

The Post-Apocalyptic Imaginary in Contemporary Fiction

Elisabetta Abignente, Claudia Cao, Claudia Cerulo¹

Abstract

The issue *After the Catastrophe: Contemporary Post-Apocalyptic Narratives* explores post-apocalyptic, science-fictional, and eco-dystopian production from the past two decades, examining the representation of the 'after-the-catastrophe' world through the ways in which it interrogates and reconfigures the three fundamental coordinates of time, space, and subjectivity.

Keywords

Post-Apocalyptic Fiction, Science Fiction; Dystopia, Climate fiction

¹ This introduction is the result of a shared reflection among the three authors. Specifically, the first paragraph was written by Claudia Cerulo, the second by Elisabetta Abignente, and the third by Claudia Cao.

The Post-Apocalyptic Imaginary in Contemporary Fiction

Elisabetta Abignente, Claudia Cao, Claudia Cerulo

From Immanent to Imminent: Temporal Reconfigurations in the Post-Apocalyptic²

Ever since antiquity, narratives about the end of the world have given voice to the anxieties and crises of the societies that produced them. The idea of catastrophe adapts and changes according to the historical context, functioning as a cultural device through which human communities process their existential fears (Pharr – Clark – Firestone 2016; De Cristofaro 2020). Although the ‘sense of an ending’ (Kermode 1966) once characterized earlier periods, since the beginning of the new millennium reality and imagination have increasingly come to coincide: the notion of catastrophe has shifted from the speculative horizon of possibility to that of concreteness. Contemporary subjectivity develops in more or less conscious coexistence with an ‘endo-apocalyptic’ condition (Frezza 2015) and with phenomena – such as climate change – whose temporal and spatial scales exceed human perceptual and conceptual capacities (Morton 2013). These phenomena challenge modern categories for understanding reality and produce an epistemic-political condition that manifests as crisis (Cvetkovitch 2012; Preciado 2022), taking shape in the collapse of the categories of past, present, and future (Fisher 2013; Ingold 2024). In this cultural climate, the post-apocalyptic imaginary that has developed over the past two decades has progressively emerged as a conceptual device capable of interrogating the fundamental coordinates through which we think subjectivity,

² This research is part of the PRIN PNRR 2022 project «PANIC. Post-Apocalyptic Narratives in Italian Culture (2000-2022)», funded by the European Union – NextGenerationEU, Mission 4, Component 1, n. P2022XNY2M, CUP E53D2301893, Università degli Studi “G. d’Annunzio” Chieti-Pescara and Università degli Studi di Napoli Federico II.

humanity, and –more generally – the very notion of ‘ending’ (Engélibert 2013). Living in an era of epistemic precariousness, the idea of catastrophe – the central focus of this issue devoted to post-apocalyptic, science-fictional, and eco-dystopian narrative production – intersects with social and political reflections on subjectivity and the environment, becoming a tool for investigating the fears of the present (Malvestio 2021a).

If one considers literature and the arts as a means of rethinking societal values in light of the climate crisis (Clark, 2019; Engélibert, 2019), the concept of catastrophe emerges as a key area for reimagining the ontological categories that have defined Western modernity (Thacker 2011; Colebrook 2014). It contributes to shaping «new imaginaries and sensibilities that compel us to see and think beyond anthropocentrism» (Abignente, 5)³, with a shift in horizon and imagination that, both theoretically and formally, challenges the usual rhythms and models of the novel (Trexler 2015; Vermeulen 2020). Taking as its starting point the notion of an apocalypse already permeating contemporary subjectivity, this issue of *Between* aligns itself with these reflections to explore how narrative proposes an epistemological reconfiguration of the paradigms through which we customarily view and narrativize the world. The climate crisis demands not only a radical rethinking of the categories of nature and culture, subject and object (Latour 2017), but also urgently demands the development of new temporal and narrative grammars (Hartog 2014; Heise 2008; Chakrabarty 2021) capable of accounting for a crisis that challenges the spatiotemporal coordinates of modern representation (Fisher 2013).

