

Living in the Anthropocene

Environmental journalist Christian Schwägerl explores our role in this new geological epoch and points toward a sustainable future

The Anthropocene by Christian Schwägerl

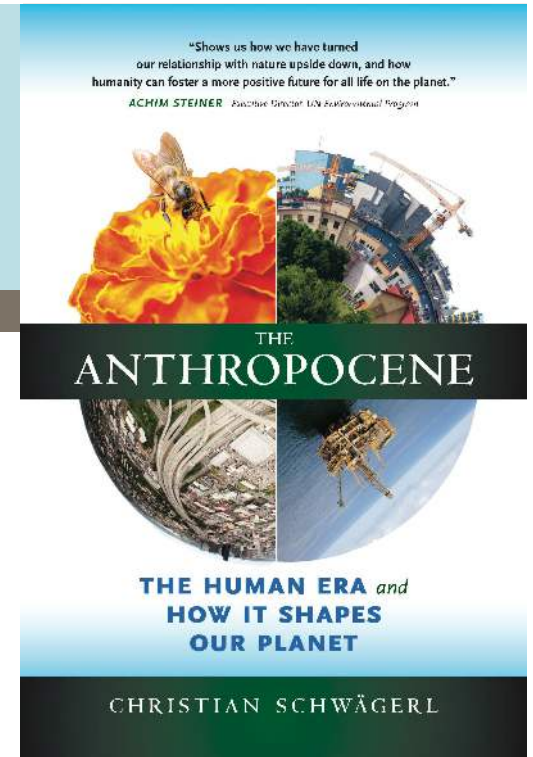
In *The Anthropocene: The Human Era and How It Shapes Our Planet*, environmental journalist Christian Schwägerl investigates our current ecological circumstances, and discovers something hopeful: that we already possess the scientific, philosophical, spiritual and governmental tools needed to correct our current trajectory toward a positive and sustainable future.

In 2000, Nobel Prize-winning scientist Paul Crutzen suggested that humans are now living in the “Anthropocene,” a new geological epoch in which humanity has the dominant influence on the planet’s ecosystems. Schwägerl was struck by Crutzen’s definition of the relationship between humans and nature—that they form a single entity, instead of being two separate, opposing forces. After twenty-five years of reporting on environmental and science issues, seeing rainforests burning, land made toxic from mining, and species on the brink of extinction, Schwägerl gained hope from the idea that our ever-evolving human consciousness might be about to enter a new phase.

Schwägerl says, “The Anthropocene is more than the sum of the parts of environmental havoc. It can be the arena in which humanity decides to wisely integrate into the planet’s workings, enriching itself by its actions as a result. Smart cities, cultivated life-forms and landscapes with a human-induced biodiversity, are examples of how we can create a positive geological record. Human creativity, community spirit and conscious thought can lead to changes that might make our species look back at current behavior as sheer ecological barbarism. We can go from today’s crises to an enlightened planet.”

Schwägerl opens the book with an example of how ordinary human beings can alter the course of Earth’s history—for better or worse. He profiles the chemist who invented CFCs, chemicals used in refrigerants and aerosol cans, and the subsequent research of its damage to the atmosphere, for which Crutzen was awarded his Nobel Prize. According to a recent United Nations report, thanks to laws that banned the use of CFCs, the hole in the Earth’s ozone layer is shrinking.

Drawing on his own research and experiences as a journalist with rigorous scientific training, Schwägerl offers readers the means to envision and create realistic solutions to our current ecological crises. He shares a planetary vision of an attainable world that balances ecological sustainability, economic prosperity, political justice and cultural vibrancy.



BOOK DETAILS

November 5, 2014

Synergetic Press

The Anthropocene

by Christian Schwägerl

with foreword by Paul J. Crutzen, Ph.D.

248 pages, 6 x 9 inches

Hardcover, \$27.95, 978-0907791-54-6

Paperback, \$19.95, 978-0907791-55-3

Ebook, \$14.95, 978-0907791-53-9

PR BY THE BOOK

Originally published in German as *Menschenzeit* (The Age of Humans) by Random House, *The Anthropocene* is available from Synergetic Press in November 2014.

Who wrote it?

Christian Schwägerl is an award-winning journalist who has written for national media in his home country of Germany since 1988, covering politics, science, the economy and cultural affairs. He began writing about global environmental policy in 1995 while covering the first UN climate conference in Berlin, and subsequently worked for several prestigious publications there, reporting on the environment, agricultural development and politics internationally. He has directed a Master Class on the future of science journalism at the Robert Bosch Foundation. Since 2012 Schwägerl has helped initiate two major cultural endeavors around the Anthropocene in Germany: The Anthropocene Project, at the federally funded House of World Cultures in Berlin, and a special exhibition at the German Technology Museum in Munich, serving as an external curator. He is the author of three books in German, the most recent being *The Analog Revolution: When Technology Becomes Alive and Nature Fuses with the Internet* (Random House: Riemann Verlag, September 2014). Schwägerl lives in Berlin, where he loves being out in nature with his two children, practicing yoga, bird-watching, and cycling.

News tie-ins & core messages

- The Anthropocene: Living in a new geological epoch
- U.N. Reports the Earth's Ozone Layer is "On Track to Recovery"
- The Relationship Between Humans and Nature: Our chance to affect the future
- The four forces propelling us out of the Holocene into the Anthropocene: Population growth, increase in human living space requirements, energy consumption, and human influence on evolution.
- The fundamental issue of life on a crowded planet: What happens when I multiply my lifestyle by 7 billion?
- Technature: Why *homo sapiens* live in such a tight symbiosis with their own technical gadgets and why we need an evolution whereby technology adapts to its environment
- Our Potential for Action: Schwägerl's positive, speculative scenario of how the Anthropocene could progress



Author and journalist
Christian Schwägerl

christianschwaegerl.com/en

Reviews

“This book is a striking manifestation of the power and potential in the idea of the Anthropocene. A skillful narrator with many years of journalistic experience, author Christian Schwägerl describes how a single species, our own, is irreversibly transforming the Earth’s biological, geological and chemical processes, and thus affecting our very existence. Schwägerl’s book is a rallying cry for us to recognize our opportunity to build a long-lasting, viable, creative and freedom-loving human civilization. This book is like a navigation system for the new world of the Anthropocene that lies before us.”

—From the foreword by Paul J. Crutzen, Ph.D.

“Christian Schwägerl’s book shows us that we humans turn our relationship with Nature upside down. Over millennia we were rebels against a more powerful force. Now it is we who decide what will be Nature tomorrow and after, e.g., by determining the climate and altering the oceans. *The Anthropocene* is an intellectually exciting book.”

—Achim Steiner, Executive Director of the UN Environment Program (UNEP)

“This book is skillfully investigated. It invites us to join a dawning Age . . . where total responsibility is fundamental in our value system.”

—Prof. Dr. Reinhold Leinfelder, Humboldt-University Berlin, former director of the Berlin Natural History Museum

“One of the most intelligent how-to-save- the-planet books in a long time.”

—*Die Zeit* Science Magazine

“One of the most inspiring and enlightening books I’ve ever read.”

—John Allen, Inventor, Biosphere 2

Media Contact: Elena Meredith, 512.481.7096, elena@prbythebook.com

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