

Entrance Ticket for September 26

Framing the Apocalypse: Analysing *The Collapse of Western Civilization*

On September 26, we have a seminar reflecting on the course book *The Collapse of Western Civilization. A View From the Future* by Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway. In order for you to participate in the seminar, you have to have read the book and you should bring the answers to the three questions below as an “entrance ticket” to the seminar. Your answers don’t have to be structured as a paper, it can be keywords and it can be short. You don’t need to hand it in on Studentportalen, just bring it with you on your phone/computer, in print or handwriting to the seminar and show your ‘entrance ticket’ to Sachiko and Thomas, when you enter the class.

1. What are the main reasons that humanity couldn’t prevent what happened, according to the book?
2. Bring a quote from the book, a scene that sticks with you, or a discussion question that you would like to share and discuss in class.
3. Read the articles in the Course Reader, and use them to reflect on the way that the book frames climate change. Answer *one* of these two questions (*either a or b*):

Foust & O’Shannon Murphy (2009) differentiate two ways how we frame the dystopic future of our planet in times of climate change: 1. The ‘tragic apocalypse’ frame portrays climate change as a matter of fate. The world will soon end, polar bears are dying, cities are flooded and there is nothing we as humanity can do about it. 2. The ‘comic apocalypse’ frame portrays it as an issue that we can act towards. It assigns responsibility, gives clear time frame of what will happen when, if we don’t act - and it sees climate change as an issue that affects some more than others.



- a. What elements of ‘tragic’ and ‘comic’ apocalypse can you find in the book? What do you find good and what do you find problematic about the way they talk about the apocalypse?

Swyngedouw (2010) criticises that climate change is often portrayed as a ‘global humanitarian cause’ (‘us’ as humanity vs. our enemy CO₂). He argues that this framing is harmful, because it leads us away from thinking about climate change as an issue that has political actors who are responsible for it (= the biggest emitters of carbon emissions, Western countries). This ‘depoliticized’ way of framing climate change claims that there is a consensus around climate change, but actually this consensus does not prevent global warming.



- b. Whom do the authors of “The Collapse of the Western Civilization” see as responsible for climate change?

Polar Bear Icon made by Freepik; CO₂ Icon made by Webalys