The question of temporality is a crucial aspect of the contemporary catastrophic imaginary. Various theoretical perspectives converge in their analysis of how the post-apocalyptic genre produces and reveals alternative, non-linear temporal configurations that challenge modern regimes of historicity (Halberstam 2005; Edelman 2004; Freeman 2010). The slow erasure of the future (Fisher 2014) –replaced by a «presentism» (Hartog 2003) characterized by the collapse of future and past into an expanded present – finds in the post-apocalyptic imaginary a striking expression of an era that has lost both the capacity to project itself into the future and to critically process the past (Berardi 2011).

The issues raised by theoretical reflections on temporality are addressed in nuanced and multifaceted ways by the contributions comprising this issue. Florian Mussgnug’s essay offers a critical rereading of the

³ Unless otherwise noted, all translations are our own.

concept of «apocalyptic immanence» (294) formulated by Frank Kermode in his seminal *The Sense of an Ending* (1966). Mussnug demonstrates that Kermode's claim—namely, that the human subject and conceptions of cosmic time co-emerge through expectations of the 'end'—still shapes Anthropocene debates today, in ways that are often unacknowledged and potentially problematic. According to Kermode, the history of the planet becomes meaningful only when we are able to relate it to our present, in an effort of «presentification» (Mussnug 285⁴) that reveals the desire to give definitive form to the present itself. Mussnug identifies the most eloquent example of this mechanism in the decision of the Anthropocene Working Group to date the beginning of the Anthropocene to 1952. By choosing the hypothesis that situated «the beginning of the "Age of Man" in closest proximity with *their* present», scientists have created what he defines as «a Kermodian relation of consonance» (Mussnug, 286-287) between planetary and individual temporal scales, revealing the persistence of an anthropocentric stance even in a context that – at least in intention – invites thinking beyond the human. Mussnug analyses the political implications of this mechanism, emphasizing that the Anthropocene is «patchy and uneven» (294): for certain elites, the climate crisis takes the form of an apocalyptic immanence, an imaginative investment in a catastrophic future not yet manifest in everyday life; for communities in the Global South, however, global warming is already an urgent and present reality. Drawing on Povinelli (2006), Mussnug notes that Kermode's figure of the «man in the middle» resembles the «autological subject» (295), a construct that naturalizes the self through «constitutive acts of chrono-biopolitical violence» (*ibid.*). From this perspective, the emergence of the Anthropocene does not represent a rupture with historical time, but a «perpetuating ancestral catastrophe» (Mussnug, 295) which, rather than deconstructing hierarchies of power, perpetuates the existing ones. The issue of presentist temporality dominated by anxiety is also the focus of Alessandro Grosso's article, which introduces the concept of the «playful catastrophe» into the critical debate, as an interpretive key for reading Éric Chevillard's *Sans l'orang-outan* (2007) and *Choir* (2010). Grosso defines the playful catastrophe as a disastrous event staged within a fictional narrative that must be read «in the second degree» (220): a representation of the end that parodies the literary and cinematic codes of the apocalyptic genre. In *Sans l'orang-outan*, the extinction of the last orangutans triggers a catastrophic mechanism that

⁴ See Ricoeur 1988: 66.

drives society toward disintegration. Grosso shows how this improbable extinction functions as a metatextual pretext: the disappearance of the great apes becomes an allegory of linguistic impoverishment. The temporality of the novel is that of a perpetual present: the disaster has already occurred, yet its effects continue to unfold in an endless spiral. Temporality is also cyclical and degenerative in *Choir* too, and the catastrophe is not a future event but a permanent condition that serves as a pretext for experimenting with the formal possibilities of irony. In contrast to this perspective, Elisabetta Abignente shifts attention to a diptych of graphic novels published by Jérôme Dubois in 2020, in which words are almost entirely absent, focusing on how visual storytelling reaches «where exclusively verbal narrative sometimes fails to penetrate» (4). The two graphic novels depict the same urban spaces in distinct temporal configurations: *Citéville* presents a dystopian city inhabited by human figures, while *Citéruine* depicts the same locations completely deserted, a potential posthumous reflection of *Citéville*. Once more, a paradoxical temporality emerges, characterized by alienation in the first volume and stasis in the second. The dual temporality of the diptych evokes Günther Anders' figure of the «time acrobat» (as cited in Benedetti 2021): just as Anders' Noah compels us to think of the present from the perspective of the day after tomorrow, *Citéruine* functions as visual «shock therapy» (Abignente, 15) that forces us to see the present from the standpoint of a «world-without-us» (Thacker 2011), generating an estrangement (Scaffai 2022) that quietly prompts not only a change in perception but also an ethical reorientation in the face of disaster.

