

Post-structuralism argues for the dissolution of the modern subject, especially the subject's individuality, interiority, and abstraction from embodiment. The subject is a knot in strings of language, driven by external and unconscious forces, less the free origin of ideas and actions than a site where bodies meet flows of information. For Felix Guattari, 'rather than speak of the "subject", we should perhaps speak of *components of subjectification*' and distinguish between the concepts of the individual and subjectivity. If the subject of technoscience bound up with issues such as the authority of climate modelling is a processual subject in this sense, then how should one think the role of scaling and scale critique in its formation? How does scalar subjectification influence the politics of scientific truth in today's context of corporate capitalism, anti-colonial critique, and post-truth media?

This talk addresses the relationship between subject formation in contemporary technoscience and the theoretical problems of scale at work in ICI's lecture series. Drawing on the ontology and media theory of Gilbert Simondon, Woods understands scientific subjectification in terms of a tension between at least two qualitatively different scales such as weather and climate. His central example is computational climate modelling — especially the use of grids, time steps, and parameters to establish a model's resolution. In such knowledge-political contexts, scale theory and scale critique have taken the subject's integrity for granted in their various ways of conceptualizing 'the human scale' and opposing it to the imperceptible, nonhuman phenomena that lie beyond it. One viable alternative can work with post-structuralist theories of subjectivity to complicate the relation between human and nonhuman scale domains.

**Derek Woods** an assistant professor in the Department of Communication Studies and Media Arts at McMaster University in Canada. Woods works to create dialogue between the sciences and humanities for the sake of anti-capitalist climate politics. He studies the human condition in a time of accelerating ecological crisis, including how environmental damage and restoration intersect with the production of inequality and efforts to redistribute wealth and power. With Joshua Schuster, he is the author of *Calamity Theory: Three Critiques of Existential Risk* (University of Minnesota Press, 2021). He has published articles about scale in relation to climate, film, and ecology in journals like *New Formations* and *The Minnesota Review*. With Karen Pinkus, he co-edited a special issue of diacritics on terraforming, which was the topic of an ICI colloquium organized by Alison Sperling in 2019. His other recent publications appear in journals like *New Literary History*, *CR: The New Centennial Review*, and *Symplokē*. Currently, Woods is completing a book manuscript about the ecosystem and earth system concepts entitled *Trophic Time: A Media Theory of the Ecosystem*. His other ongoing research takes up the cultural politics of symbiosis and eco-Marxist critiques of green technology/carbon markets. Before starting at McMaster, he worked in the Department of English at the University of British Columbia and the interdisciplinary Society of Fellows at Dartmouth College.

**Lecture Series Scale** Scales are used to quantify properties such as length and temperature, or also to measure popularity and affect. But as Alice discovers in Wonderland, a change of scale can also have dramatic qualitative consequences. It disrupts customary ways of perceiving, acting, and being — to the point of feeling as 'queer' to her as a caterpillar's metamorphoses. Helped by the arguably inextricable intertwinement of different meanings and aspects of scale, Alice's experiences continue to provide apt metaphors for the disorienting importance and effects of scale and scaling at a time of hyperglobalization and the so-called anthropocene.

Scale is indeed a highly ambiguous notion, even when one only considers the meanings deriving from the Latin or Italian *scala*, ladder. It simultaneously denotes the whole ladder, one of its steps, and the relation between two steps: The scale of a cartographic map is the ratio between a distance on the map and a distance on the ground, but any particular length also defines a scale, and the range of scales from the subatomic to the planetary scale is part of the spatial scale. Paradoxically recursive, scale combines and helps mediate quantity and quality, as well as subjective perception, objective material properties, and contingent construction.

If different disciplines, discourses, and dispositives each have their privileged scales to which they tend to reduce others, what may be gained by thinking them together, acknowledging both the relative autonomy of particular scales — each with their own affordances, limitations, rules, even laws and ontologies — and their interdependence — each affecting and being affected by other scales? What is the critical purchase of developing multiscale architectures or patchworks of scale-specific, mutually inconsistent and irreducible descriptions, theories, and models? How might the tensions be made productive where they overlap or come into contact? The ICI's Lecture Series 'Scale' will address such questions by reflecting upon the critical role of scale within and across a wide range of different fields.

# Derek Woods

# Scale Critique and

# the Subject of

# Technoscience