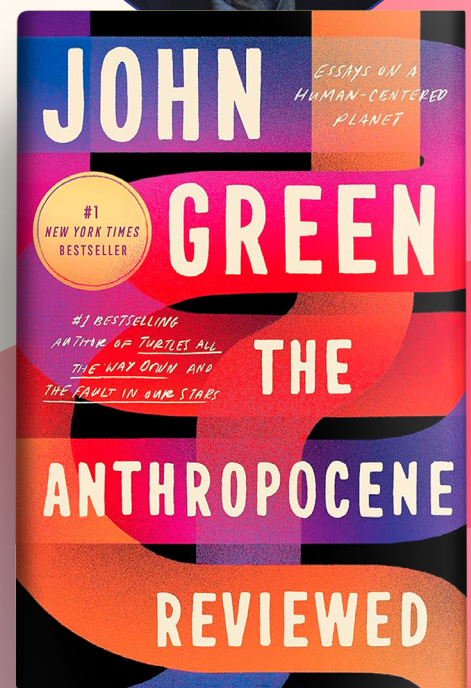


Discussion Questions for **THE ANTHROPOCENE REVIEWED** by JOHN GREEN

1. In his introduction to the book, John Green observes that reviewers were once expected to be authorities on the subject, but in contemporary society everyone has become a reviewer, and everything is a subject for review, from books and films to public restrooms and wedding photographers. Do you think expertise matters? Do the qualifications of the reviewer impact the way you read their reviews?
2. Green contends that “everyone secretly harbors at least one provocative opinion” (108). What’s your provocative opinion? What do you think that opinion reveals about you?
3. Green’s review of the internet recounts surprises, tech updates, outdated platforms, relationships, and wonderful memories—but also traumatic ones. How does his review of the internet reflect your own experiences online? Do you agree with his “mid” rating (three stars)? Why or why not?
4. Green’s one-star reviews in *The Anthropocene Reviewed* include *Staphylococcus aureus*, viral meningitis, and plague. What would you rate at one star, and why?
5. Green calls his process of writing these reviews an exercise in “trying to pay attention to what I pay attention to” (6). Now that you think about it, what do you pay attention to the most, and how does that attention shape your sense of self, your sense of community, your sense of the future, etc.?
6. In “Googling Strangers”, Green directs the reader from impersonal reflections on privacy to a deeply personal story about his time as a student chaplain at a children’s hospital. How does that reframing change the way you think about the topic?
7. Green takes great care in offering context to his reviews—scientific data, pop culture references, historical facts, etc. What is one review that offered the most pleasurable surprising context, and why did that piece of context enrich or complicate your understanding of the thing reviewed?
8. Green really likes the band the Mountain Goats—they get a shout-out in his Notes app review and earn five-star ratings as both a band and for the song “New Partner.” Is there a group or artist (musical, visual, etc.) who means to you what the Mountain Goats mean to Green? What does that artist bring to your lens and to your life?



9. Some of Green's essays explore topics uniquely relevant to him, while the subjects of others are nearly ubiquitous—like air-conditioning. How does his review of air-conditioning make you feel about how you live? How does this review make you feel about living in a world with climate change and Green's observation that "I need to get used to feeling a bit warmer. It's the only future for us" (78)?
10. In "Wintry Mix," Green suggests that we "will build meaning wherever we go, with whatever we come across" (221). What's an example from your own life when you've built meaning through experience?
11. In his chapter on the LC, iOS Notes app, Green shares one note from each year of his life with the app. What do your notes say about you? (If you don't have the app, try the same analysis with your camera roll or your inbox.)
12. When looking at the reviews and ratings, what do you think of the arc of the book as a whole? How many reviews are five stars? Does it reflect a human tendency to arrive at contentedness, or does it suggest something else about looking critically at the world?
13. Green explains that the word *Anthropocene* reflects "the current geologic age, in which humans have profoundly reshaped the planet and its biodiversity" (4). How many stars would you rate the Anthropocene as an age, and why?

JOEL GARZA called roll for the first time on Monday, August 23, 1993. He lives and teaches in Dallas, Texas, where he has served on the board of Deep Vellum Publishing, an independent publisher devoted to literature in translation and literature in the community.