Defamiliarisation, Rupture, Recognition: Forms and Functions of Post-Apocalyptic Space

Post-apocalyptic narratives not only compel us to consider a time after us but also confront us with an “other” space in which we must relearn how to navigate after losing our usual points of reference. It is not only the landscape that changes – appearing in varying degrees of continuity and discontinuity with the present – but also the ways in which the subject perceives, traverses, and inhabits it. The vision of what remains after the catastrophe – ruins, unfinished urban works, empty spaces, desertified lands, submerged settlements – produces effects of defamiliarisation that transform once-familiar places into deeply unsettling settings (similar, in this respect, to the obsolete objects studied by Orlando 2015 and Sturli 2022). The evocative power of these de-familiarized spaces lies, on the one

hand, in their capacity to become «hauntological landscapes» (Fisher 2012: 21) – spectres of a future that already appears as past – and, on the other, in their never fully severed connection to what existed before, triggering mechanisms of mirroring and retrospective recognition.

A significant number of essays in this special issue focuses on the spatial dimension, inevitably intertwined with temporality. On the one hand, these contributions are devoted to graphic novels from recent decades, in which the two-dimensional page often serves as a privileged site for representing dystopian or post-traumatic urban environments (Chute 2016; Earle 2017); on the other, they include studies of the hyper-contemporary Italian novel, which moves between climate fiction, coming-of-age narratives, and eco-dystopia (Malvestio, 2021b). This genre manages to give shape to the unprecedented and the unthinkable (Ghosh, 2017), while still providing realistic portrayals of everyday life and interpersonal relationships (Scaffai, 2025). This is similar to other very recent European novels discussed in the “In Discussion” section of this special issue.

Marzia Beltrami’s study moves in this direction, drawing on the theoretical reflections of Marie-Laure Ryan (2022) to examine how climate change and the radical transformation of the environment compel individuals to rethink their modes of interaction with the spaces they inhabit. By comparing three Italian eco-dystopias that have firmly entered the canon of contemporary post-apocalyptic narratives — *Bambini bonsai* (2010) by Paolo Zanutti, *Anna* (2015) by Niccolò Ammaniti, and *Qualcosa, là fuori* (2016) by Bruno Arpaia — Beltrami demonstrates that space plays not only «a central thematic, affective and strategic role», but also produces «formal destabilisation» (Beltrami, 23). Space is thus positioned as an alien yet knowable element, estranging yet traceable.

The dimension of travel and movement appears crucial in this respect, as it inevitably calls into question the subject’s capacity for re-orientation within a de-familiarized environment and places them in a condition of uncertainty, instability, and «despatialization» (James 2022), which becomes a metaphor for the human condition in the Anthropocene. This line of thought also encompasses the concept of “solastalgia” – the nostalgia for a beloved place imagined to be radically transformed by climate change – which, as appropriately highlighted by Beltrami, can serve as an interpretive key for many other texts and iconotexts featured in this special issue. A similar perspective informs Antonella De Blasio’s contribution, which focuses exclusively on one of the three Italian novels examined by Beltrami, *Qualcosa, là fuori* (2016) by Bruno Arpaia, read as an example of the climate fiction novel, a label whose characteristics and potential boundaries are de-

lineated in her analysis. Particularly noteworthy is the focus on the novel's anti-heroic structure, which conveys the human being's vulnerability and their ethical engagement with the environment. The latter is internalized through bodily sensations of discomfort that serve as a metaphor for the profound «cognitive disorientation» arising from the awareness of climate change's effects on both the landscape and ways of life. A useful interpretive key for the novel – also applicable to several other works examined in this issue – is the concept of «negative topophilia», understood as the condition in which the emotional bond with a place is replaced by a traumatic memory of its loss (De Blasio, 143), whereby the protagonist's body functions as a kind of «narrative seismograph» (*ibid.*).

