

Review of: "The Anthropocene Borderline Problems"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Martin Bohle's *The Anthropocene Borderline Problems* is well worth reading as both a means of updating one's understanding of the foundational terms surrounding the term and the meanings of "Anthropocene." It is also a dense and well-argued essay surrounding the consequences of recent discussions about what happens when people begin to debate the Anthropocene's human dimension.

Bohle uses the theories offered by Jurgen Ren in his book *The Evolution of Knowledge - Rethinking Science for the Anthropocene* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2020), where the concepts of borderline problems, economy and evolution of knowledge find their origins. Bohle's familiarity with the academic organizations and the certification of terms such as Anthropocene enable him to provide the reader with a valuable description of the history of important ideas and discussions surrounding the development of the term "Anthropocene." This familiarity, however, might challenge some readers ability to easily move through his argument. Here is a portion of the essay that might be challenging to those not socialized into languages of the academic disciplines that are part of Bohle's borderline problems.

Developing the GTS is a long-enduring process undertaken by geological stratigraphers organized in the ICS, a constituent body of the IUGS, which regularly updates the GTS. It took almost a decade after the C/S-proposal for the geological communities to start to debate it formally (Zalasiewicz et al. 2008). The ICS's Subcommission on Quaternary Stratigraphy¹⁰ (SQS). P. 6

It should be noted, as an example, that the letters ICS have over a thousand meanings and are used many times throughout the essay. (<https://www.allacronyms.com/ICS>).

When all is said and done, the essay deals with time and change. As St. Augustine said "What is time then? If nobody asks me, I know; but if I were desirous to explain it to one that should ask me, plainly I do not know." Indeed, the essay involves us with many times: personal, clock, geological, and earth to mention a few. And, as Augustine suggests, it is difficult, if not impossible to know. But the essay strongly suggests it is a knowledge of these various times that open up diverse meanings of Anthropocene, thus enabling us to manipulate the materials associated with these meanings and times.

This leads me to wonder about, what seems to me, presuppositions of his argument. Presuppositions, which seem inherent within discussions of the history of science and the history of technologies many times associated with it. Thinking about science in the current liminal epoch many times runs the danger of the acceptance of the reductionism that is part of the modern epoch. Jurgen Ren's linkage of understanding and change seems to continue another presupposition of the modern era: that an increase of personal and communal knowledge will result in a harmonious

world. Thus, in this instance, the more we know about the Anthropocene and its borderline problems the better we will be prepared to solve some of the inherent challenges of the Anthropocene such as climate. I wonder if that is true.

This wonder will certainly lead me to read Jurgen Ren's book and revisit my favorite philosopher's view of the meaning and role of human understanding: Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study in Human Understanding* (NY: Harper Collins, 1957).

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