

We are in the Anthropocene.

We are in the Anthropocene¹. Science shows that we are living in a time of unprecedented human transformation of this planet. How these manifold transformations of Earth's environmental systems and life itself are unfolding is messy, complex, socially-contingent and heterogeneous. Most certainly, they cannot be reduced to a single thin line in the 'mud' dividing Earth's history into a time of significant human transformation and a time before. This is why geologists have rejected the simplistic approach of defining an Anthropocene Epoch beginning in 1952 in the sediments of Crawford Lake in Canada². Geologically, the Anthropocene is better understood as an intensifying, ongoing planetary event³. The Anthropocene has opened up fertile ground for interdisciplinary advances on crucial planetary issues, including critical discussions of societal transformations required to reduce and reverse the damage done by humanity. By focusing on the Event, itself, rejecting the assumption that it must be a time interval, attention can at last be turned towards more important and urgent planetary matters, rather than a start date.

(170 words)

References

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Authors

Mark Maslin^{1,2}, Matthew Edgeworth³, Erle C. Ellis⁴, Philip L. Gibbard⁵ and Michael Walker⁶

¹ Department of Geography, University College London, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, UK

² Natural History Museum of Denmark, University of Copenhagen, Gothersgade 130, 1123 København K, Denmark

³ School of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH, UK

⁴ Department of Geography and Environmental Systems, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Baltimore, Maryland 21250, USA

⁵ Scott Polar Research Institute, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, CB2 1ER, UK

⁶ Department of Geography and Earth Sciences, Aberystwyth University, Aberystwyth, Wales, UK