Contributions by Michele Paolo on Zanotti's *Bambini bonsai* and by Annamaria Elia on Claudia Durastanti's *Missitalia* (2024) are also devoted to the Italian novel after 2000, in which the post-apocalyptic space depicted corresponds, respectively, to an imaginary Genoa and to the Basilicata region, the latter observed through its transformations from the late nineteenth century to the 2050s. In Zanotti, the relationship with the sea emerges as both distinctive and constant – a space of estrangement – whose effect in the novel is amplified through a stimulating comparison with Laura Pugno's *Sirene* (2007). Durastanti's novel, by contrast, privileges the traversal of space in diachronic (through the three temporal layers of the narrative), diatopic (notably through excursions beyond Lucania, first to Rome and ultimately to the Moon), and diastratic terms (through the depiction of chthonic creatures inhabiting the 'underworld' of Casa di Madre, confirming the centrality in Anthropocene narratives of the depth paradigm analysed by Scaffai 2025). The result is a kind of «augmented realism» (Elia, 191) that, by emphasizing an atavistic and collective dimension, plays with literary genres in a manner not unlike that experimented with in *Bambini bonsai*, which can be read as an eco-dystopia, a coming-of-age novel, or a «contemporary *conte sociologique*» (Paolo, 299).

In contrast, Guarino and Sandulli's study breaks the boundaries of literary fiction by taking a disaster that actually occurred as its starting point: the 2019 landslide in San Martino Valle Caudina, Avellino, and the consequent reemergence of the Caudino stream. The study examines how this traumatic event impacted the imagination of the local community, generating what the authors term «multispecies marginations» (Guarino – Sandulli, 234). The transdisciplinary approach adopted – situated at the intersection between cultural studies, architecture, geography, sociology, and narratology – proves capable of capturing the complexity of a specific phenomenon which, due to its symbolic significance, can metonymically

represent the operational and narrative strategies through which communities respond to climate crises. Literature – which is continually referenced throughout the essay – functions in this sense as a potential catalyst for images and imaginaries, contributing to the transformation of fracture into a reconsideration of the multispecies relationships that communities cultivate with their environment.

The reference to «aquatic, marginal, and porous landscapes» (*ibid.*, 246) as symbolic sites of resilience and transformation leads into a semantic field very similar to that explored by Busi Rizzi and Di Paola in their work on the «submerged worlds» of post-apocalyptic comics. In *La terra dei figli* by Gipi (2016), *Celestia* by Manuele Fior (2019), and *Troppo facile amarti in vacanza* by Giacomo Bevilacqua (2021), water functions both as a metaphor and «as an aesthetic and semantic element, [...] a diegetic vector and a critical device» (Busi Rizzi–Di Paola, 64), subjecting space to a dual process of dissolution and regeneration. Fior’s comic also appears in the corpus analysed by Cerulo and Dal Canto, who compare it with *Da sola* (2021) by Percy Bertolini and *Lo spazio bianco* (2023) by Enrico Pinto. The estranging and unfinished architectures depicted in these graphic narratives resist the notion of apocalypse, functioning as heterotopic spaces and «creating fragile utopian spaces» (Cerulo – Dal Canto, 85), suggesting that even when the world comes to an end, perhaps not all is lost.

