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Abstract for: Assailing the Anthropocene: the ethics of disruptive innovations for surviving our climate-changed world.

Title: Changing the Face of the Earth: Cross-examining the human species

Abstract: In 1962, Rachel Carson wrote a book called *Silent Spring*, in which she predicted many of the catastrophe's that we are experiencing as part of life in what we now call the Anthropocene Epoch. In part she recognised nature as the victim of industrialised man's indifference; man as an assailant against nature. Had we listened to her prescience, this now impoverished earth may be in better shape than it is, and so too we, its custodians. This paper argues that the human species must now cross-examine itself and its exponential recklessness since the onset of the Great Acceleration (Steffen, Crutzen and McNeil, 2007) in the 1950s. We have normalised some truly irrational habits and practices (such as flushing the toilet with single use highly treated and expensive drinking water) in the name of progress. Disrupting our comfort zones, obsessions, bias and unnecessary consumerism, is an ethical imperative now, that necessarily calls on economics, technology and science, philosophy and cultural studies, and public policy as expert witnesses, to the case of planetary care. If we are to produce innovative yet realistic futures, a stock-take of both past and present practices is required, towards a sustainable state of collective and inter-disciplinary future mind, and reconsideration of what constitutes intelligent progress.

Common sense must prevail, otherwise we risk paying forward past errors in new and different forms, and exoticizing climate change as some external other. We are climate change; we are as much a part of it as the increase in wild fires, or tsunami's – a complex and adaptive assemblage of life, for which we have been given the voice and capacity to govern. How well we govern is contingent on effective public policy informed by the environment that is, partnering with nature as it is, not where we would have it. Resilience thinking and policy is part of that partnership. As Folke, Walker *et al* (2002) have argued, 'Resilience is the capacity of a system to continually change and adapt, yet remain within critical thresholds'; if we change nature too much we compromise its resilience and ours. A reconsideration of use and exchange value may therefore be useful in such a problematization, in which an understanding of the planet as 'a commons' built on ethical eco-sufficiency (Salleh, 2008) may better serve ethics informed policy that is also cognisant of the operationality of gender and cultural considerations. This paper uses the example of the flush toilet (with the sub-title 'Your Shitting Me?'), to flesh out challenges of water scarcity and to pose new conditions of possibility, while addressing Goal 12 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals: 'Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns'.