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Speaker 1: A very good day to you. I'm here today with. Man Daniel Buschmann works at the Federal Environment Agency in the Climate Change and Adaptation Department and is conducting research in the field of environmental philosophy in the Anthropocene.

Speaker 2: Thank you very much, thank you for your interest. Yes, wonderful.

Speaker 1: I'll start right away with my first question, in the field of Anthropocene environmental philosophy. Where does the term Anthropocene actually come from and what does it describe?

Speaker 2: Put simply, the Anthropocene is the age of humans. It's an invention that comes from geology. Geologists look at sediments and see how the same fossils are found again and again in certain layers of the earth all over the world. For example, and they then started to use these fossils to divide the geological eras into different periods and you probably remember that from your geography lessons anyway - Cambrian or Silurian and Ordovician and Permian, Triassic, Cretaceous - all these things we once had to learn and exactly and the last eras are then the Pleistocene, which is the Ice Age. The mammoths, the sabre-toothed tigers. And the ice was the main force that determined the sediments on earth and the climate. Then comes the Holocene, the warm age in which the ice melts and in which the Baltic Sea, for example, was formed, or these five large lakes on the border between Canada and the USA, and since the 19th century people have been considering whether there might be a new age, because man has now populated the earth through agriculture, for example, but also through many other things, and people have long been considering whether a new age should be introduced now, the Anthropocene, the age of man. And this debate really took off at the beginning of the 2000s and became popular. And it has also gone beyond this geological discussion, indeed it has gained a lot of momentum in politics in art in many different sciences people are beginning to deal with this term Anthropocene, and perhaps what is special about this term is that in the last 500 years man has always been perceived as someone who studies nature from the outside as an external observer. And who actually plays no role at all in nature. We had this with Johannes Kepler, who stated that the home of man is not the center of the universe, but that we are just one planet of many in the solar system and just one galaxy of many. Or Charles Darwin, who said that man is not the crown of creation, but is only an unimportant branch on the tree of evolution and he is still an unimportant branch in this tree. Yes or then Freud, we are in Vienna, just said man does not even control his own psyche his own mind, so to speak We are driven by our compulsions by our drives by our subconscious and that was the understanding of science of the last 500 years and that is changing very strongly through this term Anthropocene. And suddenly man is at the center of the life of the earth - life, perhaps the only life in the universe as we know it, is suddenly in the hands of man and man is coming back very strongly to the center of commerce. And that is also what makes this concept so attractive and so charged and, as I said, makes it a concept that many people deal with far beyond geology.

Speaker 1: Very interesting. You said that the human being comes back to the center of action, so to speak, also through this, through this concept. What examples of human action and human influence on the environment can you give us?

Speaker 2: There are many, many examples. I think everyone knows about microplastics, for example, that I said before that geologists look at sediments, that you can even find ocean sediments in sediments all over the world, that would be a point where you can actually geologically determine the Anthropocene, so to speak. Then there are forest fires - all over the world due to fires, the soot particles are distributed through the atmosphere. You find them everywhere. . There are radioactive markers from the atomic bomb tests that took place in Hawaii in the atmosphere of many countries

in the nine hundred and sixties - all of the atoms that can be found all over the world. But there is also, for example, a loss of biodiversity that you can see, i.e. certain fossils, certain plant species, certain animal species are no longer found in the more recent sediments. If you go back further historically, you can see that the CO₂ level has risen since industrialization, which is now common knowledge. You can also go back even further and see that there was a historical low point in CO₂ around 1610 because industrialization had not yet begun, but there were a lot of sugar cane plantations, for example, and that could also be the beginning of the Anthropocene, which is still being debated at the moment. When does it actually start? And if you go way, way back, it's actually agriculture. I don't know the last flight when you think about how much the landscape in which we live is actually shaped by people. There is actually no spot. In connection with the Anthropocene, people often talk about the end of nature, i.e. there is no longer any nature as we used to imagine it, the external wild nature that we encounter has always been shaped and used by humans, and agriculture is also something that people around the world have been using to influence sediments for centuries, and that could also be one of the markers where the Anthropocene begins. But that's a very political question, so it's been controversial at the moment for many years when exactly it should start, also because a lot is riding on this question. So if you say it's agriculture, it's still relatively evenly distributed, so apart from a few nomadic societies, everyone is farming. If you take the year 1610, the plantation economy, then it already has a very strong connotation of racism colonialism that brought about this plantation economy, if you take this year 1870, the beginning of industrialization, then you get very quickly to capitalism. And if you take the atomic bomb tests, then you have this scenario of the Cold War. Yes, a certain kind of science, so a lot also depends politically on this definition of when the Anthropocene begins - who is "to blame for it" in quotation marks? Who caused the Anthropocene? Who started it? And that's why it's also a question that hasn't yet been clarified in the history books - the Anthropocene is more a part of the public debate at the moment.

