uses deconstruction theory and Derridean ‘hauntology’ to analyse the idea of physical space in the play.

The next article, by Anita Dremel, returns to the ‘Apocalypse’ theme, this time from a sociological point of view, with her study of the projection of an ending within a systemic logic of auto-reproduction.

The second article on the ‘Ghosts in the Flesh’ theme again takes a work of literature as its starting point. Alexandra Kurmann links the idea of ghostliness with the figure of the grandmother in one of the Franco-Vietnamese Linda Lê’s novels. Her article examines how the author explores the notion of the spectre as being both connected to questions of exile and a dual maternal/paternal figure in the shape of a Freudian phallic (grand)mother.

‘Apocalypse’ is the theme of the final article, in which Diane Langlumé turns to television and cinema studies as she examines how apocalyptic discourses are used as a foundation rather than an end in *Battlestar Galactica* and *Caprica*.

Bibliography

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About the authors

James P. Leveque

James P. Leveque is a native of Fresno, California. He is a PhD candidate at the University of Edinburgh, where his research focuses on themes of apocalypse, prophecy and avant-gardism in the poetry of Ezra Pound, Guillaume Apollinaire and F.T. Marinetti. He holds Masters degrees in both Comparative Literature and Biblical Studies. His work has been featured in *Forum: The University of Edinburgh's Postgraduate Journal of Arts and Humanities* and *The Bible and Critical Theory*.

Paul Reid-Bowen

Dr. Paul Reid-Bowen is a senior lecturer in Religions, Philosophies and Ethics at Bath Spa University (UK). His research and teaching interests encompass ecological philosophy, existentialism and a number of new religious and social movements. He is the author of several articles and is currently working on *The Future is Pagan: Collapse and the New Indigeneity* (John Hunt Publishing).

April Lodge

April Lodge is currently a Masters Research student at the University of Huddersfield. After attaining a first-class degree in English Literature in July 2013 she received a scholarship to continue her research with the University. Her Master's thesis combines Jacques Derrida's philosophy of deconstruction with William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and focuses on such topics as: the work of mourning, the impossibility of justice and the nature of existence. Outside of her literary endeavours, April also plays violin with the Huddersfield Philharmonic orchestra.

Anita Dremel

Anita Dremel studied sociology and English language and literature (graduated 2006) and Japanology (graduated 2007) at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (Croatia). She completed her PhD in the field of sociology in 2014. Her thesis, entitled *The Construction of Gender Identities in the Novels by Marija Jurić Zagorka – a Critical Discourse Analysis*, offers an interdisciplinary socio-cultural analysis of discursive constructions of gender in popular novels and is aimed at the critique of power relations. Since 2008, she has lectured at the Centre for Croatian Studies, University of Zagreb, in the Department of Sociology (classical sociological theory) and the Department of Educational

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Alexandra Kurmann

Alexandra Kurmann was awarded her doctoral thesis entitled '*Lecteur idéal, lecteur imaginaire: The Intertextual Relationship Fostered by Linda Lê with an Imaginary Ingeborg Bachmann*' by the University of Melbourne, Australia, in 2014. As well as a 2010 interview with Linda Lê available online, she has published an article on fatherhood regarding Lê's trilogy, which is found in *Experience and Experiment: Women's Writing in France 2000-2010*. She also has chapters forthcoming in *Public Cases: Case Studies and the Dissemination of Knowledge* and *Forgotten Histories: Vietnamese Veterans in Australia*, as well as in a Festschrift, *Mélanges pour Anne Freadman*. She is currently an Associate Lecturer of French and Francophone Studies at Macquarie University, Sydney.

Diane Langlumé

Diane Langlumé is an Associate Professor of English at the University of Paris VIII Saint-Denis. She holds a Masters in Cinema from the University of Paris Ouest Nanterre and is currently preparing a PhD on the Representations of Women and the Apocalypse in American TV Series, her supervisors being Gilles Menegaldo, Full Professor, University of Poitiers and Anne-Marie Paquet-Deyris, Full Professor, University of Paris Ouest Nanterre. She co-authored and translated the book *The Catacombs of Paris* (éditions Parigramme, 2011) and has published articles on American cinema, notably for *CinémAction*. For ten years, she worked as a photojournalist, publishing articles and pictures in the French and international press (*Libération*, *The Independent*, *The Boston Globe* and *Cosas* among others), and as a photographer under assignment for Bloomberg News.