



Geographies
of the
Anthropocene



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Global threats in the Anthropocene: from COVID-19 to the future
Leonardo Mercatanti, Stefano Montes (Eds.)

Citizen, Geoscientist and Associated Terra-former

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Abstract

This essay focuses on the specific societal responsibility of geoscientists. The experiences with the COVID-19 health pandemic of the years 2020/2021 provide a lens to situate geosciences/earth-sciences in contemporary societies. The pandemic illustrates the essence of any possible Anthropocene, namely, less a geological epoch than a *'future World'*. Contemporary humans operate a planetary technosphere to secure their daily living. Nowadays, the technosphere is part of the Earth System. That feature is at the origin of the Anthropocene. Geoscientific knowledge is a corpus of insights about the functioning of the abiotic systems of planet Earth. It enables contemporary technologies and cultures; hence, it co-shapes the technosphere. Likewise, geoscience knowledge enables people to evaluate anthropogenic changes in societal contexts, even as mere consumers of resources. Furthermore, citizens need insight into how the Earth System works to make informed decisions. Therefore, the societal responsibility of geoscientists is central because geoscientific expertise is crucial for making anthropogenic change occur. Geoscientists help achieve anthropogenic change and make the change global. Therefore, they are (like) assistant terra-formers. Subsequently, geoscientists should assume the responsibility that comes with their role as agents of technology-driven change. That is the essence of [geo]ethics and being a citizen.

Keywords: geosciences, geoethics, Anthropocene, pandemic, social-ecological systems

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