What does the proclamation of the Anthropocene – an epoch in which the human is said to have become a geological agent and who’s had irreversible impact upon our planet (Kolbert, 2014; Klein, 2014) – mean for media and cultural studies? Reflecting on the crisis of human and nonhuman life as manifested in ongoing multispecies extinction, this contribution discusses how media and cultural studies can engage with the ‘geological turn’ (Ellsworth and Kruse, 2013). It also considers whether it makes sense to practice media and cultural studies from the perspective of deep, i.e. geological, time.

Zylinska argues that this ‘naturecultural’ mode of thinking can be traced back to Raymond Williams’s idea of culture as ‘transformation of substance at a biological level’ (1997). Yet the Anthropocene may open up media and cultural studies to new ways of engaging with nature and culture, by raising questions about issues of distribution, environment and the privileging of the human as the central point of ethics (Zylinska 2015). At the same time, in its attention to both matter and discourse, media and cultural studies can help rein in some of the rhetorical excesses of the Anthropocene debate. Through its hermeneutic tools, it can also challenge an uncritical and moralistic focus on materiality that ‘the geological turn’ at times implies.

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Competing Interests
The author has no competing interests to declare.
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