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Introduction: Imag(in)ing the Apocalypse

In recent decades, the entanglement of technological acceleration, ecological crisis, and geopolitical instability has profoundly transformed the horizon of political and philosophical imagination. Far from producing new figures of the future, such acceleration seems instead to have led to a peculiar contraction of the possible, in which tomorrow appears thinkable almost exclusively in terms of catastrophe. It is within this context that one witnesses the anything but marginal return of mythic and eschatological discourses, and in particular of apocalyptic imaginaries that structure both political narratives and the forms of contemporary sensibility.

This issue of *Mythos. Journal für Ästhetik* arises from the need to critically interrogate this return, approaching aesthetics not as a mere domain of representation, but as a field of forces in which apocalyptic imaginaries are produced, naturalised, or potentially put into crisis. If the apocalypse is not only a future event but a form of perceiving the present, then images, media dispositifs, and artistic practices become privileged sites for understanding how catastrophe is rendered visible, desirable, or inevitable.

Far from being a mere symbolic *repertoire*, the apocalyptic imaginary today operates as a genuine politico-affective grammar. Narratives of climate collapse, global warfare, the decline of civilization, or violent redemption permeate both institutional discourses and digital cultures, often intertwining with new political theologies and reactionary ideological formations. In this scenario, aesthetics plays an ambivalent role: on the one hand, it contributes to the dissemination of a negative imagination grounded in the inevitability of the End; on the other, it opens spaces of resistance, deviation, and reinvention of the sensible.

The contributions gathered in this volume address this ambivalence from philosophical, media-theoretical, artistic, and political perspectives, interrogating both the dominant forms of the apocalyptic imaginary and the possibilities of imagining otherwise. From digital memes to posthuman aesthetics, from feminist readings to practices of symbolic desertion, the essays presented here show how the apocalypse can be not only represented, but also dismantled, rearticulated, or stripped of its paralysing function.

Rather than offering a univocal diagnosis of the present, this issue seeks to open a space for critical reflection on the relationship between end and imagination, between catastrophe and possibility. The question that runs through these pages is not whether the end is imminent, but which forms of seeing, feeling, and thinking render the end so pervasively imaginable today — and whether it is still possible, starting from aesthetics, to disclose other horizons of the possible.