

A black and white photograph of a man in a suit and tie, looking directly at the camera. Inside his head, a complex industrial cityscape with various towers and structures is visible, suggesting a connection between industry and human thought.

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True Detective, still from the opening sequence

EDITORIAL / ANTHROPOCENE

Thinking in the Age of Anthropocene: Cultural Heritage, Philosophical Personae, Environment

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At the dawn of the new millennium, the Nobel prize winner for chemistry Paul Crutzen defined the possibility of characterizing the current epoch as the Anthropocene—the era in which humans can be seen as the main factor in transformation of environmental conditions on Earth. This concept, which was initially debated, criticized and re-signified within many fields of the natural sciences, was ultimately met with great success in the social sciences and, more generally, in the field of humanities—from sociology to anthropology, art and philosophy.

In particular, the concept of Anthropocene puts philosophical thought under pressure. Philosophy was forced to radically change its vantage point, in a sort of anti-Kantian Copernican counter-revolution. Anthropocene compelled philosophers to no longer think from the point of view of the Cartesian subject, but within the conglomerate of various human and non-human actors (including the large network that connects animals, plants, atmospheric and geological phenomena, artificial products, rituals and culture) which constitutes “all that is the case”, following Wittgenstein’s famous definition of the world contained in the first proposition of his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

Beyond its much-criticised descriptive value within the scopes of geology, the philosophical “perspective” of Anthropocene brings into play a multiplicity of disciplines often very distant from each other. From the obvious

connection with environmental ethics and moral philosophy (with their interrogation on the relation between human and non-human agents), to aesthetics (the value of industrial artifacts, biotechnology and geological phenomena), to theoretical philosophy (which inquires over the abysmal question of the statute of the knowing subject).

The perspective of Anthropocene introduces into the scientific debate a degree of complexity that shatters the theoretical foundations on which the whole history of classical philosophy has been constructed—namely, the fundamental oppositions of nature/culture, subject/object, human/non-human. The shortcomings of the philosophical toolbox, however, can be seen as an opportunity for development in the way we think in the humanities. We have the responsibility to cast new words, new conceptual expressions and new narratives capable to describe the complex and urgent challenges that we face entering the Anthropocene. *Vis-à-vis* the task of thinking through a new vocabulary, philosophical thought has the duty of hybridising itself and cooperating with a multiplicity of disciplinary fields in order to approach perspectives, methodological insights and narrative horizons which originally it did not belong to. From literature to biology, from chemistry to architecture and design, Anthropocene calls for an interdisciplinary encounter to develop a theoretical apparatus capable of defining new realities, situations and concepts.

Anthropocene's central question concerns rethinking the relation between humans and the environment, their interactions, interconnections and interdependence. For this reason, issues of conservation, evaluation and valorization of the human works inserted in the environment are key issues within Anthropocene. In this sense, cultural heritage is to be considered essential in the mediation between nature and humans, as the permanent trace of the relation between humans and the world as a whole. The permanence and conservation of human artifacts after the disappearance of the generations that have produced them, opens up the issue of the cultural legacy, in terms of what people from our generation intend to bequeath to future generations, as well as recognizing what the past generations have passed on to us. Artworks, buildings, human constructions, as well as ideas, techniques and forms of organization that have changed the Earth to make it inhabitable, are central issues for a philosophy wishing to address the present epoch.

Finally, the concept of Anthropocene poses the necessity to rethink the relation between *anthropos*, politics, environment and economy. In fact, if human beings are becoming aware of their responsibility towards the biosphere, then the task of politics is no longer only that of granting humans rights, freedom, opportunities of development and possibilities of expression. Above all, politics needs to locate humans within a larger context. In this sense, oceans, animals, forests, energetic resources, but also the future generations of humans, become issues to be discussed in every

political agenda that has the ambition of coping with the tasks brought about by Anthropocene.

The section *Anthropocene* of the *European Journal of Creative Practices in Cities and Landscapes* is set within such a highly interdisciplinary framework, open to the dialogue between various theoretical perspectives.

Submissions are invited to reflect on the following themes. However, contributions on other relevant themes will be also considered for publication.

Places of Anthropocene. What kind of relation exists between the natural world, the city and the industrial world? How to use Anthropocene as a positively heuristic concept, in order to produce new descriptions and new definitions of natural, urban spaces and their interactions?

Cultural heritage and Anthropocene. Cultural heritage can be seen as the set of traces left by humans on the Earth in their effort to inhabit it and understand it by changing it. How can we conceptualize cultural heritage from the point of view of the Anthropocene? What are the challenges that this new perspective forces us to face in our approach to the preservation, valorization and transmission of what we recognize as cultural heritage?

Concepts of Anthropocene. If we assume the impossibility of classical philosophical categories (subject/object, nature/culture, living beings/world) to describe the complexity inherent to the concept of Anthropocene, then what are the new terms, concepts, horizons which are adequate to theoretically grasp this new geological era?

Anthropocene and posthuman. What characteristics should a subject have, in order to appropriately cope with the gnoseological, ethical and anthropological changes that Anthropocene imposes to thinking? Is the category of posthuman adequate to represent the position of humans in this new geological era?

Narratives and images of Anthropocene. What kind of narratives, mythologies, conceptual figures, philosophical personae can express the scenario of the Anthropocene? What kind of artistic expressions are adequate to express the themes introduced by it?

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