

The book cover features a textured, abstract background. The top half is dominated by warm tones of orange and red, with some greenish-yellow streaks. A horizontal band of bright magenta or pinkish-red runs across the middle. The bottom half is a solid, muted olive green. The overall effect is layered and painterly.

Erle C. Ellis

# ANTHROPOCENE

A Very Short Introduction

OXFORD

## Anthropocene: A Very Short Introduction

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Erle C. Ellis

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**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,  
United Kingdom

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First edition published in 2018

Impression: 2

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Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press  
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017959738

ISBN 978-0-19-879298-7

Printed in Great Britain by  
Ashford Colour Press Ltd, Gosport, Hampshire

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# Preface

Rewriting history is an ambitious project. Even more so when this involves an entire planet and features a new leading actor. But that is precisely what this book is about.

The history of your planet and your role in it is being rewritten to include a new chapter; a chapter in which you play a leading role. We humans, the Anthropos, have so greatly altered Earth's functioning that scientists now propose to recognize this with a new interval of geologic time: the Anthropocene. Unlike prior geologic times, the proposal to mark an interval in which humans have become a 'great force of nature' has exploded across the scholarly world and beyond.

The future of the Anthropocene remains unsettled. Scientific debate still swirls among the various proposals to define an 'age of humans', including the option of rejecting the Anthropocene outright. As a work in progress, no book can provide the final word on what the Anthropocene is or will become. My goal here is simpler; to provide you with the background needed to understand the Anthropocene as a scientific proposal and to explain why it has become so broadly influential. In the process, I hope you will become as inspired as I am to more consciously and proactively shape a better future for the age of humans.





# Acknowledgements

I could not have written this book without the support of my wife, Ariane de Bremond. My father, Robert Ellis, encouraged me to do the book, and my children, Ryan and Amaia, kept me inspired.

I am indebted to Matthew Edgeworth, Martin Head, Peter Kareiva, Laura Martin, John McNeill, Will Steffen, Chris Thomas, Zev Trachtenberg, and Alex Wolfe for reviewing chapters and providing invaluable advice on improving them. Discussions and advice from Mark Maslin, Tim Lenton, and Andrew Bauer moved things along and helped with reviews, and Jared Margulies, Adam Dixon, and Jason Chang provided helpful feedback. My colleagues in the Anthropocene Working Group of the Subcommittee of Quaternary Stratigraphy of the International Commission on Stratigraphy have shaped my thinking in so many ways. My thanks to all of them, especially Jan Zalasiewicz, Colin Waters, and Mark Williams, who made me welcome, even as my views on Anthropocene formalization within the Geologic Time Scale have differed from the consensus view. Latha Menon provided invaluable editorial advice and Jenny Nugee made sure everything was in order. This book was written on leave from my position at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, with resources provided by the Centre for Development and Environment at the University of Bern in Switzerland. I am grateful to both for their support.



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