

We live in the Anthropocene, an epoch when it became obvious that the human impacts the world to unprecedented extent. The whole planet (lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere) changes in result of human activity causing climate destabilization, soil degradation, ocean acidification, floods and droughts, and biodiversity decline (a so-called “6th mass extinction”). Scientists from the Anthropocene Working Group confirmed that this phenomenon is geologically real, meaning that the human has indeed left a geologic trace. The discussions on the Anthropocene are not however limited to the environmental issues. It soon became obvious that environmental problems are inseparably connected to social, political, economic as well as ethical questions. The destabilization of life conditions on Earth force migration (between 2008 and 2012 up to 140 million people left their homes as a result of climate catastrophes). Environmental questions also reveal the scale of social inequalities. People contribute to climate destabilization differently and they also have unequal chances of taking effective actions against it. As Andreas Malm and Alf Hornborg, researchers from Human Ecology Division, Lund University, indicate “in the early 21st century, the poorest 45% of the human population accounted for 7% of emissions, while the richest 7% produced 50%”. This is the reason why climate debates are also a part of politics. Importantly, the Anthropocene influences not only life conditions on Earth, social and political decisions but it also forces us to reflect on ethical issues. In what values is the human activity enrooted? What values influenced today’s – some say – critical situation? The way we think about the human and its relations with nature, science, and technology, the way we define responsibility for our endeavors, the way we fathom nature and its value, impacts the world we live in and create. Values have real-life effects – they shape the way we form ourselves, the surrounding world and our mutual relations. It is thus crucial to ask what kinds of ethics stem from the reflection on the Anthropocene given the fact that this epoch challenges the traditional models of thinking about the relation between humans and the environment. First, it uncovers the ambivalent human position: humanity is both omnipotent and impotent – one species is shaping the life of the whole planet and at the same time humanity is not in control of the environmental situation and in consequence might witness its own demise. Second, the division between the active human agent and the passive environment to be protected is problematized, what we call “nature” is not a background for human activities, it is rather its active participant. Third, we are challenged with the collision of scales of human life and the geologic (and the planetary) time. Our everyday life is influenced by phenomena that are beyond our scale of perception: the scope of the problem gets out of control. It is too small to be noticed and becomes too grand to be solved. This results in disorientation on what to do and how. In this context the main research questions of this project are posed: what kinds of ethics are proposed as a response to the Anthropocene in contemporary posthumanities? What kinds of values do they offer? What kinds of human-non-human relations do they imagine? How do they conceptualize human, nature, science, and technologies? The author of the project analyses four main problems of the posthuman Anthropocene ethics. First, she reflects on how extinction (especially the possibility of human extinction) influences ethics. How to think on human responsibility for life conditions on the Earth and accountability to future generations from the perspective of demise? How to design human-non-human relations and according to what values? How the possibility of extinction impacts ways in which humans might be conceptualized when facing the thought or threat of extinction? Second, the author investigates ethics that might best respond to the collision of scales in the Anthropocene and seeks to offer a cross-scale approach in ethics (its definition and characteristic). Third, the author elaborates on the ways in which human is conceptualized in the posthuman Anthropocene ethics. The very name “Anthropocene” points to the *anthropos* as a crucial term in question and hence – as the author claims – rethinking ways in which we conceptualize the human is an ethical challenge of today. One can distinguish three main tendencies of how the human is conceptualized in contemporary posthuman philosophy: (1) tendencies to reduce the human and its central position (i.e. anthropocentrism) to show other non-human agents that shape the world; (2) tendencies to rethink the human in relational terms, i.e. to show the interdependent nature of the human and how it emerges out of the relations and entanglements of human-non-human; (3) tendencies to strengthen the human who might be able to transcend its bodily weaknesses and limitations and overcome the climate catastrophe with the help of science and technology development. Forth, the author of this research project makes efforts to uncover the utopian potential of the posthuman Anthropocene ethics. She aims at presenting the Anthropocene utopias offered by contemporary posthuman philosophers. In particular she reflects on utopian and speculative ways philosophers imagine the human. The project highlights the role and importance of philosophical and ethical reflection for today’s world. It researches the ways in which ethics responds to the Anthropocene and how it might respond otherwise: what kinds of alternative ways of how we understand the human, the surrounding world, and our mutual relations it may offer? In this sense it hopes to help us face the challenges of changing life conditions on the Earth.