The Human After the Apocalypse: New Subjectivities, Hybridisations, and Forms of Resistance

It is well known that apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic productions are one of the primary sites onto which contemporary anxieties about the fate of humanity and the planet are projected. Within the diverse corpus examined in this volume – from ‘eco-dystopias’ to solarpunk to climate fiction – one of the central concerns is the human experience of the end, both as an «inevitably [...] anthropic phenomenon, that is, [...] a product of civilisation itself, of the arrogance and greed of the species as a whole» (Micali 2022: 227) and, due to the absence of any ontological boundary between subject and context, an ideal space for reflecting on the economic, political, and cultural structures that have led to catastrophe. Indeed, if the subject can no longer be conceived as ontologically separate from the environment (Watsuji 1935; Scaffai 2017: 133–134), the very fate of humanity is closely bound to the possibility of intervention within the context (Scaffai 2017: 133).

For these reasons, one of the principal conceptual nodes highlighted by the essays in this volume is the experience of limits – between subject and environment, between individual and collective, between the biological and the technological – but above all the experience of surpassing them through forms of networking and hybridisation (Morton 2013). Central to the reflections developed here is the role of post-apocalyptic literature in activating collective and plural processes of reconstruction, as a space for elaborating «alternative cognitive configurations» (Didi-Huberman 2010) and «alternative future imaginaries» (Moscatelli, 263).

Starting from the well-known premise that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism (Fisher [2009] 2018), Federica Moscatelli, for example, identifies alternative scenarios to the paradigms of resignation and technocapitalist control through an examination of Michel Nieva's *La infancia del mundo* (2023). Her analysis foregrounds the role of anger as a utopian and collective force, as well as a form of «resistance [and] renewal» (264). Nieva's novel aligns with the apocalyptic strand understood as a form of radical ecocriticism, alongside the solarpunk works of Clelia Farris and Wanuri Kahiu analysed by Giulia Fabbri.

The end of the world and of humanity is once again a consequence of the environmental crisis, experienced as a shared, planetary, and multispecies phenomenon. In the specific cases of Clelia Farris's novel *I vegumani* (2022) and Wanuri Kahiu's short film *Pumzi* (2009), attention is drawn to the interconnection between the human and the (vegetal) non-human as a possible avenue for regeneration in a post-catastrophic context. Posthuman hybridisation, in this instance, functions as a critical device against the dominant «Anthropocene relational system» (Fabbri, 200-201), structured on binary oppositions and grounded in the «intrinsic and natural separation between Man and nature/the animal/the non-human» (201). Adopting this perspective, which deconstructs the epistemological and ontological centrality of the human subject, reveals the potential for a new ethics of co-existence. Within this framework, care emerges as a posthuman response to the End: a form of relationship and survival beyond the human, in which the subject abandons their central position to become a node in a network of interdependencies.

Several contemporary Italian graphic novels also converge on the possibility that the experience of the end of humanity can generate new subjectivities. The transformation of space after the apocalypse offers the subject an opportunity to renegotiate their identity in relation to new environments and forms of life. In particular, within the topos of the submerged world, examined by Giorgio Busi Rizzi and Lorenzo Di Paola, water – as

a «dynamic, interstitial, and metamorphic element» (66) – becomes a symbolic medium for subjectivity capable of dissolving the «foundational epistemological dichotomies of modern thought – solid/liquid, inside/outside, human/non-human, nature/culture» (*ibid.*). Similarly, the works of Percy Bertolini, Fior, and Pinto analysed by Claudia Cerulo and Rodolfo Dal Canto reveal, within the «nature/culture and semiotic/symbolic dichotomies»⁵, a conceptual tension that imbues space with layered meanings. In these cases, the architectural elements of unbuilt or abandoned projects evoke what the authors define as a «future-past» (86 *et passim*). The architectures examined are central both to reflections on the coexistence between humans and the environment and as sites of utopian resistance capable of «opening dialogues with denied futures where ecological balance might be possible» (88).

Rachele Cinerari, on the other hand, approaches the topic from different theoretical premises. Adopting a materialist and sociological perspective, she interprets contemporary post-apocalyptic production as a mirror of a profound crisis of Western subjectivity. Her essay highlights how these narratives, far from functioning as spaces of resistance or alternative imagination, tend instead to operate as anti-utopias: they are works that cultivate a pervasive sense of historical fatalism, presenting catastrophe as an inevitable event and thereby undermining the very possibility of imagining radical change.

