



History, Historians and Anthropocene

Mumtaz Alam*

Head of School- Arts and Humanities, College of Humanities and Education, Fiji National University, Fiji

*Corresponding author: Mumtaz Alam, Head of School- Arts and Humanities, College of Humanities and Education, Fiji National University, Fiji

Received: 📅 May 25, 2021

Published: 📅 June 02, 2021

Introduction

Man is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself- Rachel Carson. The Anthropocene is a generally accepted framework for describing the planet we now live in. The Anthropocene is a crucial paradigm for addressing environmental challenges in scientific, political, and ethical arguments. Its major contribution is a scientific, and hence non-normative, the hypothesis of man-made global warming. The assumed connection of man and environment provides a systemic perspective.

Holocene or Anthropocene?

The Holocene epoch relates to the fast proliferation, expansion, and global effect of humans, encompassing all its recorded history, technological revolutions, the emergence of major civilizations, and the overall considerable change to urban existence in the present. Sir Charles Lyell seems to have proposed the word Holocene in 1833, and it was adopted by the International Geology Congress in Bologna in 1885, referring to the post-glacial geological age of the past 10 to 12 thousand years of history. The Anthropocene has surpassed the Holocene as the most recent geological period. Since the year 2000, the notion of the Anthropocene has dominated discussion in practically every academic subject [1-4], including the humanities and social sciences, and has evolved into an inter-and transdisciplinary study area. It has also dissolved long-standing humanities divisions that have affected this discipline, such as those between 'nature' and 'history,' and 'geological' and 'human.' Furthermore, when previous ideas of human purpose, temporality, and collective memory- all of which are vital to historical inquiry- deteriorate, historians must create new and crucial frameworks connecting the past and present to make sense of our future. At the very least, the term 'Anthropocene' sounded academic, combining *Anthropos*, the Greek word for 'human,' with 'cene,' the suffix used in geological period names [5]. The Anthropocene is a term from the Holocene Era that refers to the current evolutionary stage in which humans have become a significant factor in world activities.

Histories of the Anthropocene

The study of history is based on the concept that human history has a particular consistency that connects our past, present, and

future. In our usual creative universe, we typically envisage the future using the same conceptual framework that allows us to comprehend the past. History of climate is the study of historical variations in climate and their impact on civilization from the advent of hominins to the present. This contrasts with palaeoclimatology, which studies climate change throughout Earth's history. These historical effects of climate change may either improve human existence and lead society to thrive, or they can play a role in civilization's eventual demise. Scholars have been hesitant to formally identify the Anthropocene as a new epoch, despite a huge increase in research over the last two decades. The difficulty in determining the beginning point is likely the most powerful argument, but issues about the human being, anthropocentrism and the validity of metaphors have also prompted many scientists to question the classification's efficiency [6]. The Anthropocene's projected ages, on the other hand, range from 50 to 10,000 years. The word "Anthropocene" was invented by Eugene Stoermer in the early 1980s, but it only acquired general acceptance in the scientific world until Dutch atmospheric scientist Paul Crutzen supported it in 2000. It occurs throughout the Holocene, a roughly 12,000-year period of growing natural stability during which varied human communities evolved.

The shift from the Holocene to the Anthropocene, unlike any previous geological shift, is driven by the purposeful behaviour of sentient creatures: 'This is not merely an environmental disaster; it is a volcanic change induced by people.' As a result, the notion of the Anthropocene implies that the history of human civilizations is inextricably linked to the history of the climate. History and geology are inextricably linked, posing a significant intellectual problem for the humanities. The Anthropocene hypothesis has become a solid, discussed phrase in the humanities and social sciences, bringing up new ways of thinking about humans, environmental communities, energy production, interactions with non-human life, confrontation, the social, and the presence of the past [7-9]. When academicians and other social scientists started studying globalization in the late 1980s and early 1990s, climate change became widely accepted in the public realm. While the Marxist critique of capital, subaltern studies, Indigenous science, and post-colonial criticism have all

been enormously helpful in analysing globalization during the past twenty-five years, they have not fully equipped us to make sense of the ecological crisis in which humanity now finds itself. Joseph Needham, a physicist, and historian who had studied extensively in China, explored methods to break down boundaries and proposed a venture that highlighted all cultures' reciprocal reliance.

