

# Parnassus and Paradise, or the Anthropocene and the Reversal of a Mode of Consciousness

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## Abstract

When did the new epoch begin? We have now, for quite some time, been hearing a discussion of the Anthropocene: the age of the human being. The term refers to the epoch in which human intervention has grown to be universal and leaves its imprint everywhere and on everything. Paul Jozef Crutzen, the atmospheric chemist who invented the term, proposes to date this epoch as having begun with the invention of the steam engine; others see its beginning in the invention of the atom bomb, and thus in that technology which holds the potential to annihilate the very thing that gives the new epoch its name: the human being.

The Anthropocene, however, means first of all that everything is landscape, that everything is *designed*. Nothing can any longer present itself as true and proper nature. There are no more sacred places. An alternative option for the beginning of the Anthropocene might therefore be found in the discovery of nature as landscape, which came about in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance as the human individual grew separate from the divine whole of nature, and thus entered the mode of consciousness that specifically hinges on the discovery of the *Self*. Landscape and the *Self* are dialectically interdependent, with each relating to the other as both precondition and result.

## Keywords

Architecture Theory, Epistemology, Anthropocene, Landscape, Nature, Petrarch, Consciousness