From this perspective, Cinerari investigates a series of Italian and international narrative works in which the possibility of a transformative future or reconstruction is systematically undermined. This crisis manifests both within the narrative fiction itself and on an extratextual level, as these works reflect the social, political, and economic dynamics of a present dominated by precarity, disillusionment, and the loss of collective horizons. The works under consideration thus emerge as symptoms of a broader cultural crisis of imagination, in which the capacity to conceive alternatives to ruin appears progressively eroded. Nevertheless, Cinerari identifies spaces of symbolic resistance in certain forms of feminist utopia that, against the dominant logic of the end, manage to keep open the possibility of rethinking relations, community, and the future in an emancipatory key.

Reflections on human responsibility toward change are also present in works where the experience of surviving catastrophe cannot be collective,

⁵ See Haraway 2016.

as it falls instead within the tradition of the 'Last-Man Novel' inaugurated by Mary Shelley in 1826. This is the case of *Dissipatio H.G.* (1977) by Guido Morselli, examined by Salvatore Renna. In Morselli's novel, the experience of the end coincides with a condition of solitude and an existential crisis of the self, leaving no room for possibilities of redemption or resistance: the cosmic catastrophe aligns with the moment of the protagonist's failed suicide, and the apocalypse functions as a «revealing» event (Micali 2022; Lino 2014; Malvestio 2021b), serving as an occasion to problematize the dominant worldview.

Finally, a path toward redefining the subject as an ethical agent, even within a dystopian narrative framework, is offered by Lorenzo Biondi's comparative reading of two works by David Foster Wallace: *The Broom of the System* (1987) and *Infinite Jest* (1996). In these works, the symmetries between the two protagonists allow the identification of the moral and ethical sphere as the primary divergence, not only between the two main characters but, more importantly, between the endings of the two works. In *Infinite Jest*, this divergence creates the potential for a positive outcome that was not achieved in Wallace's earlier dystopian work.

Despite the heterogeneity of the methodological approaches adopted and the narrative forms considered, the volume reveals a common thread in the ethical and relational reconfiguration of the subject. The point of departure – loss and dissolution – reopens the possibility of a new beginning for the subject: with the collapse of the symbolic, political, and environmental structures of the modern world, the corpus under investigation demonstrates how the crisis of Anthropocene society also creates the conditions for rethinking collective life. The post-apocalyptic production itself functions as a form of imaginative resistance, reflected in the intersections of the works examined, in which the end of the world does not annihilate the subject but reorients it: from domination to relation, from closed identity to co-belonging, from isolation to care, from the verticality of power to the horizontality of shared responsibility. The emerging subject responds not only to other humans but to other living beings (Haraway 2008; 2016), generating new imaginaries and new practices of care. While, as noted, this production is often characterized by a recurring anti-utopian tendency, it simultaneously provides an occasion to imagine an escape from failure.

The post-apocalyptic production examined reworks the notion of the end not as closure, but as a generative moment and a reconfiguration of the human: a subject capable of inhabiting ruins without nostalgia, of reconstructing meaning and community even after catastrophe, and of making survival an ethical act of care toward all living beings.