The Anthropocene Controversy

We may make the case for the Anthropocene by stating that humans have depleted 40% of the world's petroleum reserves during the previous few hundred years. This work has taken ages, if not millennia, to complete. Human activity has significantly altered approximately half of the Earth's terrestrial area, generating biodiversity shifts [10,11], nutrient cycle, and soil, climatic, and environmental changes. Synthetic nitrogen fixation is currently fixing more nitrogen in terrestrial ecosystems than all-natural processes combined. People use half of all freshwaters, which is quickly dwindling in many areas. Some scientists think that the Anthropocene began in the late eighteenth century, when analyses of air trapped in polar ice indicated the beginning of increased global carbon dioxide and methane emissions. This day also happens to coincide with the creation of the steam engine. According to the WGA (Working Group on the Anthropocene), the Anthropocene Period began in 1950, because of nuclear testing, the discovery of plastics, and the exponential demographic rise of the human population. The Post-Anthropocene epoch is also known as the Plutocene epoch. Despite significant advances in the study over the previous century [5], we are still a long way from understanding nature. The Anthropocene debate is the peak of Nature/Society duality. And, though the Anthropocene is inadequate as a historical rather than geological assertion, it is always an argument worth considering. A sequence of early steps results in the emergence of new concepts. On the way to a new synthesis, there are various philosophical detours. Without a question, the Anthropocene definition is the most impactful of these compromises. No other theory based on historical transition has had such a broad influence throughout the Green Thought continuum; no other socioecological notion has piqued the public's curiosity.

Anthropocene and Health

The fast expansion of the human population and human activities is producing a problem: the increasing pressure is disrupting important biophysical Earth systems and producing environmental changes that are detrimental and disastrous to

human well-being. The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change report for 2019 shows how planetary health is evolving in the ecological, social, and human health realms.

Conclusion

If you assume that humans are the only species deserving of consideration, you have not comprehended Darwin's revelation that we are but are no longer aware of our function in the environment. People's ability to affect change at such a large scale and such a rapid pace were unparalleled. The rate at which these changes occur spans from decades to centuries, as opposed to hundreds to thousands of years for analogous transitions in Earth's natural dynamics. The Anthropocene must be part of our lexicon if we acknowledge that not all men are equal contributors to our global ailments and that many are victims. We know who we are, what we do, and what our duties are as a community.

References

1. Crutzen PJ (2006) The "Anthropocene". *Earth system science in the anthropocene* pp. 13-18.
2. Karlsson O, Rocklöv J, Lehoux AP, Bergquist J, Rutgersson A, Blunt, et al. (2021) The human exposome and health in the Anthropocene. *Int J Epidemiol* 50(2): 378-389.
3. Lewis SL, Maslin MA (2015) Defining the Anthropocene. *Nature* 519(7542): 171-180.
4. Oskar Karlsson, Joacim Rocklöv, Alizée P Lehoux, Jonas Bergquist, Anna Rutgersson, et al. (2021) The human exposome and health in the Anthropocene. *Int J Epidemiol* 50(2): 378-389,
5. Perez CS (2021) Thinking (and feeling) with Anthropocene (Pacific) islands. *Dialogues in Human Geography*.
6. Rockström J, Steffen W, Noone K, Persson Å, Chapin III, et al. (2009) Planetary boundaries: exploring the safe operating space for humanity. *Ecology and Society* 14(2).
7. Ruddiman WF (2013) The Anthropocene. *Annual Review of Earth and Planetary Sciences* 41: 45-68.
8. Steffen W (2021) Introducing the Anthropocene: The human epoch. *Ambio* 2: 1-4.
9. Watts N, Amann M, Arnell N, Ayeb Karlsson S, Belesova K, et al. (2019) The 2019 report of The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: ensuring that the health of a child born today is not defined by a changing climate. *Lancet* 394(10211): 1836-1878.
10. Zalasiewicz J, Williams M, Smith A, Barry TL, Coe AL, et al. (2008) Are we now living in the Anthropocene? *Gsa Today* 18(2): 1-4.
11. Zalasiewicz J, Williams M, Steffen W, Crutzen P (2010) The new world of the Anthropocene.



This work is licensed under Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License

To Submit Your Article Click Here:

[Submit Article](#)

DOI: [10.32474/SJPBS.2021.05.000210](https://doi.org/10.32474/SJPBS.2021.05.000210)



Scholarly Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Sciences

Assets of Publishing with us

- Global archiving of articles
- Immediate, unrestricted online access
- Rigorous Peer Review Process
- Authors Retain Copyrights
- Unique DOI for all articles