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Biographical Note

Philip Jacobi read American and Japanese Studies at LMU in Munich and English Literature, British Cultural Studies and Psychology at University of Passau. He has published on British TV comedies, crime television, contemporary fiction and pornography. His research interests include nostalgia culture, 17th and 18th century food and health discourse, speculative fiction, and contemporary theory. His book *Postmillennial Speculative Fiction and the Culture of Longing*, a project on post-postmodern structures of feeling in contemporary culture, SF literature and videogames is available at Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier.

Lecture Abstract

“Imagining the End of Britain: The Cosy Catastrophe in the 21st Century”

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In British science fiction, catastrophe and crisis are familiar motifs: in the works of authors from H.G. Wells to Arthur C. Clarke, the British rarely weather apocalyptic storms unscathed. In the wake of World War II, British SF, however, assumed a particularly British attitude towards the end of the world: despite mankind’s near extinction through carnivorous plants in John Wyndham’s *The Day of the Triffids* (1951), its survivors end up living rather comfortably on the Isle of Wight. Initially (and disparagingly) termed ‘cosy catastrophes’ by Brian Aldiss in his seminal *Billion Year Spree* (1973), this type of disaster narrative mainly saw educated white middle-class men having “a pretty good time [...] while everyone else is dying off” (Aldiss 294).

The tropes of the cosy catastrophe have remained popular until today: this lecture will investigate how they have been updated to the 21st century. In particular, I will consider the mode of the disaster narrative itself, the cosy catastrophe’s “specific class and gender imperatives” (Seed 150), and its expression in a variety of media. From Danny Boyle’s zombie film *28 Days Later* (2002), to Jane Roger’s YA novel *The Testament of Jessie Lamb* (2011), to The Chinese Room’s videogame *Everybody’s Gone to the Rapture* (2015) – sometimes the apocalypse is not the end as we know it.