References

- Benedetti, Carla, *La letteratura ci salverà dall'estinzione*, Torino, Einaudi, 2021.
- Berardi, Franco "Bifo", *After the Future*, Oakland, AK Press, 2011.
- Caracciolo, Marco, *Contemporary Fiction and Climate Uncertainty. Narrating Unstable Futures*, London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2022.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh, *The Climate of History in a Planetary Age*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2021.
- Chute, Hillary L., *Disaster Drawn: Visual Witness, Comics, and Documentary Form*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Colebrook, Claire, *Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction*, Vol. 1, Ann Arbor, Open Humanities Press, 2014.
- Cvetkovich, Ann, *Depression: A Public Feeling*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2012.
- De Cristofaro, Diletta, *The Contemporary Post-Apocalyptic Novel*, London, Bloomsbury, 2020.
- Didi-Huberman, Georges, *Survivance des lucioles* (2009), trad. it. *Come le luciole. Una politica della sopravvivenza*, Torino, Bollati Boringhieri, 2010.
- Earle, Harriet E. H., *Comics, trauma, and the new art of war*, Jackson (MI), University Press of Mississippi, 2017.
- Edelman, Lee, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2004.
- Engélibert, Jean-Paul, *Apocalypses sans royaume: Politique des fictions de la fin du monde, XXe-XXIe siècles*, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2013.
- Engélibert, Jean-Paul, *Fabuler la fin du monde: La puissance critique des fictions d'apocalypse*, Paris, La Découverte, 2019.
- Fisher, Mark, "What Is Hauntology", *Film Quarterly*, 66.1 (2012): 16-24.
- Fisher, Mark, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures*, Winchester, Zero Books, 2013.
- Fisher, Mark, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (2009), trad. it. *Realismo capitalista*, Roman, Nero, 2018.
- Freeman, Elizabeth, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2010.
- Frezza, Gino, *Endoapocalisse. The Walking Dead, l'immaginario digitale, il post umano*, Cava de' Tirreni (SA), Area Blu Edizioni, 2015.
- Ghosh, Amitav, *The Great Derangement* (2016), trad. it. *La grande cecità. Il cambiamento climatico e l'impensabile*, Vicenza, Neri Pozza, 2017.
- Halberstam, Jack, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, New York, New York University Press, 2005.

- Haraway, Donna, *When Species Meet*, Minneapolis – London, University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
- Haraway, Donna, *Staying with the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016).
- Hartog, François, *Chronos: The West Confronts Time*, translated by S. R. Gilbert, New York, Columbia University Press, 2022.
- Hartog, François, *Régimes d'historicité: Présentisme et expériences du temps*, Paris, Seuil, 2003.
- Heise, Ursula K., *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Ingold, Tim, *The Rise and Fall of Generation Now*, Cambridge, Polity, 2024; trad. it., *Il futuro alle spalle. Ripensare le generazioni*, Ed. Nicola Perullo, Milano, Meltemi, 2024.
- James, Erin, *Narrative in the Anthropocene*, Columbus, The Ohio State University Press, 2022.
- Kermode, Frank, *The Sense of and Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1966.
- Latour, Bruno, *Face à Gaïa. Huit conférences sur le nouveau régime climatique*, Paris, La Découverte, 2015.
- Lino, Mirko, *L'Apocalisse postmoderna tra letteratura e cinema. Catastrofi, oggetti, metropoli, corpi*, Firenze, Le Lettere, 2014.
- Malvestio, Marco, *Raccontare la fine del mondo: Fantascienza e Antropocene*, Roma, Nottetempo, 2021a.
- Malvestio, Marco, "Sognando la catastrofe. L'eco-distopia italiana del ventesimo secolo", *Narrativa*, 43 (2021b): 31-44.
- Micali, Simona, *Creature. La costruzione dell'immaginario postumano tra mutanti, alieni, esseri artificiali*, Milano, Shake, 2022.
- Morton, Timothy, *Hyperobjects. Philosophy and Ecology after the End of the World*, Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis Press, 2013.
- Orlando, Francesco, *Gli oggetti desueti nelle immagini della letteratura. Rovine, reliquie, rarità, robaccia, luoghi inabitati e tesori nascosti* (1993), Torino, Einaudi, 2015.
- Preciado, Paul B., *Dysphoria Mundi*, Roma, Fandango, 2022.
- Ricoeur, Paul, *Temps et Récit* (1985), Eng. tr. *Time and Narrative*, Volume 2, by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1988.
- Ryan, Marie-Laure, *A New Anatomy of Storyworlds. What Is, What If, As If*, Columbus, The Ohio State University Press, 2022.
- Scaffai, Niccolò, *Letteratura e ecologia. Forme e temi di una relazione narrativa*, Roma, Carocci, 2017.