Speaker 1: And you've just mentioned that it's still a contentious issue as to when the Anthropocene actually begins, but what other problems do you know about in the general discussion about the Anthropocene?

Speaker 2: Yes, well. Maybe starting with the fact that it's a scientific debate from geology. Scientists like to think of the world as a laboratory. There are only physical chemical processes and mathematical equations. And that's just not the case - the Anthropocene, which includes the term anthropic human, depends very much on people, on social factors, which is currently given very little consideration. The Anthropocene is based on an entire human race. That's why there are also some scientists who say that this term Anthropocene is post-social because it assumes that there is only one humanity with undivided interests and that they are all equally affected. But the possibility is that within this one humanity, some are very strongly affected by the effects of the Anthropocene, some hardly at all, some benefit very strongly from it, others not at all. Some have played a major part in bringing about the Anthropocene, others have hardly benefited at all, and it is easy to lose sight of these differences when we talk about THE human race in general. Exactly what is still out of sight are the interests that exist in the Anthropocene. The fact that it follows such a tradition of geological terminology makes it seem a bit like natural development, that it just happened that way. But in the truest sense of the word, there are powerful interests behind it, i.e. violent interests enforced by force, in which a few people have enriched themselves to an above-average extent at the expense of the common good at the expense of everyone. At the expense of the natural environment, biodiversity and so on, and these interests are very much out of sight due to this quasi-natural term Anthropocene. Two further remarks: When we talk about the Anthropocene, there are two key terms that are often used - one is planetary boundaries. This is a very well-known publication that is now about 10 years old. It says that there are certain sectors that are being overexploited, i.e.

the nitrogen cycle, the conviction of the oceans, biodiversity, ozone, CO₂ and so on, if there are certain, nine factors, and each of the factors is in a certain range. The area is either overexploited or in an area that is safe for the survival of humanity. But these new planetary boundaries are all scientific factors, there are no social indicators, there is no hunger, no poverty, no exploitation. That is something that is very much missing and there are some scientists who are now trying to bring this debate back more strongly and to say that the planetary boundaries are not just external natural boundaries - they are also the boundaries of our society and our social systems, which are reaching their limits. People are reaching their limits. Yes, it's very easy to lose sight of that if you only "focus on the environmental problems" in quotation marks and lose sight of the fact that they are closely linked to the social crises that exist, the environmental crises. Perhaps one last point, precisely because the Anthropocene is a term that comes from the natural sciences, environmental problems are often seen as having priority, i.e. we have to deal with CO₂ first and species extinction first, and then the social problems are in a sense secondary because they do not threaten our survival.

That's a bit of a perception, but I think it's very dangerous to prioritize the environmental crises over the social crises, firstly because they are very closely related and secondly because it's simply unfair to play one off against the other. A better approach would be to think of the two together in mutual dependence and that both must be dealt with, i.e. poverty, hunger, child poverty, old-age poverty, for example, which also exist here in Austria in Europe, are just as important issues that must be tackled with the same political priority as CO₂ avoidance and species extinction.

Speaker 1: What concerns me now is one last question, namely why do you think it is important to deal with these discussions in the context of vocational schools and what opportunities for action do you see in the field of vocational schools?

Speaker 2: That's a good question. Firstly, I would say that students at vocational schools are very important multipliers. People who complete vocational training go into sectors that are very important for the Anthropocene, agriculture, trade. On the other hand, I would also say that it is important to politicize the Anthropocene again, i.e. not to leave it to the natural sciences to define it, but to form an opinion about it ourselves and, in a certain sense, to appropriate the Anthropocene ourselves. What do I mean by that? It could be something like, for example, a positive vision of the future, a positive idea of how the Anthropocene could not only look like a catastrophe in terms of the overuse of resources, the extinction of species and the end of humanity, but how the Anthropocene could perhaps also be a new era that is positive and worth living in? For example - as I said at the beginning - that phenomena such as racism, colonialism and capitalism have led to the Anthropocene and a positive vision could be that in the Anthropocene, in this crisis situation, we overcome these phenomena and we manage to develop into an age in which we overcome these social phenomena that have led to the Anthropocene by overusing them. And that could be a perspective on how young people in particular can appropriate the Anthropocene themselves, fill it with political content themselves, take a stand on it and then also contribute to us finding our own way of dealing with it.

Speaker 1: Well, thank you very much for the interview and all the best.

Speaker 2: Thank you.

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