

The Anthropocene concept, by defining humans as protagonists of global environmental change, draws attention to the necessity of developing more responsible forms of interaction with the planet. Operating as “stewards of the Earth system” (Steffen/Crutzen/McNeill 2007), however, requires an understanding of the scales at which anthropogenic processes occur. Issues of scaling have long been acknowledged and widely discussed in the disciplinary fields of biology, ecology, geography, engineering or mathematics. But the Anthropocene concept transcends discipline-specific conceptions and theories when social, political, ecological, biological and geological processes intertwine at multiple spatial and temporal scales. This creates manifold challenges to widely established epistemological and ontological, observational and operational categories.

Although the Anthropocene concept conveys that phenomena such as climate change or biodiversity loss are intrinsically linked to individual human activities, these phenomena tend to appear highly complex, abstract and distant if presented and imagined at planetary scale. Narratives play a central role in dealing with the ambivalence and discontinuity in nonlinear, multi-scale spatial and temporal processes. The emergence of planetary responsibility presupposes the development of forms and patterns of narrative which allow to mediate and to narrate the Anthropocene and to make it graspable. ‘Narratives of scale’, i.e. narration-based approaches to the scalar complexity of the Anthropocene through cultural, artistic and scientific artefacts, practices and techniques, face various issues. How can individual humans feel responsible for planetary-scale events such as a major “rupture” in the earth system (Hamilton/Grinevald 2015)? Can climate change be made tangible by narrating local weather events (Neimanis/Walker 2014)? How can epochal narrative timeframes in literature mediate the immensity of deep time? Is a different type of narrative information required in order to contextualize the abstract visuality of large-scale bird’s view air photography and satellite images? The difficulty of approaching such issues consists in the oftentimes nonlinear interrelation between the variegated scales of the Anthropocene. It is, for instance, impossible to extrapolate linearly from planetary processes to local events, or to zoom out from individual concerns to the level of ‘species’. How can images, texts, artefacts and scientific data narrate this incommensurability? Can they make cross-scalar effects and entanglements intelligible and even commensurable? Can they fill the scalar gap between individual and planetary human agency, i.e. enable a representational interstice which connects manifold empirical, phenomenological and epistemological scales?

Many contributions to the Anthropocene debate from the humanities have explicitly or implicitly linked the issue of scale to questions of narration: For instance, Dipesh Chakrabarty (2010) has called for the development of “multiple-track narratives” which incorporate the geophysical agency of *anthropos* “into our telling of the human story” without marginalising the scale at which humans are concerned with issues of justice; Timothy Morton (2016) has conceptualised the interrelations between human history and geological time as a “strange loop”; Derek Woods (2014) has outlined the formulation of a “scale critique” that reveals the occurrence of scale variance within seemingly static and linear systems; Timothy Clark (2012; 2015) has argued that the Anthropocene, as a symptom of a “crisis of scale”, provokes a “derangement of linguistic and intellectual proportion” within modes of talking and thinking about the environment; hereby Clark proposes a transfer of such “derangements of scale” into reading practices by embedding texts “in multiple and even contradictory frames at the same time”; and, Bruno Latour (2017) has criticised the visual reproduction of linear modes of scaling operated by zoom-effects.

The conference wants to stimulate interdisciplinary dialogue between scholars from literary and cultural studies, history, social and political sciences, media studies and philosophy on the relationship between scale and narration-

based forms, practices and techniques of representation. The aim is to investigate the potential of various forms of representation (literary, cinematic, photographic, political etc.) in order to narrate and to mediate the multiple interwoven scales of the Anthropocene.