- Scaffai, Niccolò (ed.), *Racconti del pianeta terra*, Torino, Einaudi, 2022.
- Scaffai, Niccolò, *Sotto l'inesauribile superficie delle cose. Il paradigma della profondità nell'immaginario dell'Antropocene*, Sansepolcro, Aboca, 2025.
- Scaffai, Niccolò, "Apocalissi borghesi. Ecologia e vita individuale nel romanzo italiano contemporaneo", *Italian Studies*, 80 (2025a): 47-60.
- Sturli, Valentina, "Catastrofi ecologiche e tecnologiche: i paesaggi e gli oggetti straniati nelle post-apocalissi contemporanee", *Status Quaestionis*, 22 (2022): 393-411.
- Thacker, Eugene, *In the Dust of This Planet: Horror of Philosophy Vol. 1*, Winchester, Zero Books, 2011.
- Trexler, Adam, *Anthropocene Fictions: The Novel in a Time of Climate Change*, Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2015.
- Vermeulen, Pieter, *Literature and the Anthropocene*, London - New York, Routledge, 2020.
- Watsuji, Tetsurô, *Fûdo: Ningengakuteki Kôatsu* (1935), trad. it. *Vento e terra. Uno studio dell'umano*; Milano-Udine, Mimesis, 2014.

The Editors

Elisabetta Abignente

Elisabetta Abignente teaches Literary Criticism and Comparative Literature in the Department of Humanities at the University of Naples Federico II. She has studied the representation of love waiting in 20th-century novels, literary translingualism, and contemporary autobiographical genealogical novels. She is the Principal Investigator of the PRIN PNNR 2022 project «PANIC. Post-Apocalyptic Narratives in Italian Culture (2000-2022)» (University of Chieti-Pescara "G. d'Annunzio" and University of Naples Federico II), previously led by PI Valentina Sturli, and coordinates the Osservatorio sul romanzo contemporaneo with Francesco de Cristofaro.

Email: elisabetta.abignente@unina.it

Claudia Cao

Claudia Cao is a researcher in English Literature at the University of Cagliari, where she has collaborated on the research groups Sisters and

Sisterhood in Literature and the Arts (PI Marina Guglielmi) and Writing Impotence and Frigidity: Gender Crisis from the Nineteenth Century to Today (PI Fabio Vasarri). Her interests focus on rewritings, intermedial relations, and gender studies. She is currently working on the project Narrating Assisted Reproductive Technologies (PI Ramona Onnis, Paris Nanterre), which investigates narratives on the medicalization of the female body and assisted reproductive technologies. She is a member of the editorial board of *Between*.

Email: claudia.cao@unica.it

Claudia Cerulo

Claudia Cerulo is postdoctoral researcher in Literary Criticism and Comparative Literature at Universitas Mercatorum. Previously, she held a postdoctoral research fellowship at the Università di Napoli Federico II, where she contributed to the project «PANIC – Post Apocalyptic Narratives in Italian Culture (2000-2022).» She earned her PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Bologna. Her research interests include the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis, ecocriticism, autobiography, and feminist philosophy. She has published several essays in national and international journals. Her monograph *Auditory Perception in XXth Century Self-narratives* (Bloomsbury 2025) is forthcoming. She is a member of the research group SnIF (Studying 'n' Investigating Fumetti) and the Osservatorio sul romanzo contemporaneo.

Email: claudia.cerulo@unimercatorum.it

The Article

Data invio: --/--/----

Data accettazione: --/--/----

Data pubblicazione: --/--/----

How to cite this article

Abignente, Elisabetta – Cao, Claudia – Cerulo, Claudia, “The Post-Apocalyptic Imaginary in Contemporary Fiction”, *Dopo la Catastrofe. Narrazioni postapocalittiche contemporanee. After the Catastrophe. Contemporary Post-Apocalyptic Narratives*, Eds. E. Abignente – C. Cao – C. Cerulo, *Between*, XV.30 (2025): i-xvi, <http://www.betweenjournal.it/>