

CALL FOR PAPERS



HUMAN CONDITION IN THE ANTHROPOCENE

Vilnius University, Institute of Philosophy, and Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Department of Contemporary Philosophy, invite contributions to the conference “Human Condition in the Anthropocene”, taking place **at the Vilnius University on the 7-8 November 2024**.

The term “the Anthropocene” was popularised by E. Stoermer and P. Crutzen in 2000, who argued that humanity’s impact on Earth’s geology and ecology has exceeded the impact of natural processes and constitutes a new geological epoch. The Anthropocene Working Group was established in 2009, seeking official recognition of the Anthropocene within the Geological Time Scale. The idea of the Anthropocene soon got a second life within the humanities and social sciences, where it has become an object of lively and contentious discussion. In philosophy, the Anthropocene has been approached from different philosophical disciplines (ontology, ethics, social and political philosophy, aesthetics) and a variety of methodological perspectives: feminism, post-colonialism, posthumanism, indigenous cosmologies, phenomenology, object-oriented ontology, new materialisms, Marxism, and various others. These philosophical engagements with the Anthropocene thesis encouraged rethinking the “human condition” (to use Hannah Arendt’s expression, also invoked by Chakrabarty 2015). The notions of agency and the subject have been transformed, encouraging us to expand our reflections from the human towards post-human, or more-than-human concerns. On the other hand, philosophy has interrogated the idea of the Anthropocene, criticising its emphasis on humanity as such (Anthropos) and bringing to light power relations, oppressions and exclusions that structure socially unequal ecological impacts. Over the years, these debates have caused an explosion of alternative terms to conceptualise humanity’s geological and ecological condition: Capitalocene (Moore 2016), Plantationocene (Haraway et al. 2015), Wasteocene (Armiero 2021), Chthulucene (Haraway 2016), Necrocene (McBrien 2016), Growthocene (Chertkovskaya and Paulsson 2016), Neganthropocene (Stiegler 2018), Novacene (Lovelock 2019) and many others.

In the beginning of 2024, however, the Subcommittee on Quaternary Stratigraphy voted against officially recognising the Anthropocene as the geological epoch, prompting discussions on the future of this idea in the Earth sciences. The conference “Human Condition in the Anthropocene” seeks to encourage a similar reflection on the idea of the Anthropocene in philosophy from a dual perspective: on the one hand, appreciating how the idea of the Anthropocene has influenced the debates on “the human condition”; on the other, reflecting on how these philosophical engagements have in turn questioned the idea of the Anthropocene itself.

Contributions are especially welcome that address the following questions: How has the idea of the Anthropocene influenced the philosophical reflections on the human condition?

How has the engagement with the idea of the Anthropocene encouraged expanding our concerns from the human towards more-than-human, even planetary, conditions? How has the engagement with the Anthropocene thesis changed our conceptions of the subject and agency, and ecological responsibility?

How have different philosophical schools, in turn, contributed towards reshaping the idea of the Anthropocene? What alternative concepts, after years of intense philosophical interrogations, would contribute towards better conceptualising humanity's geological and ecological condition? What is the current status of the idea of the Anthropocene in philosophy and what could be its future?

Contributions are welcome from all philosophical disciplines and methodological approaches.

Proposals of up to 300 words should be sent to anthropocenevilnius2024@gmail.com by September 2nd, 2024. Please include the speaker's name and institutional affiliation. Accepted presenters will be notified by September 10th, 2024.

The conference is free of charge.

Conference organizing committee: Mintautas Gutauskas (Vilnius University), Audronė Žukauskaitė (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute), Danutė Bacevičiūtė (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute), Egidijus Mardosas (Vilnius University), Vaiva Daraškevičiūtė (Vilnius University)

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